



MENTAL HEALTH WEEK TOOLKIT

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

Welcome to the Mental Health Week Toolkit. At the heart of this resource is the recognition that mental health is a collective responsibility. By promoting awareness, understanding, and open dialogue, we empower ourselves and others to prioritize mental wellness. This toolkit is designed to help organizations in supporting mental well-being in the workplace through fun and engaging activities that can be implemented during Mental Health Week or at any time.

CMHA Mental Health Week provides an opportunity for communities, organizations, and individuals to come together to raise awareness about mental health issues, promote understanding and acceptance, and work towards creating environments that foster mental wellness for all. The goal, however, is to foster a culture where mental health is not confined to a single week, but is integrated into our daily lives.



So, let's make mental wellness a priority, not just for a week, but for a lifetime. Together, we can create a workplace where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

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TIPS FOR TALKING TO SOMEONE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN

Has an employee, friend or family member ever approached you with a mental health concern? When speaking with others, it's important to approach the conversation with understanding, empathy, and professionalism. Here are some tips to help you start the conversation:

- 1 Check yourself.** Ensure that you're in a mentally healthy headspace before offering support to others.
- 2 Choose the right setting.** Find a private space where you won't be interrupted or overheard. This helps create a safe environment for the person to open up.
- 3 Express concern.** Let them know you're there to support them. Ask open-ended questions like:
 - How are you feeling?
 - Why do you think you feel this way?
 - How can I help?
- 4 Actively listen.** Be attentive and focus your attention on the speaker. Listen without interrupting and reflect back what they share to show that you understand and validate their feelings.
- 5 Avoid judgement.** Don't make assumptions about the person's situation. Resist thinking about how you should respond or offer advice or solutions. Listening is the focus.



- 6 Respect confidentiality.** Assure them that the conversation will stay private to the extent possible. In a work setting, for example, you may explain limitations based on company policies or legal requirements.
- 7 Offer support.** Ask how you can help and provide information about available resources, programs, and services.
- 8 Know your comfort level.** You're not expected to be a mental health professional, but you can still help others by opening the conversation and referring them to appropriate resources.
- 9 Follow up.** Check in with the person regularly to remind them that you're there for them. Showing ongoing concern helps them feel valued and supported.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WORKPLACE SCAVENGER HUNT

Kindness goes a long way in contributing to a positive environment. Spread joy and warmth throughout your workplace by organizing a Random Acts of Kindness Scavenger Hunt.

What you'll need:

- A champion or team to organize and lead the activity
- Random Acts of Kindness Cards – 20 cards have been provided along with blank templates if you'd rather create your own or hide more than 20!
- A *Kindness Board* - an area to post completed acts of kindness
- A prize given the winner of the draw

Here's how it works:

1. Print the Random Acts of Kindness Cards. 20 acts have been provided along with some blank templates if you'd rather create your own.
2. Hide the cards throughout your workplace in areas where employees will come across them.
3. When an employee finds a card, (s)he will perform the act of kindness.
4. The person who completed the act writes his/her name on the back and posts it on the Kindness Board
5. At the end of the week, all cards on the Kindness Board will be entered into a prize draw

Happy hunting!

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS CARDS

Bring in a *treat* to share with colleagues



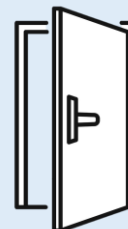
Offer to make a *coffee or tea* run



Compliment a coworker



Hold the door open for someone



Help a coworker without being asked



Leave a *thank-you note* for someone who has helped you



Tidy up a mess that you didn't make



Offer to help organize a *team-building* or *social event*



Post *inspirational messages* where others can see



Bring in a plant or flowers to *brighten up* the workspace



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS CARDS

Give someone a *compliment* during a meeting



Greet each co-worker *by name* as you see them



Join *someone* in the lunch room who's sitting alone



Spread some *good news*



Offer to *take on a task* for a colleague who's feeling stressed



Bring in books or magazines for the *break room*



Share a funny meme or joke to *lighten the mood*



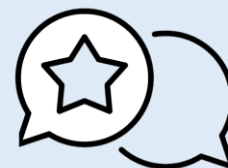
Leave a *token* or *handwritten note* on a coworker's desk



