

WELL~ BEING CANADA

Home Connection Activity Cards

Cultivating meaningful connections at home.



Aligned with the Well-being
K-6 curriculum, but
suitable for all ages.

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Instructions

Welcome to your Well-being Home Connection Activity Cards! These cards are designed to compliment and extend the well-being topics your child may be learning in class.

Each card will begin with an overview of the well-being issue or topic for you to review.

Then, you will find discussion questions to help get your family talking about how the topic relates to them.

Finally, you'll find ways you can take action and support each other on the topic or issue.

Tips for use:

- 1 Coordinate the topics of the activity cards to what your child has done in class, or choose them as needed.
- 2 Consider using these cards to spark dinner or car drive conversation, or use them for household meeting nights.
- 3 Allow these cards to spark valuable conversation and bonding time! Be sure to both listen and communicate.
- 4 Browse through our Home Connection Activity Card topics and give one that stands out to you a try! Enjoy this special communication time together.

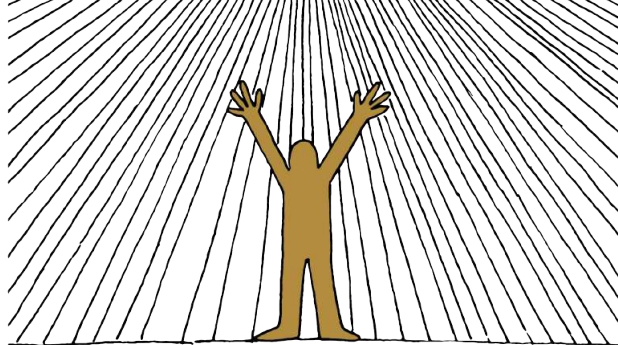


Boost your mood.

Joyful or sad, bored or wired, anxious or exhilarated, sometimes it feels like everything all at once. Whether you woke up on the wrong side of the bed, or you're looking for another reason to smile, boost your mood, there are always simple ways to boost your mood! As we get to know our emotions better what they feel like and how they affect the things we say and do we can learn how to lift them when we feel like we need a little boost.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are your favorite mood boosting activities? Share your answers as a household and keep the list on your fridge as a reminder!
- 2 How do you feel when your mood is boosted?
Random acts of kindness really do have the power to make us feel good. What are three kind deeds that you can do this week to help someone else, or to help a cause that you care for?
- 3



TAKE ACTION

- Something as simple as a walk can transform your mood if you're feeling low, or even if you just need a mid-day break! Consider working a daily walk into your household schedule. Of course, you can get outside more than once, but this is a great place to start. If you're tired of one route, try walking through a different neighborhood or walk your loop backwards. Simple changes like this can keep things interesting.
- Hungry + angry = hangry. Do you get hangry when you are hungry? Eating regularly, especially snacks with fiber, protein and healthy fats, can prevent a dip in blood sugar levels that often cause us to feel unhappy. Next time you're feeling on edge, consider having a snack and notice how you feel after.
- As a household, write down activities that help boost your mood. Stick this list on the side of your fridge and refer back to it for mood-lifting ideas.



Catch those

Zzzz's

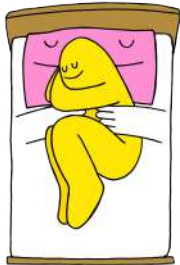
"Sleep is the single most effective thing we can do to reset our brain and body health each day", Dr. Walker writes in *Why We Sleep*.

The problem is that most of us don't get enough, especially in times of high stress and anxiety. How much is enough? Shoot for nine hours, more or less. Dr. Walker has lots of bedtime tips: avoid screens, dim lights an hour before bed, lower the thermostat, but sticking to routine tops his list of advice.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 To set your routine, what time do you think is best for you to go to bed and wake up each day in order for you do be well rested?
- 2 How do you feel when you get enough sleep versus when you don't?
- 3 What do you think you could do to help yourself get better sleep?



TAKE ACTION

Try tracking your sleep to see if you can improve your sleep over time!

