



Mental Health Tool Kit



JUNE 2021

What is Mental Health and how can this tool kit be a resource for you?

Mental health refers to a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being. It's a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully,

and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Within this tool kit, you will find information on common mental health disorders and techniques to help support emotional regulation and positive outcomes.

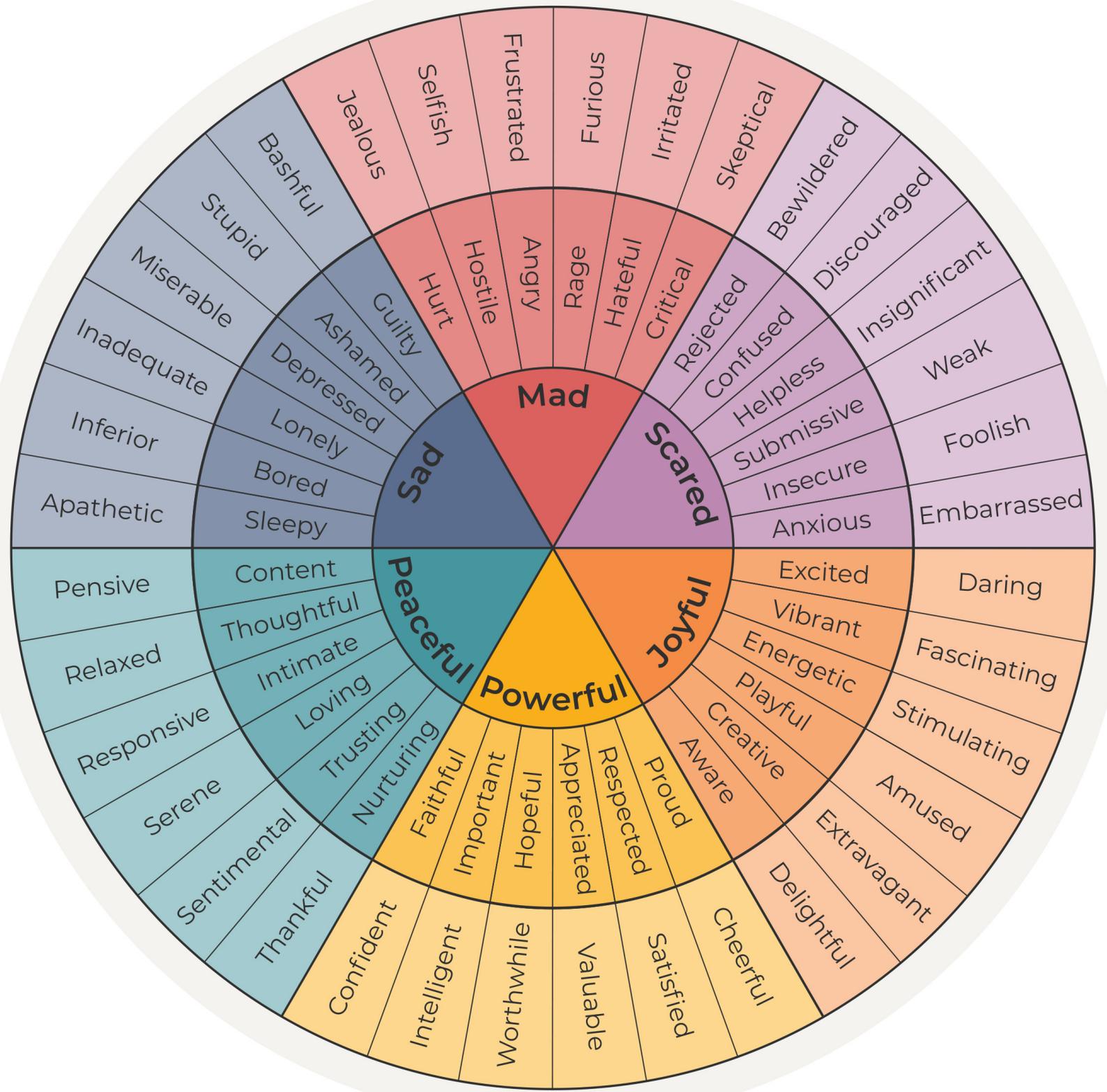


Personal Check-In

- Have I been getting quality sleep with regular bedtimes and getting up times?
- Have I been isolating myself from others?
- Do I have more worries or anxiety than usual?
- Have I lost interest in activities and pursuits that usually hold my attention?
- Have I felt more sad than happy lately?
- Do I feel at ease with myself and my surroundings?
- Do you feel that your life is appropriately balanced between work, fun, friends, family, self-care, exercise, and other meaningful pursuits?
- Do you have trouble concentrating?
- Have you been experiencing significant mood swings, low frustration tolerance, hypervigilance, crying, or self-harming thoughts?
- Are you overly fatigued or tired at the end of the day? How about at the end of the week?
- Has your appetite or eating habits changed in any way recently?

The Feeling Wheel

THE GOTTMAN INSTITUTE :: DEVELOPED BY DR. GLORIA WILCOX



Oftentimes we experience challenges in being able to name our emotional experience. Using a feeling chart like the one above can be helpful in describing our emotional state.