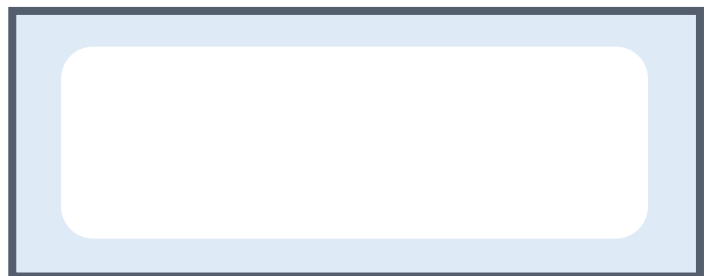
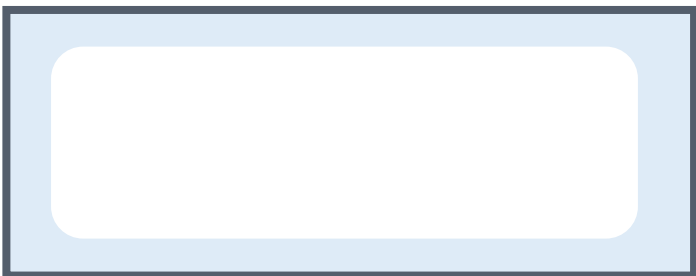
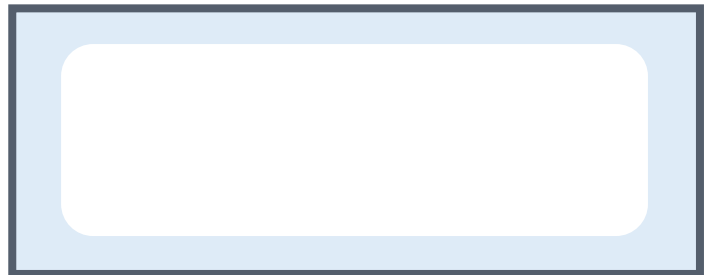
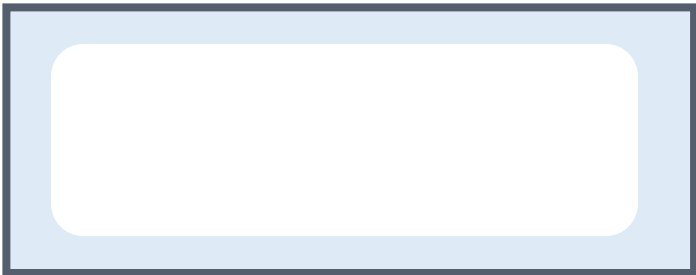
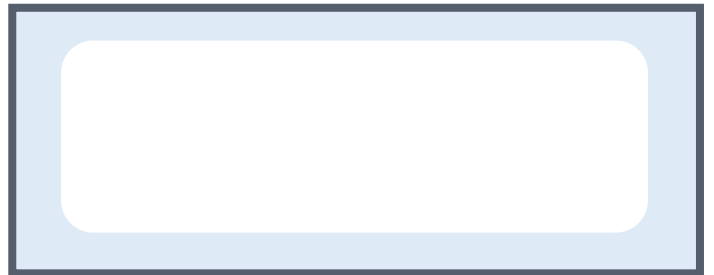
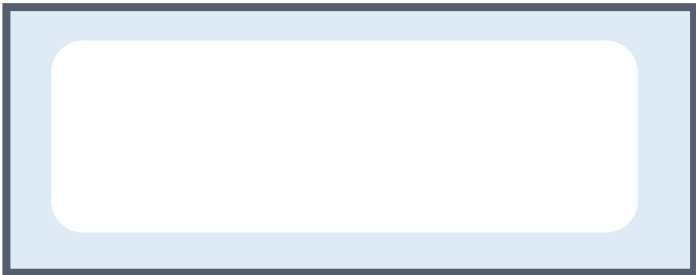
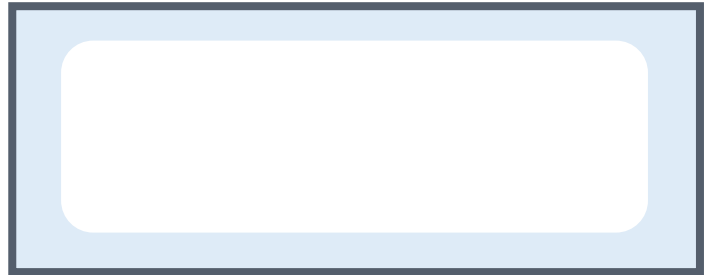
Share something you enjoy



Share *positive feedback* about a colleague with their manager



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS CARDS



SOUP IN A JAR

MAKE & SHARE ACTIVITY

Simple and healthy, soup is a universal “feel good” food that can be the perfect pick-me-up when the weather is cool or your mood needs a boost. This activity is about heartwarming camaraderie. Enjoy time with your colleagues and discover the simple yet soul-satisfying art of layering ingredients in a mason jar. The result is a delightful gift to share with loved ones at home or extend a gesture of kindness to a friend or someone in need.

