

## **Mental Health Awareness Week 2021 Resource** **(10th - 16th of May)**

Our Time has created an **activity pack** to reflect the [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) theme 'connecting with nature', helping you to be mindful of your mental health and how it can be protected by looking to nature for ideas.

Nature is central to our psychological and emotional well-being. In the last year this has been made more apparent than ever as many of us have been isolated by lockdowns and unable to take part in the everyday activities we had previously been accustomed to. As such, green spaces and time outside of our home have taken on an increased importance.

### **Drawing a tree to support your mental health**

When you look at a large tree what do you see? Strength? Beauty? History? Peace?

You may not realise it, but all these qualities exist within you too and can be discovered through the following activity.

You may approach this in a number of ways:

- By downloading and printing the tree outline from the **activity worksheets PDF** and writing onto it.
- By **drawing a tree of your own** at a size of your choosing and writing on it, make sure there is plenty of space for writing in the trunk, branches and leaves!
- By working with others on a **large tree drawing** and filling it in together. This could be on a large A3 or A2 piece of paper, or it could be a giant mural. If you're working in a large group, each person could cut out a leaf shape (**printable templates** can be found in the worksheet pack), write on it and stick it to a wall to form a giant tree made of your thoughts.

Once you have a worksheet or your own drawing of a tree ready, start writing things onto it as follows to develop your own mental health tree. For a visual example of this, you can refer to the completed **example sheet** on page 2.

Mental Health Awareness Week - Tree worksheet

**Leaves:** Inside these write down good feelings and thoughts.

**Branches:** Inside these write down activities and hobbies that make you feel happy.

**Trunk:** Inside and around this write about happy memories.

**Roots:** Around these write about close family and friends who listen to and support you.

DISCOVERY

SUPPORT

LOVE

COURAGE

RESILIENCE

FRIENDSHIP

CARE

HOPE

STRENGTH

PAPER CRAFT

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

WATCHING TV

RELAXING

FOOTBALL

PAINTING

VIDEO GAMES

READING & WRITING

LISTENING TO MUSIC

DRAWING

COMICS

PUZZLES

COOKING

GARDENING

STORIES

SINGING

BOARDS

BOARD GAMES

BIRTHDAYS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

CHRISTMAS

WINNING A COMPETITION

VISITING GRANDMA

A DAY AT THE FAIRGROUND

COMPETING IN A SPORTS MATCH

A DAY AT THE PARK WITH FAMILY

MY DAD ALWAYS LISTENS

MY MUM IS VERY KIND

MY SISTER ALWAYS PLAYS FAIR

GRANDPA HAS LOTS OF EXCITING STORIES

MY FRIEND SARAH IS ALWAYS CARING

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### **The roots**

Just as a gigantic tree needs strong roots to support its weight and hold it up through storms, our family and friends can provide a foundation of support to help us through good and bad times.

Ask yourself, **who are the most important people in your life?** Write some of their names around the tree roots on your sheet and something you appreciate about them.

### **The trunk**

The next supportive part on a strong tree is the trunk, holding up the branches and leaves. For our tree, try asking yourself; **what are your most important or happiest memories?**

Try writing some of these into your tree's trunk, perhaps with a little detail about why they are important memories and experiences. These could include holidays, achievements, journeys or just a place that makes you feel safe and relaxed.

### **The branches**

Just as a tree's branches spread out in multiple directions reaching upwards, we too may try taking our lives in new directions, trying new things and learning new skills.

**What activities and hobbies typically make you feel relaxed, happy or a sense of accomplishment?**

Write as many of these as you can into and around your tree's branches, perhaps with some explanation as to why they are meaningful for you.

### **The leaves**

The leaves of a tree grow out from its branches, absorbing sunlight through photosynthesis and sustaining it.

Much as this is the case for the tree, ask yourself; **how do your family, friends, good memories and enjoyable activities sustain your mental health and make you feel better?**

Write positive feelings you associate with all the other things you have written among the leaves.

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### **Finishing your tree**

Finished? Well done. Once most of your tree has been completed, try looking at it as a whole.

This is a representation of the good things in your life, that support you and make you happy. Just like a real tree, it is strong, resilient, beautiful and can be a reminder that even when things are tough we have family, friends, happy memories, fun activities and good feelings to fall back on.

### **Get creative, get inspired**

Remember that this activity is only a suggestion and you are free to get as creative as you like with your own trees.

Why not try making a collage tree by sticking coloured card on your paper or using stickers? How about drawing things to represent memories, family and activities rather than writing them?

You could even take a walk around some real trees or greenery for some additional inspiration. You could collect different kinds of fallen leaves to draw around or stick directly onto your sheet of paper.

Connect with nature and see what you discover about yourself in the process.

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