



Crisis Text Line's Summer Mental Health Activities for Kids provides a range of resources to support your **children's mental well-being in engaging, simplistic and thoughtful ways**, emphasizing self-care and reducing the stigma around mental health during the summer break. The toolkit is designed to integrate effortlessly into your family's summer plans. Whether you're organizing a picnic, a beach day, a camping trip, or a backyard barbecue, these resources are crafted to complement your activities. Featuring interactive games and mindfulness exercises, each activity is intended to be both enjoyable and beneficial for mental health. By incorporating these tools into your summer routine, you create meaningful moments with your children while nurturing their mental well-being in a natural and positive way. Enhance your summer with this toolkit, fostering stronger family connections and making a lasting impact on your children's well-being.

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para conectarte con un consejero voluntario



volunteer counselor

## Summer Mental Health Worksheets

These easy and engaging activities can help foster a safe and supportive space where children can learn about themselves and develop valuable strategies when dealing with isolation, loneliness and other mental health challenges during the summer break. Parents often have a desire for their children to be resilient, strong, and well-resourced – doing these activities are a great way for parents to help their kids build skills to help them navigate life's biggest challenges. These activities can be helpful to parents, too, as coping skills are necessary for everyone's mental health.

How to use:

## Writing and drawing activities

**Explain the purpose** of the activity. Writing and drawing can help your child express their emotions and communication skills, develop and strengthen coping strategies, and participate in self-reflection.

**Encourage your child** to think about the emotions or ideas they want to convey through this activity. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers in art – foster a supportive and nonjudgmental atmosphere.

**Provide inspiration** to spark creativity and imagination. Share examples of artwork that depict various emotions, or show them gratitude journals, share stories or a self-portrait collage that centers on navigating challenges.

**Set up the workspace** or an environment that ensures your child has access to the necessary material, like crayons and markers. Head outside to enjoy the outdoors during the activity – soak up the sun and create a space to allow them to be creative and expressive.



**Prompt your child to discuss** their artwork by creating an open dialogue so your child feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings behind their creations.T

Celebrate and showcase opportunities for your child to display their artwork, whether through a gallery wall at home, their room, or a spot on the fridge.

sample

Write 5 words below that inspire you and read them to yourself quietly.

## Visualize 5 of your hopes and dreams and write them down in detail below.

## Close your eyes and imagine one of your goals.

Dive into this mental image and notice the feelings that arise. Using the space below, map out how you will achieve this goal.

## Write 5 words below that inspire you and read them to yourself quietly.

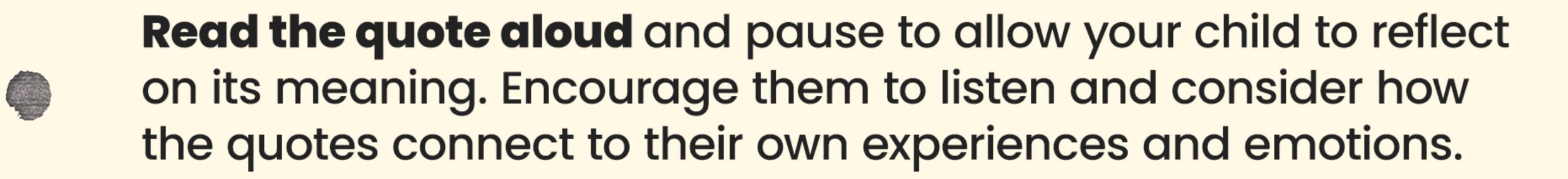
## Reflect on a time you were happy and allow yourself to relive that joy.

Write down what was special.



### Quotes

**Explain the purpose** of the activity and that you will be reading and discussing inspirational quotes related to feelings and emotions and emphasizing the value of self-expression and the importance of sharing our emotions in a thoughtful way.





Use open-ended questions in a discussion about the quotes such as "What does this quote mean to you?" or "How does it make you feel?". Foster an inclusive and respectful environment, allowing your child to share their own thoughts and interpretations.

Reinforce positive messages by emphasizing the importance of kindness, self-confidence, and the ability to ask for help when needed. Convey the message that it's okay to experience a range of emotions and that seeking support is a sign of strength.



Summarize the key messages from the quotes and the discussion. Encourage your child to carry the positive messages with them. Here are some ideas: stick the messages on the bathroom mirror, or keep them in a visible place where you can share quotes and affirmations together.