	HOURS OF SLEEP	ENERGY LEVEL
MONDAY		
TUESDAY		
WEDNESDAY		
THURSDAY		
FRIDAY		
SATURDAY		
SUNDAY		



Disconnect to Reconnect

Relationships and connection are key to well-being. Feeling socially connected reduces cortisol, the stress hormone, and connections boost the release of oxytocin, the love and cuddle hormone. Even just thinking about connections can activate a release of neurotransmitters.

Chatting through texts and social media, however, might not have the same affect. One study of children interacting with their moms noted a release of oxytocin, the love hormone, in the kids who did so in person or by phone. This was not the case for those who connected by text.

So instead of a chain of texts, try calling a friend or loved one, or visiting them in person if you can!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How do you think screen time, social media, and texting has changed connections between people in the past years? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these changes?
- 2 How do you feel about your current amount of screen time? Do you think it's too much? Just right? Not enough? Why or why not?
- 3 On a scale of 1-10, how well do you feel connected to others? Are there any ways, such as joining activities or clubs, that you could try to increase your connections?



TAKE ACTION

- If you keep your phone an arm's length from your pillow - like 89% of teens - it will be the first and last thing you reach for each day. Try putting your phone in another room overnight.
- Mahatma Gandhi once said "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Think about ways you can help others on a regular basis to bring goodness to the world while also building connections!
- Don't forget, disconnect to reconnect can also mean reconnecting with yourself! Make time for you to recharge your own batteries that don't involve burning your device batteries.

Empathy & Compassion

"How are you?" is a simple question worth asking twice sometimes. Think about what we usually say when someone asks how we're doing. We usually say "Fine", right? But there are so many words we could really mean. Maybe we really are fine, or even fantastic, but that's not always the case.

When you ask someone how they are, try to listen with empathy to try to pick up on signs that the person may not be fine. Try replying with "Are you sure?" or "You know where to find me if you need me" to let them know you are ready to show them compassion if they need it.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Have you ever had someone tell you they are fine, but you could tell they didn't seem fine? What about them made you think they weren't fine?
- 2 Why do you think we tell someone we're fine if we aren't?
- 3 How do you like to show compassion to someone to help them feel better when they're not fine?



TAKE ACTION

- Have the members of your household take turns sharing how they are. Try to avoid words like "fine" or "okay" and find words that truly represent your current state. Listen intently as they explain why they chose that word and offer compassion, if needed.
- Remember, compassion can look different depending on the person and the situation. Brainstorm situations you and the people in your household have experienced where they really needed compassion. What compassionate actions have given them the most comfort in those situations?



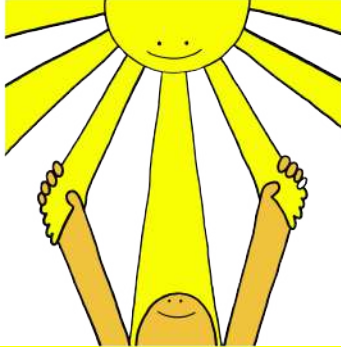
Get Moving

What's good for the body is good for the brain. Exercise stimulates blood vessels in the body and increases blood flow to the brain.

The Department of Health and Human Services says physical activity delivers the following benefits to brain health: improved cognition, performance on academic achievement tests, memory, executive function, and quality of life. It can reduce the risk of depression, short-term feelings of anxiety, and improve sleep.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some ways you can exercise that are fun for you?
- 2 When during your day and week do you think you can fit exercise in?
Are there any physical activities you could enjoy together as a household? Going on walks together or playing a sporting game can not only benefit all of your physical and mental health, but also bring you closer together!
- 3



TAKE ACTION

- Exercising 45 minutes for three to five times a week was found to deliver the greatest benefits. Don't like to sweat? Don't sweat it! "Walking just three times a week is better than not exercising at all," said researcher Adam Chekroud of Yale University.
- Remember, every little thing counts! See if you can find little ways to fit in more physical activity. Maybe it's doing a few jumping jacks each time you stand up, or walking around your bathroom as you brush your teeth- it can add up!
- Spread your physical activity throughout your day and week. Instead of exercising for for an hour a few days a week, try 10-15 minutes at a time a few times a day.