Anxiety

Have you ever experienced persistent worry or recall being fearful of aspects of everyday life? We all experience butterflies in our stomachs from time to time, but when we cannot move forward because we are overcome with worry or fear, we may be experiencing anxiety. All anxiety disorders have one thing in common: persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening. People typically experience one or more of the following symptoms:



Emotional symptoms:

- Feelings of apprehension or dread
- Feeling tense or jumpy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Anticipating the worst and being watchful for signs of danger

Physical symptoms:

- Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath
- Sweating, tremors and twitches
- Headaches, fatigue and insomnia
- Upset stomach, frequent urination or diarrhea

Behavioral symptoms:

- Avoidance/ Refusal/Escape/ Making Excuses
- Agitation/Aggression
- Crying
- Inability to remain calm

Challenging Anxious Thoughts

Just because something is possible does not mean it is probable. People with anxiety disorders are often consumed with the idea that something terrible will happen if they fail to act in a certain way. They become so overwhelmed by anxiety that they often do not take the time to realistically examine whether what they fear most is likely to come true. What if you apply the theory of probability to your anxiety? Probability is the likelihood an event will occur. Of course, it is always possible your fears may be warranted but is it probable? Most people with anxiety disorders imagine the worst outcome and act accordingly to prevent it.

But think about this: if the worst outcome can occur, it is equally possible for the best outcome to take place.

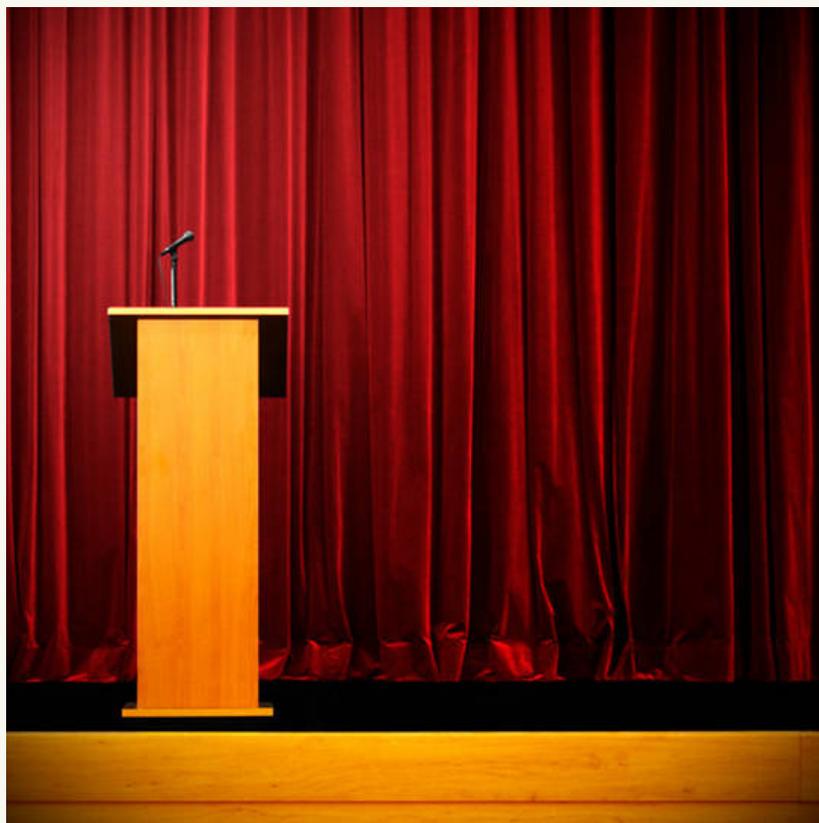
Exercise: Marc often became anxious when he had to present this project to the entire class. As a result, he would often avoid going to class on the days he had to present.

Let's explore:

Possible outcomes: I'll have to go to the bathroom in the middle of the presentation

Probability: Low

Gathering Evidence: This has never happened before, and I'll use the bathroom before I start. Next time you experience anxious thoughts, challenge yourself to explore possible outcomes, probability and gather evidence.





Depression

Depression, a widespread mental health disorder, can present different symptoms, depending on the person. For most, there may be life-changing events that impact how we feel. This includes loss, grief, extreme stress, financial difficulty, sickness.

Oftentimes we can alter our emotional state; however, for most people with a depressive disorder, their emotional state remains the same for 2 weeks or more and changes how they function day-to-day. Common symptoms include:

- Irritability
- Agitation
- Aggression
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of concentration
- Loss of energy
- Lack of interest in activities
- Hopelessness or guilty thoughts
- Changes in movement (less activity or agitation)
- Physical aches and pains
- Suicidal thoughts



*** If you or anyone you know are experiencing any self-harming or suicidal thoughts please contact 911 immediately***

To better understand how feelings of depression may affect you, take some time to complete the questionnaire below.

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?				
a. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Trouble falling/staying asleep, sleeping too much	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Feeling tired or having little energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Poor appetite or overeating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Feeling bad about yourself or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite; being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. If you checked off any problem on this questionnaire so far, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?				
	Not difficult at all	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Extremely difficult
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Should you identify the need for additional support, please contact our on-site Mental Health Clinicians Jessica Pollas jpollas@monroecollege.edu, and Nygera Pierson Mutis, nygera@monroecollege.edu. They are available for confidential individual counseling sessions.