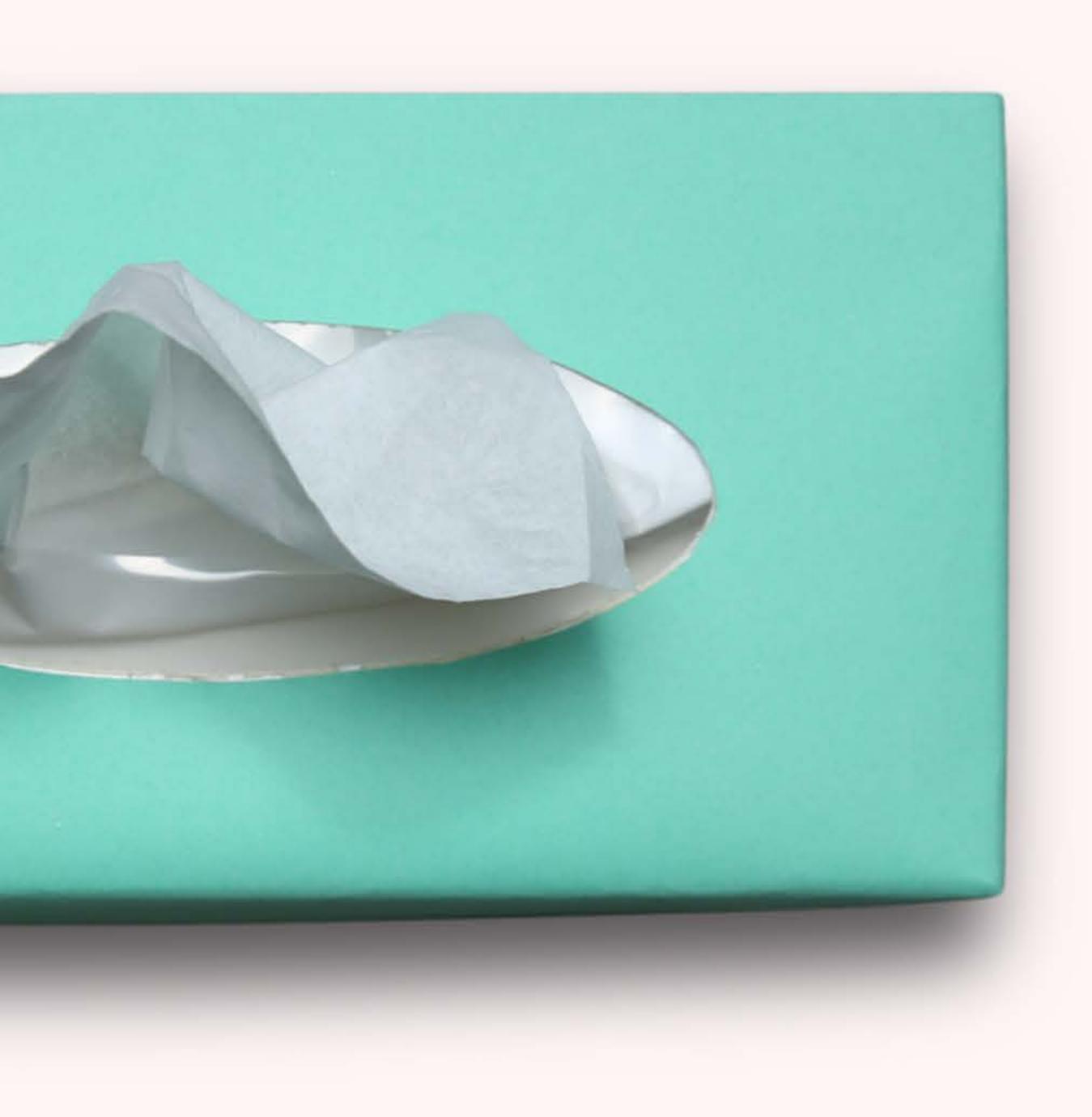
Sample

24 Don't be afraid to cry. It will free your mind of sorrowful thoughts.

-Hopi proverb

# Don't be afraid to cry. It will free your mind of sorrowful thoughts.

-Hopi proverb





Your imperfections make you beautiful, they make you who you are. So just be yourself, love yourself for who you are and just keep going.

-Demi Lovato





## 44 Everything negative pressure, challenges is all an opportunity for me to rise.

-Kobe Bryant





You have to find support.
Find someone you can talk
to. It doesn't have to be
a therapist only but your
mother, a friend or
someone else.

-Priyanka Chopra Jonas



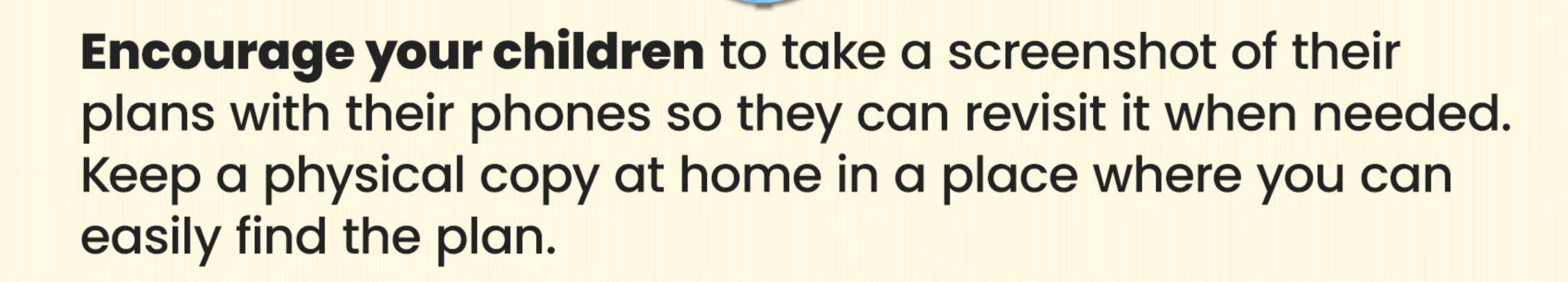
How to use:

## Mental health

At one point or another, you or your children may need some tools to cope with difficult emotions. The best way to prepare yourself and others is to have a plan ready before you need it.