Get the Ball

Rolling

Sometimes, sparking conversations can be hard. Since positive everyday interactions enhance our well-being, it's a good idea to have ideas on how to start conversations in your back pocket. Practicing these ideas with people in your household can not only enhance your relationships with them, but help you feel more comfortable using your ideas with others, too.

While the next page of this activity card has ideas on how to start deeper conversations, much of our day to day talk start simply. Asking how someone is doing or how their weekend was can open a conversation up in ways we didn't see coming! Just offering kind words of genuine interest in how someone is can get the ball rolling in an easy, yet caring way. And remember, one of the most powerful ways to connect to someone is just to listen! You don't always have to do all the talking.

Also, keep in mind that positive relationships are reciprocal. That means that the connections that enhance our well-being should be with people that value us as much as we value them!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- 1 Have you ever tried to start a conversation that fell flat, meaning it didn't go anywhere and maybe felt awkward? Talk to your household about what to do in those situations!
- 2 What are some simple conversation starters you and your family can come up with? Make a list so you can always refer back to them!
- 3 Can you tell that a relationship is positive from the conversations you have with a person? Do they do certain things that show you they value what you have to say?



TAKE ACTION

- Make a list of people you are comfortable with in different areas of your life school, clubs, online, teams, etc. These connections are people in your corner,"meaning you can count on them to talk with you and be there for you!
- Try these 12 ideas for starting deeper conversations:
 1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, who would you want as a dinner guest?
 2. How would you like to make a difference in the world?
 3. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained one quality or ability, what would it be?
 4. If a crystal ball could tell you the future, what would you want to know?
 5. What is something you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it yet?
 6. What would constitute a perfect day for you?
 7. Who or what do you feel most grateful for?
 8. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
 9. What do you value most in a friendship?
 10. What is your most treasured memory?
 11. Share an embarrassing moment in your life.
 12. When did you last cry or laugh really hard?

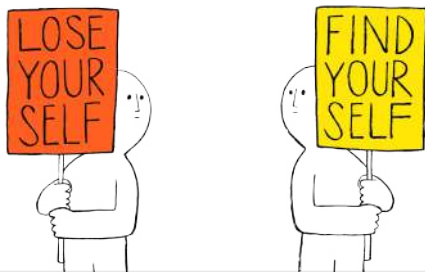
Get to Know Your Pattern

Everyone deserves healthy relationships whether it's with friends or loved ones, parents or caregivers, we are all worthy of giving and receiving love. We can learn to manage our behaviors to ensure that we are connecting with our loved ones in a healthy and positive way. We can all learn to love better by recognizing unhealthy signs and shifting to healthy behaviors.

UNHEALTHY SIGN	SOLUTION
Intensity: When someone expresses very extreme feelings and over-the-top behaviour that feels overwhelming.	It is important to respect your friend's boundaries just as they would yours. If they don't respond to a text or a call right away, use this as an opportunity to do something kind for yourself: have a bath, or go for a walk and notice how you feel afterwards. When we become more present in our own lives, we tend to become less obsessive about the lives of others.
Deflecting responsibility: When someone repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy behaviour.	It is important to notice when our emotions lead to unhealthy reactions. If you need to take some time for yourself, let your friends and loved ones know that you'll be more present to continue this conversation at a later moment. They will understand and respect your boundaries which in turn will help you avoid lashing out unintentionally.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Has a friend ever bothered you on social media, like sending you lots of text messages when you didn't want them to, or didn't respect your boundaries? How did this make you feel?
- 2 What could you say to this friend to establish boundaries that keep you both safe and happy?
- 3 Why is it important to establish boundaries in relationships with friends, family and romantic partners?



TAKE ACTION

- Use your own interactions with your household to set positive examples of what healthy friendships and relationships looks like. Through practice and examples, we can support each other as we learn to set boundaries.
- Seeing someone in your household, friend group or community struggling with an unhealthy friendship or relationship can be troubling. People experiencing an unhealthy relationship may not take their friend's advice, but telling a friend that you're worried can plant an important seed and provide space for the potential of a future conversation.
- A young person may be afraid to seek support from a parent or caregiver if they're experiencing an unhealthy relationship. Consider checking in with one another regularly to cultivate an environment that supports healthy and honest discussion.

