

# MENTAL WELLNESS WEEK ACTIVITY GUIDE



## Mindful Monday

Mindfulness is the awareness that arises when we intentionally pay attention in a kind, open, and discerning way. When we are mindful, we focus on the present moment non-judgmentally. Students today need mindfulness more than ever to cope with the increasing demands they face every day. Today is the day to teach students different mindfulness techniques.



## Take Care Tuesdays



Self-Care is any activity where you tend to your own mental, emotional, and physical health and wellbeing. It will not be the same activities for each student, but many will be similar. Teaching self-care strategies is essential because it helps students learn how to balance their needs with their responsibilities. Today is the day to teach students different self-care strategies and techniques.

## Break Mental Health Stigma Wednesdays

Mental Health promotion helps to reduce stigma students may face. Stigma is a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something. Let's create environments that promote and sustain positive mental health for everyone. Today is about providing education for students to promote mental awareness and to reduce mental health stigma.



## Thankful Thursdays



Gratitude has positive impacts on physical, psychological, and social health including stronger immune systems, greater optimism, lower blood pressure, more joy and pleasure, and fewer feelings of loneliness and isolation. Today is about providing students with education on why they should practice gratitude exercises.

## Fun Friday

Research shows that social connectedness leads to an increased chance of longevity, it strengthens your immune system, helps you recover from disease faster, and may even lengthen your life. Today is all about fun and celebrating everything about Mental Health as a school community.



2023 Mental Health Awareness Month Theme: Together For Mental Health





## About Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month is a national campaign that takes place during the month of May. It aims to raise awareness about mental health, fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

There are many ways to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month. One way to promote Mental Health Awareness Month is hosting a Mental Wellness themed week on your school campus. The Wellness in Schools Program has created a guide to help implement a Wellness Week at your school.

This week is an opportunity for students and staff to participate in activities focused on mental wellness. These activities will help raise mental awareness, reduce stigma, promote self-care strategies, express the importance of gratitude and help them de-stress as they continue to work towards completed their 2022-2023 school year.

Each day is dedicated to a different area of wellness. Each day has a theme page and an activity page. We hope that these activities will help students on your campus learn how to manage stress, anxiety, loneliness, and other strong emotions related to mental health, while also increasing mental health awareness and reducing mental health stigma.

Utilize these resources to select an activity per day to support Mental Health Awareness Month. For more support in this effort, [please contact your local Wellness in Schools Program Liaison.](#)

For additional 2023 Mental Health Awareness Month activities and resources check out the [Mental Health activities Google Folder.](#)

## ***Mental Health Awareness Month Toolkits***

***If you are looking for ideas on how to promote Mental Health Awareness Month, please review these free toolkits:***

[Mental Health America: Mental Health Month Toolkit](#)

[Mental Health America; Mental Health Awareness Month 2022 Toolkit](#)

[Active Minds: Mental Health Month Partner Toolkit](#)

[Active Minds: Peer Powered Mental Health Curriculum for High Shools](#)

[Each Mind Matters: May is Mental Health Month Toolkit](#)

[SAVE Promise Club Activity Guide 2022-2023](#)

[Children's Mental Health Awareness Month Calendar of Activities for Families](#)

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# Mindful Monday

Mindfulness is a type of activity which helps you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgement. Students today need mindfulness more than ever to cope with the increasing demands they face every day. Mindfulness is important for students because it can help them improve their mental and emotional well-being, academic performance, and social skills. Some of the benefits of mindfulness are:

- Mindfulness can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression by helping students cope with challenging emotions and situations in a healthy way.
- Mindfulness can foster self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy by helping students recognize and accept their thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment.
- Mindfulness can improve social skills, communication, and relationships by helping students listen attentively, express themselves clearly, and respond compassionately to others.

To practice mindfulness, students can engage in various activities that can help them pay attention to their breath, body, senses, thoughts, and emotions in a kind and curious way. Some examples of how to help students practice mindfulness are:

- Breathing exercises: Students can practice taking slow and deep breaths, noticing how their chest and belly rise and fall with each inhale. They can also count their breaths or use a mantra to help them stay focused on their breathing.
- Mindful movement: Students can practice moving their body with awareness and intention, such as stretching, yoga, or dancing. They can also notice how their body feels before, during, and after the movement.
- Mindful gratitude: Students can express gratitude for something or someone in their life. They can write down or say out loud what they are thankful for and why. They can also notice how gratitude makes them feel.