**Explain the purpose** and importance of having a mental health plan as a tool for helping your children stay safe and seek appropriate support during times of feeling just completely stressed out.





## Make a health mental health plan



Need to vent? Start a chat!

When I feel stressed, here are three things I can do to feel more calm:	
	—
	- —

Three people I can reach out to if I'm struggling:

Three things I do for self care that often make me feel better:

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Text	SUMME	Rto	74174	H 
		_ — — — —		

## Make a mental health plan



When I feel stressed, here are three things I can do to feel more calm:	Three people I can reach out to if I'm struggling:
Three things I do for self care that often make me feel better:	Resources I can turn to if I need support:
	Text SUMMER to 741741

Your mental health is important. And, at one point or another, you and your friends may need some tools to cope with difficult emotions. The best way to prepare yourself is to have a plan before you need it.

#### How to use

## Coping techniques breakdown

**Explain the purpose** of this resource, emphasizing the importance of understanding and developing coping skills for dealing with difficult emotions and mental health challenges. Coping skills are strategies and techniques that individuals use to manage stress and navigate challenging situations effectively.

Provide relatable examples on when and how to use these techniques, such as "ways to help us feel better when we're upset or facing something difficult."



**Start a brief discussion** about different emotions and situations that may require children to use coping techniques.

**Highlight** that there are no right or wrong answers, and that the goal is to explore and discover what works best for each individual.

Address support and resources by reassuring your children that they can talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns or need additional support. They can also reach out to Crisis Text Line by texting SUMMER to 741741 for free, 24/7, and confidential emotional support or through our webchat service.

### Pro Tip

Play our Summer Vibes Music
Playlist in the background while
your children work on some of
the activities. Head outside to
enjoy the summer air, and remind
your children that it's okay to
seek help and that learning about
mental health is an important
part of growing up.



#### sample

#### Coping Techniques Breakdown



Need to vent? Scan to chat

#### Take time to rest

Allowing yourself to rest physically and mentally will help you reset and clear your mind.

#### Seek mental health support

Need additional support? Consider reaching out to <u>Crisis Text Line</u> by texting **SUMMER** to **741741** or contacting mental health professionals in your area.

#### **Create art**

Practice a hobby or try something new. These activities can help with feelings of stress and burnout and allow you to be present in the moment.

#### Listen to music

Pick an upbeat tune to feel energized or go for that slower beat for a soothing and relaxing effect on your mind and body.

### Coping Techniques Breakdown



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Quality time with your core circle is key. Find a moment to meet with them, talk, text or joke together. Having a support system is a game changer!

#### Tune into TV, video, or podcasts

Your favorite show can be a healthy temporary coping skill to lower anxiety. Some shows offer new perspectives and learning opportunities.

#### Let's get physical

Choose an activity that best suits you. Exercise can help boost your mood, decrease anxiety and depression and improve sleep quality.

#### Play with pets

It helps diminish feelings of loneliness and depression. If you don't have pets, visit a nearby shelter and show those little critters some love!

#### Take it slow with meditation

Doing this can provide a sense of calm, balance and relaxation. Find a quiet place to connect with yourself and your senses.

#### Get lost in a good book

It'll help relax and distract your mind, and can significantly help decrease your stress.

For more resources, visit https://www.crisistextline.org/resources

### Poster

Help us spread awareness and empower children to seek assistance by bringing our mental health posters to your child's summer camp for example. Our posters feature a question to prompt children to check in with themselves and provide Crisis Text Line as a resource for your child to use when needing mental health support by texting **SUMMER** to **741741** or using our webchat service by scanning the QR code.

How to use:

Posters in your community

Promoting Awareness: Displaying mental health posters in prominent areas, such as local businesses, libraries, and other community gathering areas, can help raise awareness and normalize discussions about mental well-being. You and your children could also download the poster and send it to neighbors, friends and family via email or text. Spread the word!

**Providing Information:** Our posters offer information about Crisis Text Line as a mental health resource and easy ways to get in touch with our live trained volunteer counselors.

Encouraging a Supportive Environment: By displaying and sharing these mental health posters, parents can create an inclusive and supportive environment that validates and prioritizes the mental well-being of all children.

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si necesitas hablar con alguien.



POV: You found a judgment free zone where you can vent



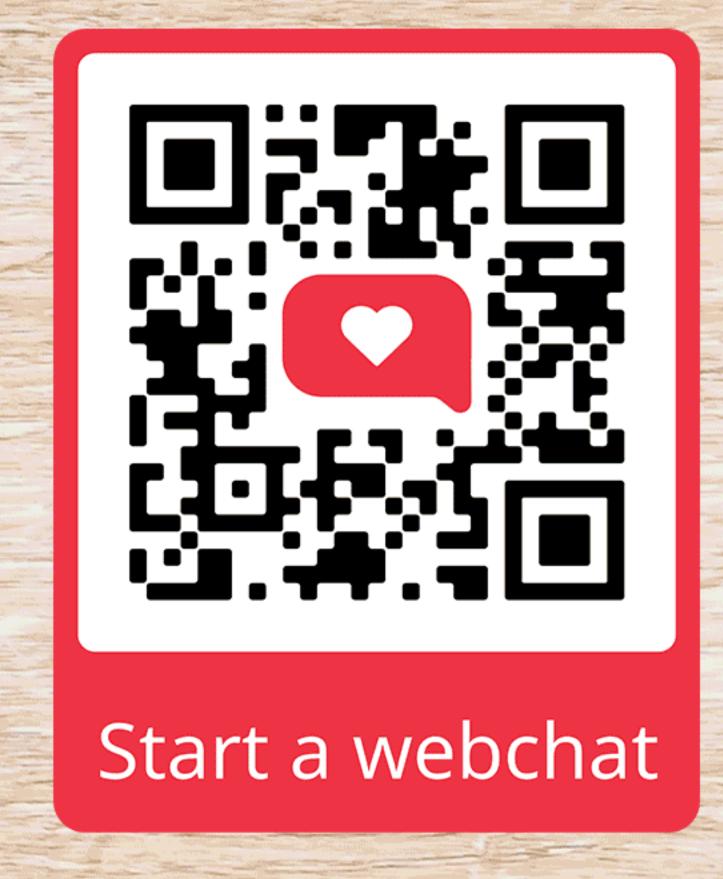
to reach a volunteer counselor.