When you Give, You Get Well

Altruism is when we care about others and do acts of kindness for them even when we don't get anything in return. But do we really not get anything, do you think?

While we don't do nice things for others *because* we want to feel good, acting with altruism positively affects our own well-being. When we make others feel good, we feel good, too.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some reasons why we do nice things for others? Are there times when people need to be shown altruism more than others?
- 2 What are some kind things you have done for others without expecting anything in return? How did it make you feel?
- 3 Can you think of an example where gratitude and empathy/compassion could also happen along with altruism?




TAKE ACTION

- As a household, brainstorm a list of kind things you can do easily for others. Challenge each other to try to do 3 of those ideas this week. At the end of the week tell each other what you did and how it went!
- After you complete your 3 acts of altruism, think about how you could do little acts of altruism each day. After a while, doing acts of kindness can become a healthy, happy habit!
- Take some time to write down experiences of altruism from your life, both that you have done for others and others have done for you. Write your thoughts and feelings about these actions. What feeling words do you associate with these memories? How could increasing altruism help the world?




Grow your Gratitude






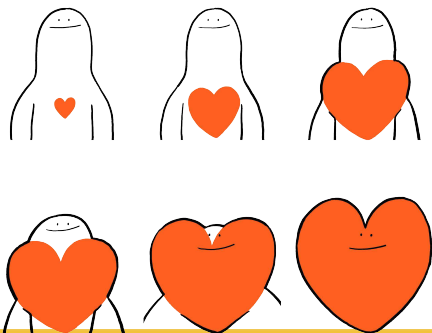
According to Dr. Amy Eva of UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, researchers that have studied people who have written letters of gratitude have found they show differences in their brains even 2-3 months after the letter writing. This means that expressing gratitude has a powerful affect on our brains not just immediately, but months down the road!

Gratitude also has the power to strengthen your immune system, lower your blood pressure, help you cope with stress, and even help you sleep better!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

-  Who is someone that you are grateful for? Be specific as to why you are grateful for this person and how they are special to you.
-  What is something about yourself that you are grateful for? It can be a quality or talent you have, or something you have done that you are grateful to yourself for doing.
-  What is something simple in life that you are grateful for? This can be something that we may take for granted but brings you joy or comfort, such as cool breezes, books, or even chapstick!



TAKE ACTION

- Think back to your answer to discussion question #1. Write a letter to the person you are grateful for to tell them how you feel, or tell them in person! And when you're done, consider doing it again and again!
- Now, think back to your answer for discussion question #2. Try to make a daily practice of self-gratitude to give yourself a boost!
- Think about how you feel when you express gratitude. Whether those feelings are happy, warm, or even uncomfortable- that's okay! If expressing gratitude out loud does make you uncomfortable, think of ways that make it easier for you, such as sending a card or making a video instead.



Healthy communication

Healthy relationships bring out the best in you and make you feel good about yourself. Whether it's a relationship with a parent or caregiver, a close friend, or a partner, our relationships all depend on our ability to clearly communicate our needs and feelings to each other. While that might seem simple enough, communication can be overwhelming or challenging at times if we can't find the right words to express how we are feeling. Remember, nobody is a mind reader.

Start by thinking about your own communication patterns and to identify the areas where we can improve:

1. Practice observing without evaluating. Healthy communication begins with healthy listening.
2. Identify and express your feelings. Whenever you notice a shift in your mood, try to identify what you feel and need in that moment, naming your emotion is a great place to start.
3. Listen emphatically. People are generally more willing to hear you once they feel heard and understood.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Consider a time recently when you felt as though your needs were not met. How did you react? If you were to experience this moment again, how would you react differently to clearly communicate your needs? Share this experience as a household and notice how reflecting on this moment challenges you to rethink your communication strategies.

2

In your own words, what does positive communication look and sound like to you? What does negative communication look and sound like to you? E.g., body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc.