What you'll need:

- Pint size mason jars with lids – one for each participant
- Printed soup recipe card – it may be helpful to punch a hole into each card
- Dry soup ingredients
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Ribbon, twine, etc. to tie the recipe card onto the jar

Here's how it works:

1. Set up the activity area with a mason jar and recipe cards at each setting.
2. Arrange dry soup ingredients along with measuring cups and spoons together.
3. Participants will take turns measuring ingredients and layering them into their mason jar in the order listed on the recipe card.
4. Close up the jar and tie the recipe card to the jar.



SOUP RECIPES

MINISTRONE SOUP

In the Jar:

- ¼ cup dried lentils
- ¼ cup dried green split peas
- ¼ cup uncooked long grain rice
- 2 tbsp pearl barley
- 4 tsp beef or chicken bouillon granules
- 2 tbsp dried minced onion
- 1 tsp celery salt
- ½ tsp Italian seasoning
- 3 tbsp dried parsley flakes
- ½ cup uncooked small pasta shells (wrapped in plastic)

To make the Soup:

1. In a Dutch oven, cook ½ lb. beef over medium heat until no longer pink. Drain.
2. Add 8 cups water, 1 can diced tomatoes (undrained), and soup mix (minus pasta). You can add chopped carrots and celery as well.
3. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer 45 minutes.
4. Stir in pasta. Cover and simmer 15-20 minutes or until pasta is tender. Enjoy!

SOUTHWESTERN 3-BEAN & BARLEY SOUP

In the Jar:

- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/3 cup dried black beans
- ½ cup pearl barley
- 1/3 dried kidney beans
- 1/3 cup dried great northern beans

To make the Soup:

1. Dice 1 large onion, 1 celery stalk, and 1 carrot. Set aside.
2. In a Dutch oven, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat.
3. Add onion, celery and carrot. Cook until softened (about 5 minutes).
4. Add 9 cups of water, 4 cups of broth, and the soup mix. Bring to a boil.
5. Reduce heat to simmer and cook until beans are tender (1¾ to 2 hours) adding more water if needed.
6. Season with ¾ tsp salt and serve.

COCONUT CURRY LENTIL SOUP

In the Jar:

- 2/3 cup green lentils
- ½ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- ½ cup brown rice
- 2/3 cup red lentils
- 2 tsp mild curry powder
- 1 ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp chili powder

To make the Soup:

1. Bring 7 cups of water or stock to a boil.
2. Add soup mix and simmer until lentils are soft.
3. For a richer, creamier soup, add 1 can of coconut milk.

SIMPLE WINTER CHILI

In the Jar:

- 2/3 cup brown or green lentils
- 2/3 cup yellow split peas
- 2/3 cup green split peas
- 1 cup barley 2 vegetable bouillon cubes
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder

To make the Soup:

1. To a Dutch oven, add 10 cups of water, 1 can diced tomatoes (undrained), and soup mix. Stir to combine.
2. Bring to a boil then cover and reduce to a summer.
3. Cook for 1 to 1 ½ hours or until lentils and barley are soft. Enjoy!

NURTURING SELF-COMPASSION: A 3-PART PRACTICE

When we think of compassion, our minds often drift to thoughts of empathy and understanding directed towards others. While compassion towards others is undoubtedly valuable, it's equally important to recognize the significance of self-compassion. Self-compassion involves extending the same kindness, empathy, and understanding to ourselves that we readily offer to others. In a world where self-criticism and perfectionism often reign supreme, nurturing self-compassion is not only essential but transformative.



Why Self-Compassion Matters:

Self-compassion is vital because it serves as the foundation for mental and emotional well-being. It involves treating oneself with warmth and understanding, especially during moments of difficulty, failure, or suffering. Unlike self-pity, which can trap us in a cycle of victimhood and negativity, self-compassion fosters resilience and growth. By acknowledging our struggles with kindness and acceptance, we can navigate life's challenges with greater ease and grace.