to reach a volunteer counselor.



Free - 24/7 - Confidential





si necesitas hablar con alguien.



Gratis, 24/7 y confidencial

### Stickers

Positive images, turned into stickers, are a great way to remind children about self-love and positive affirmations. Stickers are a versatile and fun tool to engage children in various activities.

Here are some creative ways to use stickers to capture your children's interest and support their mental well-being:

How to use:



Use stickers with motivational quotes or affirmations for your child to stick where they want and **create reminders for themselves wherever they go**.



Your child can stick their new stickers on their phones, laptoops, water bottles, or on their travel gear. Colorful stickers are a creative and stylish way to express themselves.



Your child can use these stickers **for gifts, or to spruce up their social media and photography** by using them as props for their posts and pictures.



Challenge your child to **create visual stories or comic strips** using stickers as the main characters or props. This activity not only sparks creativity but also helps improve story telling skills and visual literacy.



**Explain the word "empathy" to your child**: The ability to be aware of the feelings of other people and put yourself in their shoes to try to understand their thoughts and emotions.



### What you need



- 1. Print the sticker sheet on adhesive paper or regular paper, depending on whether you prefer the stickers to be peeled and stuck or simply cut out and glued. Gather any additional supplies such as scissors, markers, and a suitable surface for sticking the stickers.
- 2. If you have a die-cutting or card machine, you can use it to print and cut the stickers for your children.

#### Sticker Mule Template

6 x 7



#### To use with die-cut machines

(Cricut, AccuCut, Silhouette Portrait, Gemini)

Download individual stickers and more at

Crisistextline741741.com/SummerStickers

## Summer Vibes Music Playlist

Our <u>Summer Vibes Music Playlist</u> adds a shot of energy and positivity to your summer plans. Music is a great tool to promote strong mental health due to its ability to affect emotions, thoughts, and physiological responses.

Listening to music is the most common technique that allows our texters to go from a hot moment to a cool calm.

How to use:

Music at home, in the car, or during activities

Music can enhance the environment you and your children are in. Music has numerous benefits for children's mental health, offering a variety of ways to improve their emotional and psychological well-being. Engaging children with music can be both fun and educational, helping to foster a love for music while supporting their development and mental health.

Use the playlist to set the mood for a variety of activities – like going for a drive, coloring at home, or while spending time outdoors. The Summer Vies Music Playlist will create a fun and uplifting atmosphere that you and your kids can enjoy together.



Use the playlist as a prompt for interactive listening activities, such as identifying musical elements like tempo, rhythm, melody, and dynamics. Children can also analyze the song lyrics to see what resonates with them.