## Mindful Monday Activity Suggestions:

### Elementary School Activities

- Activity 1: Body Scan Meditation (Grades K-5)
- Activity 2: Breathing With a Pinwheel (Grades K-3)
- Activity 3: Mental Wellness Mailbox (Grades K-3)
- Activity 4: Mindfulness: The Present Moment (Grades K-5)
- Activity 5: Stress Ball Creation (Grades K-5)
- Activity 6: Rhyming Body Scan for Young Children (Grades K-4)
- Activity 7: Mindful Bubble Blowing (Grades K-4)



Great Resource for Other Mindfulness Activities for Students: 30 Days of Mindfulness in the Classroom

### Middle/High School Activities

- Activity 1: Review Suggested Practices and Prompts for Meditation Sessions (Grades 6-12)
- Activity 2: 5-Minute Meditation You Can Do Anywhere (Grades 6-12)
- Activity 3: Guide students through a Yoga & Meditation Activity (Grades 6-12)
- Activity 4: "Breathing Activity" Printable sheets (Grades 6-8)
- Activity 5: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script (Grades 6-12)

Great Resource for other Mindfulness Activities for Students: Mindfulness High School

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## Take Care Tuesdays

Self-Care is any activity where you tend to your own mental, emotional, and physical health and wellbeing. It will not be the same activities for each student, but many will be similar. Some Contra Costa County students may be tempted to only focus on their work and disregard many aspects of their mental health. Taking care of one's mental health is important to a child's education and success as a student. Teaching self-care strategies is essential because it helps students learn how to balance their needs with their responsibilities. We want to encourage students to take a little time to care for themselves, despite having other things that also need to be done.

Self-care is important for students because it can help them cope with academic and personal challenges they may face in elementary, middle, high school, and beyond. The benefits of self-care include:

- It can reduce or eliminate anxiety, depression, and stress.
- It can increase happiness, self-compassion, and life satisfaction.
- It can improve academic performance and progress.
- It can enhance leadership skills and adaptability to change.
- It can foster strong relationships and resilience.



When we teach our students about the self-care at a young age, it will teach them to prioritize their mental and physical health, now and as they age.

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## Take Care Tuesday Activity Suggestions:

### Elementary School Activities

Activity 1: I Am and I Can (Grades K-3)

Activity 2: I Like Me Tee (Grades K-3)

Activity 3: Get Creative! (Grades K-3)

Activity 4: Quote It! (Grades K-3)

Activity 5: Caring for You is Caring for Me (Grades K-3)

Activity 5: 101 Positive Thinking Affirmations Educator's Guide and Workbook

SELF CARE  
IS A  
PRIORITY  
AND  
Necessity  
NOT A  
LUXURY

Great Resource for Elementary Aged Take Care Tuesday Activities: Self-Care: Classroom Resources

### Middle/High School Activities

Activity 1: Self-Care Check-Up Checklist (Grades 7-12)

Activity 2: Continuum of Feelings (Grades 4-6)

Activity 3: Medicine Wheel Wellness (Grades 4-6)

Activity 4: What's in a Wellness Plan? (Grades 7-12)

Activity 5: Breathing Into Stress Detox (Grades 7-12)

Activity 6: Dissecting Your Social Media Networks (Grades 9-12)

Great Resource for other Mindfulness Activities for Students: Mindfulness High School

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## Break Mental Health Stigma Wednesdays

SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) is as much about how we teach as it is what you teach. SEL helps schools apply a different lens to the education of children: the lens of emotions, empathy, and positive relationships. SEL actually improves children's academic successes as well as their overall mental health. Social-Emotional Learning Opportunities are a great way to address mental health stigma that our students and families may face.

Mental Health Stigma is negative and often unfair social attitudes that places shame on people who live with mental illness or seek help for emotional distress. Mental Health Stigma can lead to discrimination, isolation, self-doubt, and reluctance to seek treatment. It can also affect the opportunities and quality of life of people with mental health conditions. Some examples include:

- Making jokes or derogatory comments about mental illness.
- Assuming that people with mental illness are violent, dangerous, or unpredictable.
- Blaming people for their mental illness or telling them to "snap out of it".
- Treating people with mental illness differently or with pity.
- Believing that people with mental illness cannot recover or contribute to society.

Mental Health stigma is a powerful force that can prevent students from seeking appropriate support for mental health difficulties. Some of the best ways to address mental health stigma is:

- Educating students about mental health and challenging common myths and stereotypes.
- Providing students with access to a variety of mental health resources and services, such as counseling peer support, self-help tools, and crisis intervention.
- Creating a supportive and inclusive campus culture that values well-being and diversity.