How Self-Compassion Differs from Pity:

Self-compassion is often misunderstood as self-pity, but they are fundamentally different. While self-pity involves wallowing in feelings of victimhood and inadequacy, self-compassion is rooted in kindness and understanding. Self-pity tends to amplify negative emotions and perpetuate a sense of helplessness, whereas self-compassion empowers us to acknowledge our struggles while offering ourselves comfort and support.

In essence, self-compassion is the antidote to self-criticism and judgment. By nurturing a compassionate relationship with ourselves, we can cultivate a deeper sense of inner peace, resilience, and fulfillment in our lives.

A 3-PART PRACTICE

This activity is designed to guide you through a journey of self-discovery and self-nurturance, helping you cultivate a deeper sense of self-compassion and well-being. By engaging in positive affirmations, reflective journaling, and personal activities focused on self-care, you'll embark on a transformative path towards greater self-acceptance and inner peace. Take this opportunity to prioritize yourself and explore the power of self-compassion in enhancing your overall quality of life.

Part 1: Positive Affirmation

Choose a positive affirmation that resonates with you and embodies self-compassion. It could be something like, "I am worthy of love and kindness," "I embrace my imperfections with compassion," or "I treat myself with the same kindness I offer to others." Write this affirmation down on a piece of paper or create a digital image of it. Place it somewhere visible, such as your bathroom mirror or computer desktop, where you'll see it daily.

Part 2: Journal Prompt

Reflect on a recent challenge or difficult situation you've faced. Consider how you responded to yourself during that time. Did you offer yourself kindness and understanding, or did you engage in self-criticism and judgment? Write about your experience in your journal, exploring your thoughts, feelings, and actions with honesty and compassion. Then, ask yourself: How can I respond to myself with greater compassion in moments of difficulty?

Part 3: Personal Activity

Engage in an activity that brings you joy and nurtures your well-being. This could be anything that makes you feel relaxed, inspired, or fulfilled, whether it's going for a walk in nature, practicing mindfulness or meditation, creating art, listening to music, or spending time with loved ones. During this activity, focus on being present in the moment and treating yourself with kindness and self-compassion. Notice any self-critical thoughts that arise and gently redirect your attention back to the present moment and the experience of self-nurturance.

Keep reading for some additional examples that provide a variety of options for incorporating positive affirmations, reflective journaling, and personal activities into your practice of cultivating self-compassion. Feel free to customize the activities to suit your preferences and individual needs.

A 3-PART PRACTICE

Positive Affirmations

- "I am deserving of love and respect just as I am."
- "I embrace my flaws and imperfections with compassion."
- "I forgive myself for past mistakes and embrace my journey with kindness."
- "I am enough, exactly as I am in this moment."
- "I honor my needs and prioritize self-care with compassion."
- "I release self-judgment and embrace self-acceptance."

Journal Prompts

- Reflect on a time when you felt overwhelmed or stressed. How did you respond to yourself during that period? What self-compassionate actions could you take the next time you face a similar situation?
- Think about a mistake you've made recently. How did you talk to yourself about it? How can you practice self-forgiveness and offer yourself kindness and understanding?
- Consider a challenge you're currently facing. What self-compassionate words or phrases could you offer yourself to provide comfort and support?
- Reflect on moments when you've compared yourself to others and felt inadequate. How can you cultivate self-compassion by acknowledging your unique strengths and qualities?
- Write about a time when you felt rejected or unaccepted by others. How can you offer yourself the same level of love and acceptance that you seek from external sources?

Personal Activities

- Engage in a mindfulness meditation session, focusing on self-compassion and kindness towards yourself.
- Spend time in nature, taking a leisurely walk or simply sitting and observing the beauty around you.
- Practice self-care by indulging in a soothing bath, treating yourself to a massage, or practicing gentle yoga.
- Write yourself a love letter or a list of affirmations, expressing gratitude and appreciation for all that you are.
- Spend quality time with a beloved pet, enjoying their unconditional love and presence.
- Connect with a friend or family member who uplifts and supports you, and share your feelings of self-compassion and acceptance with them.

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK PROMO IMAGE

As CMHA Mental Health Week approaches, it's time to shine a light on our dedication to mental well-being. This year's focus is on the healing power of compassion and May 6 to 12 will explore how compassion connects us all.

Spread this message of empathy by downloading the image below. Whether for media board displays, communication boards, or your social media platforms, it's a simple way to make a meaningful impact to pave the way for a more compassionate workplace.

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