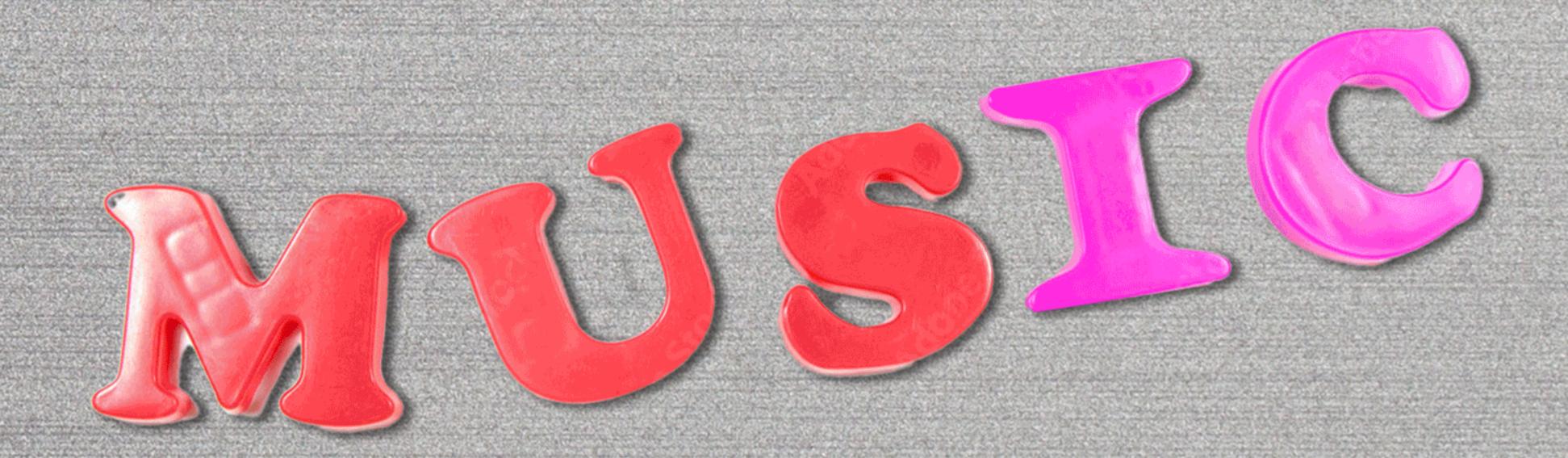


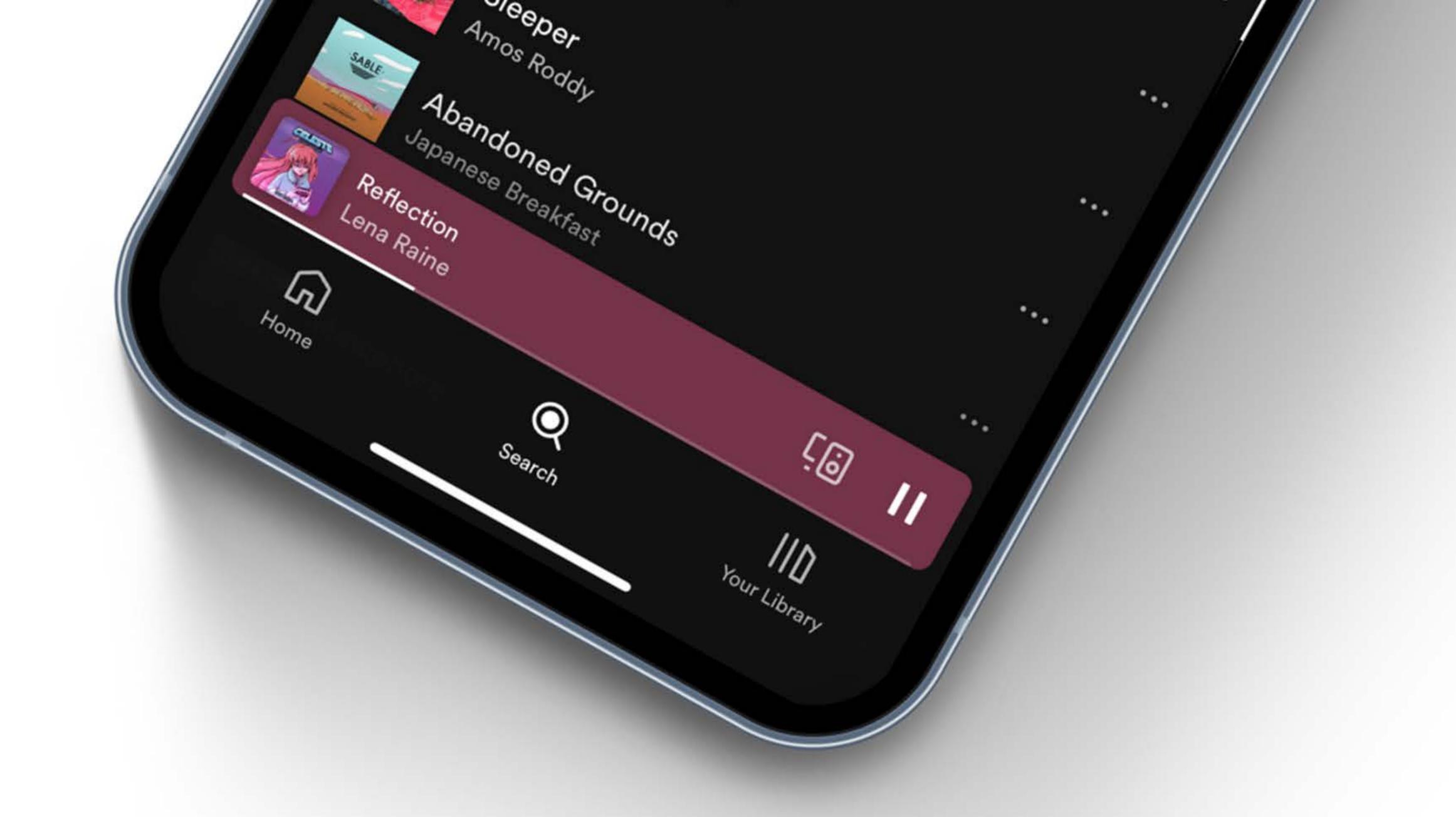
Combine the playlist with physical activities, such as dancing or playing sports.



Incorporate The Summer Vibes Music Playlist into storytime by using the songs to tell a story. Encourage children to make up their own stories and set them to music.







## Listen to our Summer Vibes Music Playlist

https://crisistextline741741.com/SummerVibes



Pro Tip

Music is a powerful tool that

can positively impact children's

mental health by enhancing

emotional expression, reducing

emotional expression, reducing

stress, building self-esteem,

stress, building self-esteem,

nurturing creativity, providing

nurturing creativity, providing

routine, and more. Listen to The

routine, and more. Listen to with

Yibes Music Playlist with

your child today!