Increasing Positive Feelings

Many people don't realize how much power they have over their emotions. When you are having a hard day, thinking about things that trigger your positive emotions can really help. Fill-out this worksheet to focus on positive thoughts, memories, and emotions. You can fill it out all at once or just a few questions at a time.

What is the one thing that always brings you joy?

Write down a time that you had a wonderful surprise.

What is something you did you are really proud about?

Write down a time when you achieved a goal because you wouldn't stop trying.

Name a person who always makes you feel confident.

What is something you do that always makes you feel energized.

Write down something that always makes you feel hopeful.

When you do feel most loving?

Name an activity that almost always makes you feel calm and focused.

Coping with Depression.

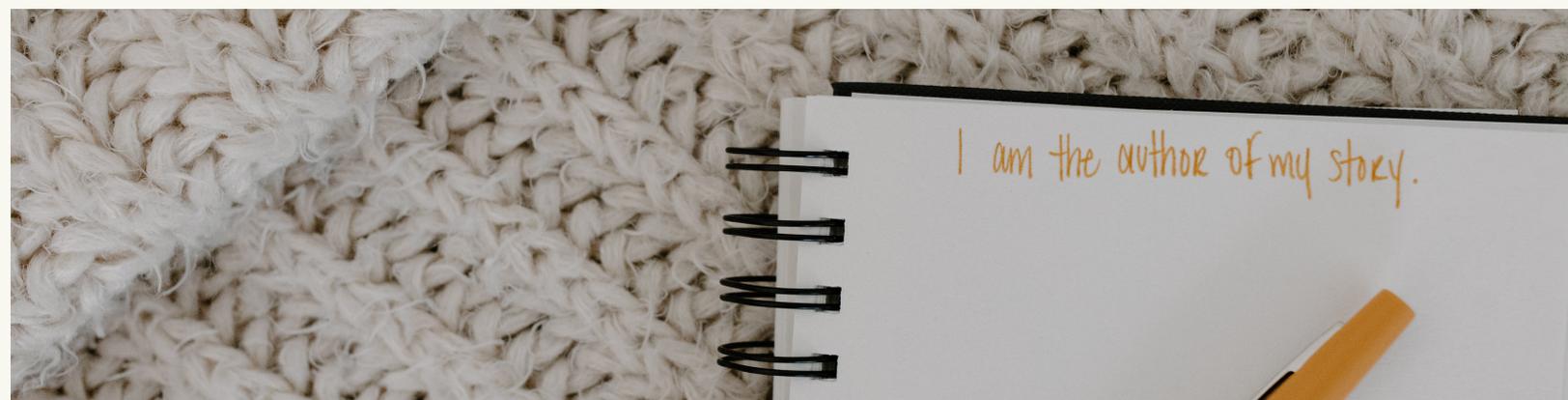
As a way to increase positive feelings and decrease the frequency and intensity of depressive symptoms, ask yourself the following questions above. Data supports the use of exercise, meditation, and proper nutrition in increasing positive feelings and overall wellness. Additionally, talk therapy is a helpful way to gain information on your depressive symptoms and coping skills.

The use of affirmations can be a powerful tool in highlighting your personal and emotional strengths as a way to overcome negative thinking patterns. Follow these four steps.

- Identify positive characteristics that you or others have used to describe you.
- Write them down.
- Place them in a place you will see daily.
- Say them out loud!

I am.....

Ambitious	Communicative	Energetic	Responsible
Analytical	Compassionate	Enthusiastic	Spontaneous
Appreciative	Confident	Fair	Thoughtful
Artistic	Considerate	Flexible	
Authentic	Creative	Generous	
Caring	Dedicated	Helpful	
Courageous	Determined	Honest	
Charming	Disciplined	Hopeful	
Creative	Educated	Intelligent	
Clever	Empathetic	Persevering	



Daily Gratitude

Objective

To turn thought outward and to feel grateful everyday.

To shift your perspective outward and broaden your view take time at the end of each day to write down three things you are grateful for, big or small. It could be a smile from a stranger, a call from a friend, a morning walk, finding a recipe, a compliment at work-whatever brightened your day.



Resources

If you or someone you love is seeking support NOW, within NYC you can speak with someone 24/7 through the use of NYC Well.

Call: 1-888-NYC-Well (1-888-692-9355)

Text: “Well” to 65173

Chat: nyc.gov/nycwell

If you or someone you know is in Crisis:

Crisis Prevention Emergency Assistance:

- Call 911.
- Go to a Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP).
- Go to the emergency room at your local hospital.

Hotlines:

Crisis Text Line:

New York State has partnered with Crisis Text Line, an anonymous texting service available 24/7. Starting a conversation is easy. **Text GOT5 to 741741.**

We hope this tool kit serves as a useful resource as each activity was designed to support personal reflection and growth as you continue on your journey and seek to prioritize your mental health and well being.



Successful Steps 2021