TAKE ACTION

- Sometimes it's hard to find the right words to communicate our own feelings and emotions. If you're at a loss for words, consider asking your friend, family member, or loved one for a five-minute break. This time will allow you to think about how you're feeling so you can go back to the conversation with a new outlook.
- Consider keeping a journal or a note on your phone and write down any feelings or emotions that you wish to share with a close friend or loved one. When we write our feelings down ahead of time, it gives us a chance to reflect on our needs while promoting a greater sense of self-awareness.
- If you notice a shift in your mood for the worse, try to identify what you feel in that moment and if they are connected to issues in your relationships with family or a close friend. Find an appropriate way to clearly express what you need.

Is your glass half full?

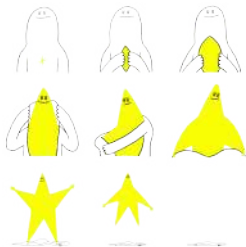
Just like passing storms, negative emotions don't last forever. Even when the rain is really pouring down, the sun will eventually come out to clear away all the dark and stormy clouds.

This idea is a powerful reminder that negative emotions, like storms, don't last forever. In fact, negative emotions are actually part of good mental health. With intention and practice, we can all become more aware of our emotions and take action. The glass isn't always half empty, but it's okay that it might be half empty right now.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 After taking on a challenge, or experiencing difficult times, pause to consider how that feels in your body. What does this feel like for you?
- 2 How do you express your feelings and emotions to loved ones?
- 3 What are some challenges that you've overcome?



TAKE ACTION

- Begin by taking out a pen or some coloured markers and a piece of paper. Consider a time recently when you felt a strong or negative emotion and draw how that emotion felt inside your body. Share this drawing with your family. Sometimes a picture helps others to understand how our emotions feel on the inside.
- Next time you feel overwhelmed by a negative emotion, consider taking a walk outside. There's a certain type of magic that happens when we are outside. Whether it's a sunny day or a cloudy day, notice how fresh air makes you feel.
- Keep a page in your journal, or a note on your phone to write down all the different emotions you feel in a day. Use this list to remind yourself that emotions come and go like passing storms. If you're feeling a negative emotion, remember that it will pass.



Name it to tame it.

When it comes to dealing with strong or negative emotions, there is power in naming what you are experiencing. Even in a whirlwind or a fury, attempt to name the emotion that you are experiencing. You might say to yourself, "I am really uncomfortable" or "I am super frustrated."

This is the magic. The work of identifying an emotion, or naming it, actually helps us to disengage from it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- 1 Can you think of an example of a time when you've experienced a strong or negative emotion? How did you react?
- 2 Are there certain things that trigger a strong or negative emotion? What can you do to anticipate this reaction?
- 3 How do you cope with strong or negative emotions? How can you improve this?



TAKE ACTION

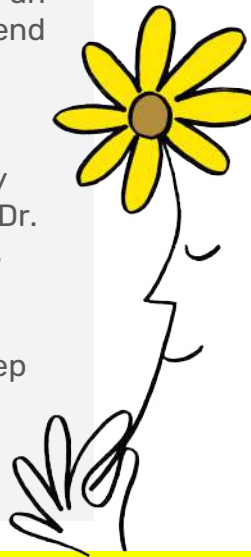
- As a household, brainstorm a list of emotions, positive and negative, that you've experienced in the past or present. Keep this list in a place where the whole family can see it next time you don't have the words to name what you're feeling, refer to this list so that you can name it!
- Think about a time recently when you felt a strong or negative emotion and consider your reaction. How might you react differently if it were to happen again in the future?

Self-Care 101

Think about how you would greet and treat an old friend. Now consider ways you can extend that same affection to yourself.

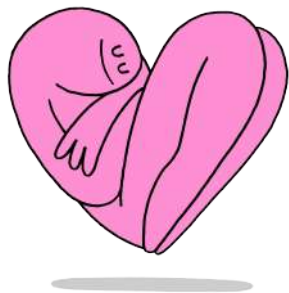
"The nurturing quality of self-compassion allows us to flourish, to appreciate the beauty and richness of life, even in hard times" says Dr. Kristen Neff, who has made the field her life's work.