## Coloring Sheets

Coloring is a fun and easy activity that promotes mindfulness for children. Over 1 in 10 texters from our own research mentioned arts and crafts as helpful ways to cope with difficult emotions. Young people in crisis also identified that engaging in visual arts is a resource needed to help them cope.

How to Use:

Coloring sheets at home

#### How does it work?

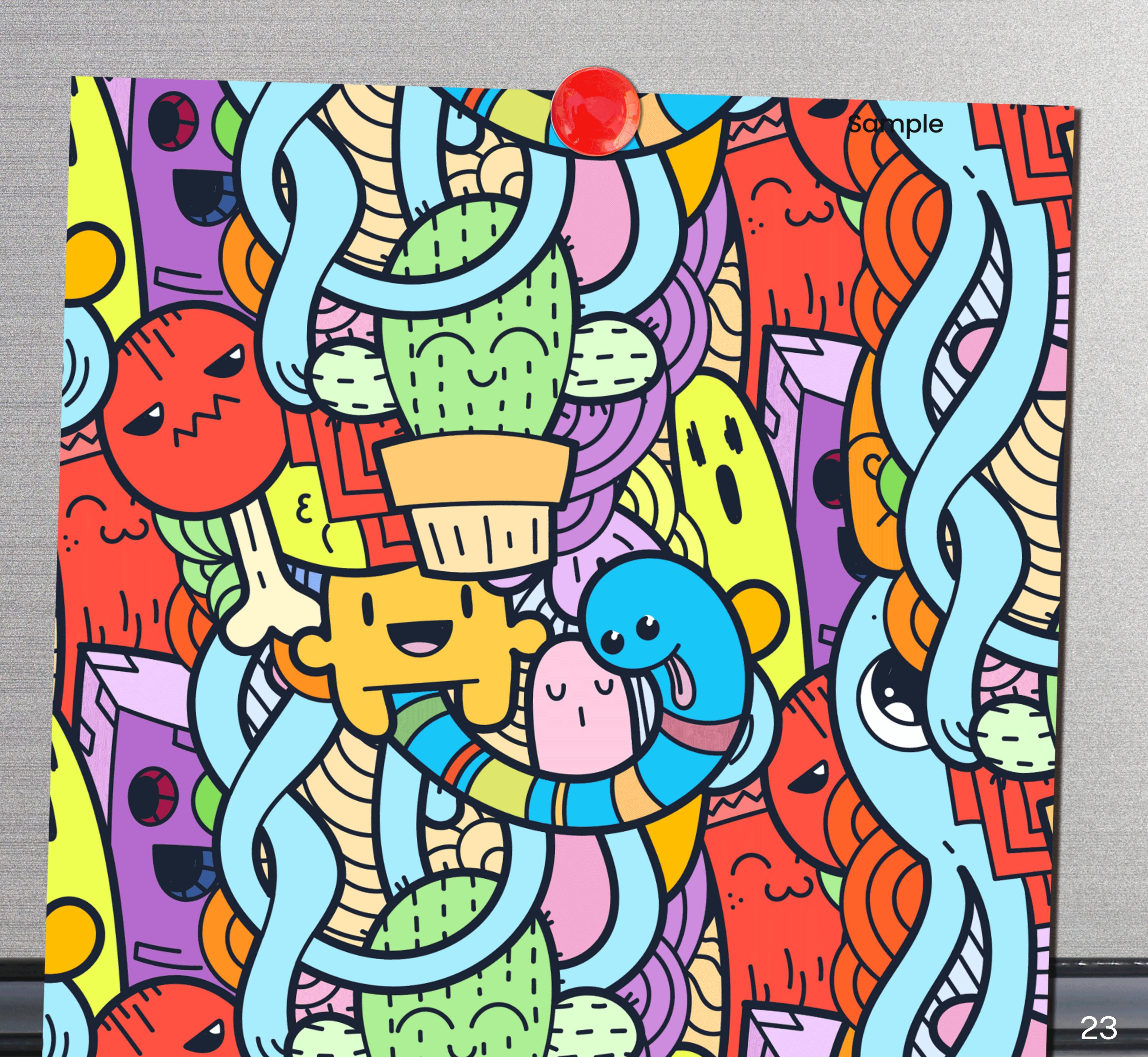
As children concentrate on selecting colors and maintaining precision, their attention is solely absorbed in that specific moment. This allows them to tune out the distractions and dedicate their mind to experiencing the movements, sensations, and emotions of the present moment.