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# **Break The Mental Health Stigma Activity Suggestions:**

## **Elementary School Activities**

Activity 1: What is Mental Health? Mental Health Explained for Elementary School Students | YouTube (5:42)

Activity 2: Meet Little Monster Coloring and Activity Book (Available in 5 Languages) (Grades K-3)

Activity 3: Draw Your Emotions! Activity Book (Grades K-5)

Activity 4: All About Me Activity Book (Grades K-3)

Activity 5: Stop The Stigma Bulletin Board (Grades K-12)

Great Resource for other Mental Health Awareness/Stigma Reduction Activities/Curriculum for Elementary:

CMHAW Activities for Children, Youth and Families

## **Middle/High School Activities**

Activity 1: Teen Health: Mental Health | YouTube (2:45)

Activity 2: National Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week: Activity Workbook (Grades 5-8)

Activity 3: My Feelings Workbook (Grades 6-8)

Activity 4: Walk in Our Shoes: Mental Health Awareness Curriculum (Grades 4-8)

Activity 5: Mental Health Myth Vs. Reality Activity (Grades 9-12)

Activity 6: Understanding Mental Health Stigma Lesson (Grades 9-12)

Great Resource for other Mental Health Awareness/Stigma Reduction Activities for Students:

Teaching Mental Health Literacy and Reducing Stigma

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## Thankful Thursday

Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. Research shows that practicing gratitude has positive impacts on physical, psychological, and social health including stronger immune systems, greater optimism, lower blood pressure, more joy and pleasure, and fewer feelings of loneliness and isolation.

It is important that we teach students and staff the importance of expressing gratitude. Gratitude is the quality of being thankful, it is a readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. With gratitude, people can acknowledge the goodness in their lives. In the process, people usually recognize that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside themselves. As a result, gratitude also helps connect people to something larger than themselves as individuals -whether to other people, nature, or a something else.

It's important to discuss with your students the importance of gratitude. It is easy to overlook the many things we must be grateful for in our lives. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. Gratitude can be taught and cultivated through various strategies, such as writing gratitude letters, keeping gratitude journals, expressing gratitude verbally or nonverbally, etc. By practicing gratitude regularly, students can improve their overall health and happiness.

THERE ARE  
(SO) many  
BEAUTIFUL  
reasons  
TO BE  
happy

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## *Thankful Thursday Activity Suggestions:*

### Elementary School Activities

Activity 1: Gratitude is my Superpower Read Aloud by Reading Pioneers Academy | YouTube (10:37)

Activity 2: Gratitude Journal (Grades K-4th)

Activity 3: Gratitude Growth Tree (Grades K-8th)

Activity 4: Gratitude Alphabet (Grades K-1st)

Activity 5: Acts of Kindness (Grades K-2nd)

Great Resource for Elementary Aged Take Care Tuesday Activities: Gratitude Activities for the Classroom

### Middle/High School Activities

Activity 1: An Experiment in Gratitude - The Science of Happiness | YouTube (7:13)

Activity 2: Gratitude Letter or Email/Gratitude Visit (Grades 6-12)

Activity 3: Gratitude Attitude (Grades 4-6)

Activity 4: Gratitude Journal (Grades 5-12)

Activity 5: Gratitude Circle of Appreciation (Grades 6-12)

Great Resource for other Gratitude Activities for Students: Thanks! A Strength Based Gratitude Curriculum for  
Twins & Teens

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## FUN FRIDAY!

It is very important that you end the week with a fun, social activity. It is encouraged that the school puts on an event that will bring students together for a common goal. Research shows that social connectedness leads to an increased chance of longevity, it strengthens your immune system, helps you recover from disease faster, and may even lengthen your life.

WISP advises schools to host a Mental Health Spirit Day on Friday. On your school's Mental Health Spirit Day, students and staff will be encouraged to participate in activities that promote mental health awareness, education, and well-being. The goal of mental health spirit day is to reduce stigma, increase support, and foster a positive school culture around mental health. A Mental Health Spirit Day can include:

- ***Wear Lime Green!*** The lime green ribbon is a symbol of mental health. Schools can encourage students to wear lime green clothes, accessories, makeup, nails, or hair, and take a group picture. Schools can also decorate the classroom or school with lime green ribbons, posters, balloons, etc.
- ***Host a Wellness Fair:*** You can invite local mental health professionals, organizations, or resources to set up booths or tables at your school and provide information, activities, or giveaways for students. You can have students create their own booths or presentations on topics they are interested in or passionate about related to mental health. Make sure to include resources for parents and families, enjoy the entire family to join!
- ***Organize a Fundraiser:*** You can raise money for a mental health cause or charity by selling items such as bracelets, stickers, baked goods, etc. You can also have students donate items or services such as books, toys, art supplies, tutoring, etc. and hold a raffle or auction. You can involve students in choosing the cause or charity and promoting the fundraiser.



For more ideas on fun activities to do on Mental Health Spirit Days, check out these links:

[Take Action Mental Health Spirit Day](#)

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