Self-Care looks different to everyone, but keep some of these basics in mind: treat yourself with kindness, be open to the kindness of others, and make time for what you love!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What types of thoughts do you have when you make a mistake? What would you say to a loved one when they make a mistake? Should there be a difference?
- 2 How does feeling stressed or overwhelmed affect your day? What little things could you do to help yourself in those moments?
- 3 What positive words can you use to describe yourself? What positive words can family members use to describe you? Make a list of these so you can refer back to them whenever you need a boost!



TAKE ACTION

- Taking time for creativity - from coding to gardening, drama to art, to wherever your imagination takes you - creativity enhances well-being and is good for the brain.
- Identify activities that make you feel happy. Whether it's making a new recipe, hanging with your pet, doing a puzzle or doing yoga, find what makes you feel good!
- Know your support team! Make a list of your go-to people and safe places to be when you feel overwhelmed. As a household, talk about how you can be that support team for each other.



Relationships and Mindfulness



Have you ever talked to someone who made you feel like you were the most important thing to them at that time? It feels pretty good, right? That's how we make someone feel when we are mindfully listening and speaking to them.

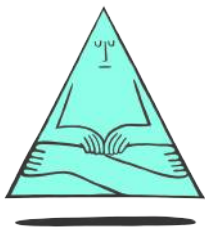
It can be easy to get distracted while someone's talking. Maybe we're busy thinking of what we're going to say next, or on our phones while they're talking to us. Try listening mindfully to what they're saying and showing them you're listening by looking at them and maybe nodding along.

Before you respond, ask yourself simple questions to check for mindful speaking: "Is it true?", "Is it necessary?", "Is it kind?". Doing a quick check like this can help us be careful of the words we choose.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How can you tell that someone is mindfully listening to you? How can you tell when they are not?
- 2 Have you ever said something that you immediately regretted? How can mindful speaking help prevent those moments?
- 3 How do you think mindful listening and speaking can strengthen your relationships?



TAKE ACTION

- Try this mindful listening exercise with the people in your household. Pretend you are a waiter taking their orders at a restaurant. After each order, repeat the order back before moving on to the next person. Be sure to focus on them and listen carefully. Once everyone has ordered, repeat the entire order to see how well you mindfully listened!
- This next week, make it your goal to mindfully listen to everyone you talk to. See if you notice a difference in the quality of your conversations and share back with your household.
- Think about your answer to discussion question #2. What was it about what you said that was regretful? Do a written reflection on that moment. If you could rewind and go back to that time, what would you have said instead?

You Got This

Resilience is trying our best even when things are difficult and navigating through adversity. We all experience challenges in our lives that come in all forms. While we often don't have control of those challenges, we have control over how we process and handle those challenges. In these times, we need to call on our inner resources- such as courage, self-compassion, and gratitude- and also our external resources, such as the people around us.

Identify the people you can rely on to help you in those times of adversity, and let those people know that you can be that person for them, too. Be that safe space for each other to talk about things that are difficult and offer support the best you can, even if that is just to listen. It's easier to tap into our own resilience superpowers when we know someone has our back!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What is a challenge you have experienced in your life that was difficult to try your best through? How did you get through it?
- 2 If someone came you you upset because they were struggling with the math you are working on right now, what steps would you take to try to help them boost their resilience?
- 3 Now imagine that a different person is upset because they are grieving the loss of a loved one. How should your approach with them be different? How should it be the same?



TAKE ACTION

- Think about discussion questions #2 and #3. Consider how you would want someone to be there for you in those two different difficult situations. Share those ideas with the members of your household so they can gain understanding of how they can be there for you when you need them.
- Don't let your failures define you! Failure is an inevitable part of life, but instead of running from it, we can learn from it! As a household, look up famous people in history that failed in their lives - JK Rowling, Michael Jordan, and Thomas Edison can start you off! Without failure, successful people, both famous and everyday, wouldn't be who they are today!
- Come up with your own internal Resilience Toolkit" for when things get tough. Things like memories of achievements, taking deep breaths, and telling yourself words such as "I can do this" or "Challenge accepted!"