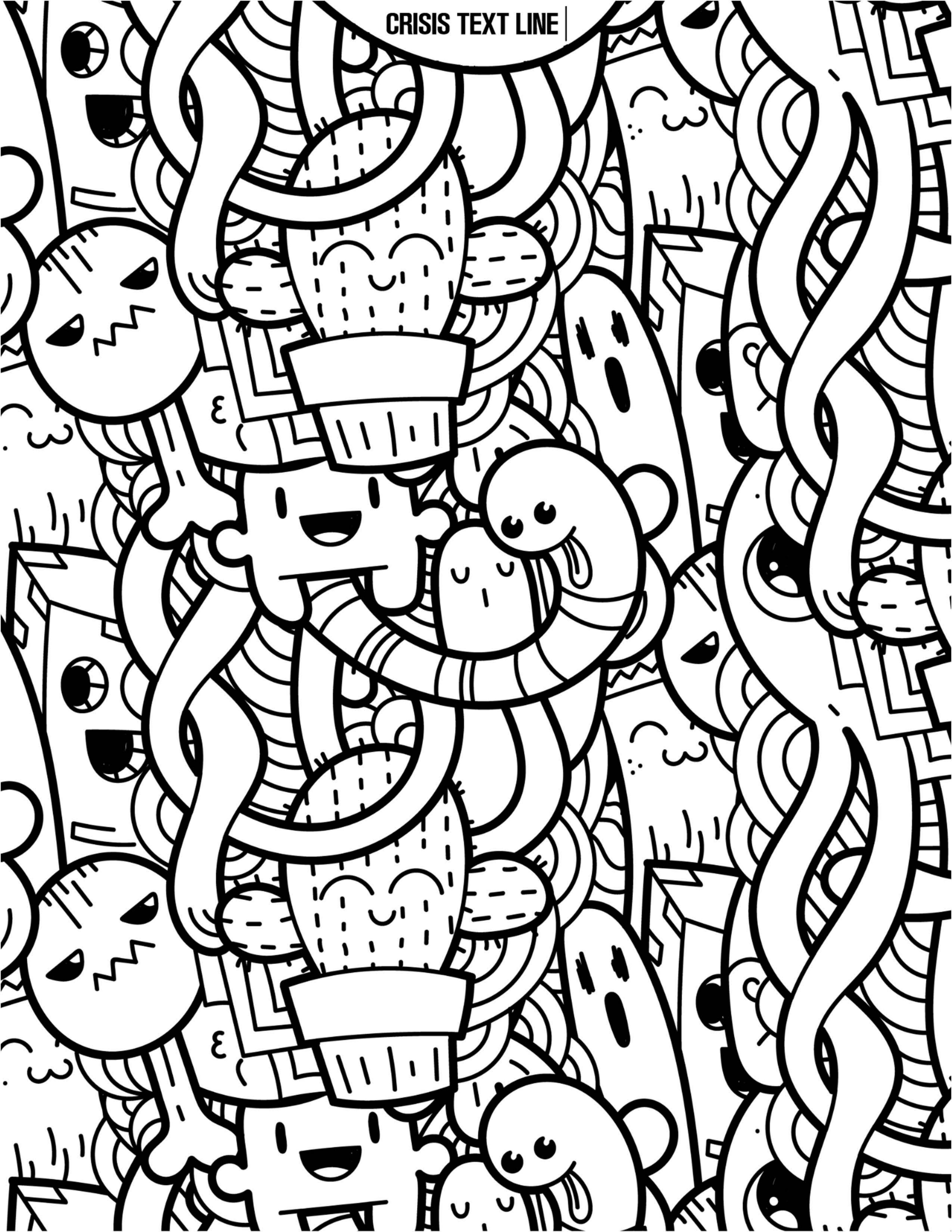
#### How to use this page?

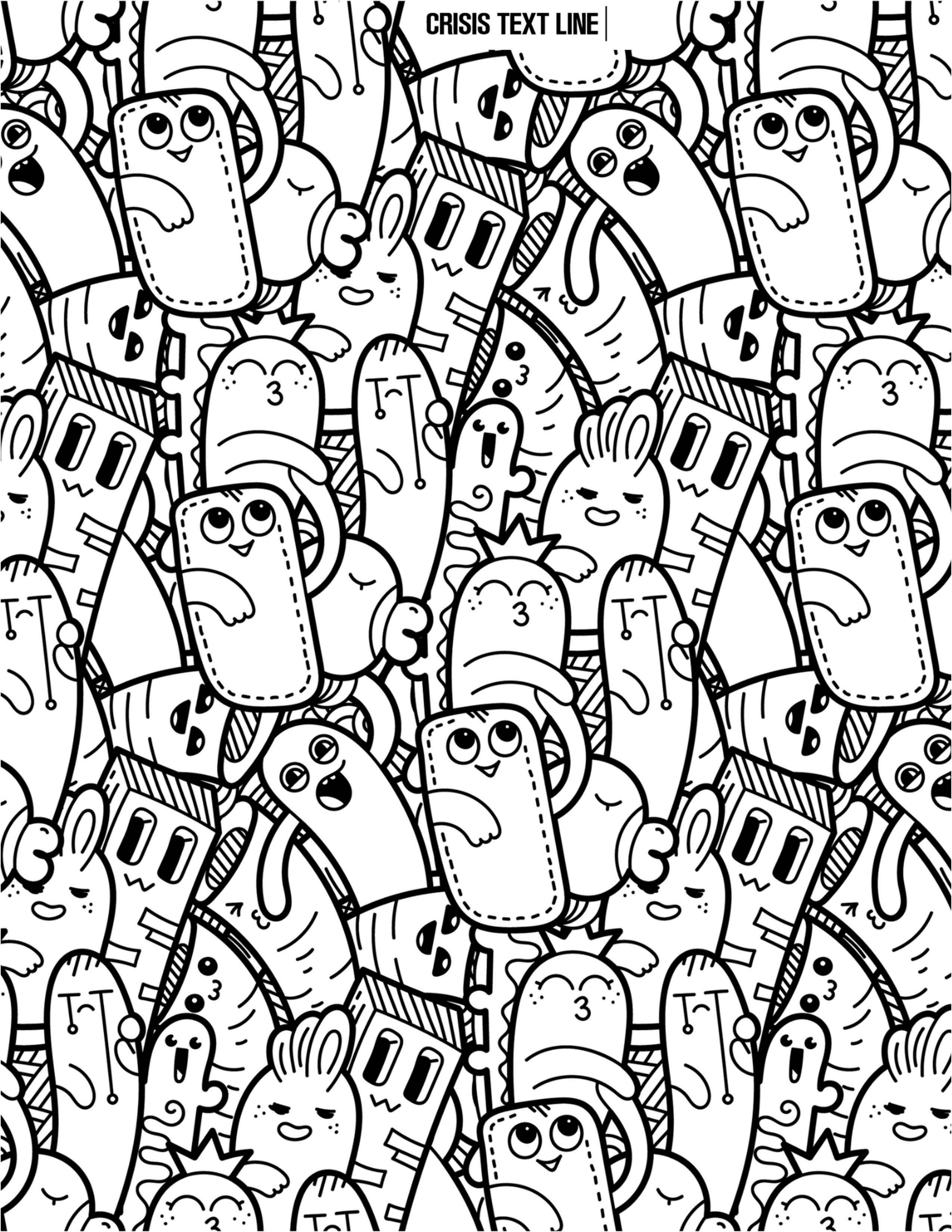
You could dedicate a special time outdoors, or in your favorite place at home for you and your child to do this activity together. Explain how this relates to their mental health and remind them that it's ok if their minds wonder. All they have to do is refocus on the activity.

## What you need

- 1. A printer and paper.
- 2. Crayons, markers or colored pencils. You could also use water colors, paint, and brushes.







## How to Talk to Your Children About Mental Health

Parents and caregivers often find it challenging to discuss mental health with their children for various reasons. Pre-teens and teens may fear being misunderstood or judged, worry about causing their parents distress, or feel pressure to meet their parents' expectations. Additionally, your children might struggle to find the right words to express their emotions or may be uncertain about how their parents will react. The fear of being stigmatized or invalidated can also contribute to the difficulty of opening up about mental health with adults.

How to use:

Tip sheets at home

**Start by reading the** "How to Talk to Your Children About Mental Health This Summer" worksheet, reviewing its purpose and finding ways to help your children feel more comfortable sharing their feelings about mental health with you.

Try some of these tips with your children. After reviewing this tip sheet, try some of the suggested conversation starters with your children.

**Normalize Emotions**. Reassure your children that it's perfectly fine for them to feel their feelings and that it's also okay to be open and talk about them with you or other adults they trust.

**Follow-Up Support**. Let your children know that you're there for them and be prepared to offer support and guidance to children who may require additional assistance in how to start a conversation about mental health.

## How to talk to your Children about mental health

Take some time this summer to connect with your children — get to know them, and don't be afraid to talk about the important things, like their mental health. By approaching the topic of mental health with empathy, understanding, and openness, parents can create a supportive environment where their children feel comfortable seeking help. Check out these tips and talking points to help connect with your child this summer:

#### What to do

- Express concern and listen first
- \* Create a safe and supportive environment
- · Reassure and validate their feelings
- Normalize mental health conversations
- Help them identify triggers or cause of stress
- Encourage them to relax go for a walk together, do breathing exercises, listen to music, or practice grounding exercises
- Respect privacy

#### What not to do

- Take over the conversation
- Force confrontation
- \* Share your own personal story about a similar feeling or situation
- Normalize mental health conversations
- Pressure students to share where they might not feel comfortable
- Get frustrated or angry with the student who is going through a difficult moment
- Use stigmatizing language

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- Respect privacy
- Follow up
- Encourage them to seek help (Text SUMMER to 741741 to connect with a live counselor)

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- Take over the conversation
- Force confrontation
- Share your own personal story about a similar feeling or situation
- Normalize mental health conversations
- Pressure students to share where they might not feel comfortable
- Get frustrated or angry with the student who is going through a difficult moment
- Use stigmatizing language
- Generalize what the student is going through
- Expect or force sudden or immediate change in their behavior
- Suggest solutions if you're not wellinformed about their situation

#### How to get started

- Open up the conversation by asking open-ended questions you could ask,
   "What does mental health mean to you?" or "How do you cope with stress?"
- Instead of saying "Stop overthinking" or "Be present" try saying "I can tell you're having a hard time" or "I'm here to help you get through this"
- Instead of saying "Calm down" or "It's all in your head" try validating their feelings by saying "I'm here for you" or "I'm here to listen if you want to talk" or "I'll stay with you if you'd like"

## Affirmation Dice

Affirmation Dice are a fun way to teach and practice positive affirmations and coping skills with your child. Developing strong positive thinking and self-talk skills can be an effective coping strategy for a number of mental health challenges, including anxiety, anger, depression, and more.

How to use:

Affirmation dice at home

**Explain what positive affirmations are** and why they're important. Affirmations are statements we repeat to ourselves to cultivate positive beliefs about ourselves and our abilities.

**Children choose** positive affirmations or thoughts and either write or draw them on the different faces of the die.

You and your child can choose to do **one roll a day** for a daily affirmation, **or roll three times** for the top three and repeat them throughout the day.

## What you need

- 1. A printer and paper.
- 2. Glue or tape.
- 3. Crayons, markers or colored pencils.

