



A-Z
OF
LEARNER
WELLNESS

presented by





This curriculum has been developed to nurture Active, Balanced and Confident learners by sharing tools for holistic health. Holistic health recognises that there are multiple dimensions of wellness: physical, mental, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual. They are interconnected.

To be well, we need to pay attention to both our inner and outer worlds. We encourage children to pay attention to their inner landscape. We have found that very often, adults have not been taught or encouraged to nurture their inner world, and they fail to develop healthy coping mechanisms. These simple tools teach learners how to create healthy habits that can be integrated into their everyday life. The best way to protect learners is to teach them a strong sense of self that they can draw on when challenges arise.

Everyone can benefit from these simple and fun tools. We encourage caregivers to partake in the activities with the learners. This is a holistic approach. Children also learn better when they see activities and behaviour modelled for them. We encourage you and the children to do your best, remembering that your best might be different every day.

Designed and produced by:



presented by





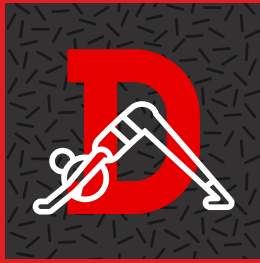
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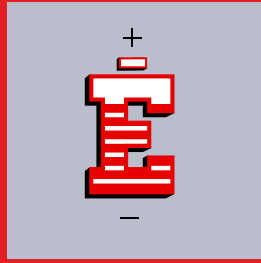
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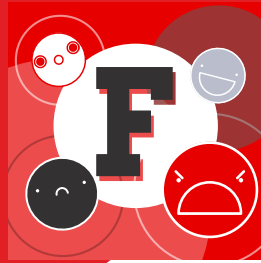
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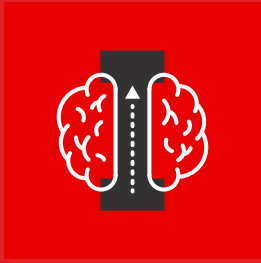
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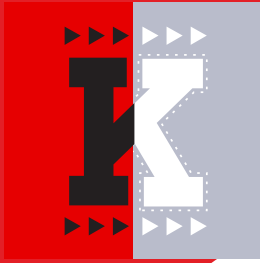
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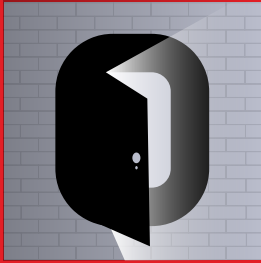
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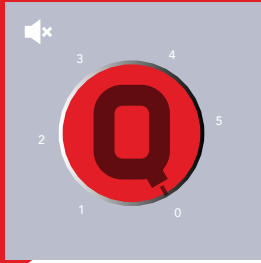
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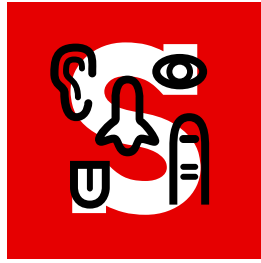
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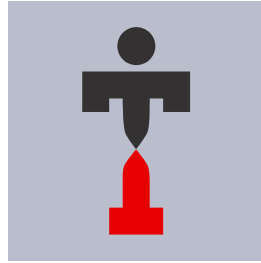
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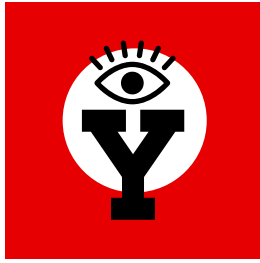
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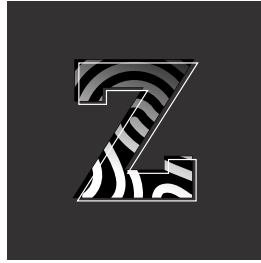
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ACTION + AWARENESS

ACTION + AWARENESS

A

LESSON

Self-awareness is a building block for wellness.

When you are feeling stuck, there is always something you can do! Sometimes, you need to move your body to shift your energy, sometimes you need to change your environment, and other times you just need to pause and take a deep breath.

Over time, you can build awareness that will enable you to understand how to give yourself what you need.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner to identify 5 strengths and 5 weaknesses (or challenges). There are a range of strengths, so think broadly about this topic beyond performance at school.

Different types of strengths include: **character strengths** (eg. honest or trustworthy, caring, generous, independent), **social strengths** (eg. a good listener, asks for help when needed, makes an effort with friends), **language strength** (eg. uses words to express needs & wants), **creative strength** (eg. artistic, good imagination), and other strengths like taking care of animals, or entertaining people with jokes and humour.

This activity serves as an opportunity to discuss balance, because everybody is good at some things but may struggle with others, and that is ok!

As a caregiver, doing this activity can help you gain some insight into how to support the learner and what activities will be particularly beneficial for them.



BREATH

BREATH IS YOUR BESTIE

B

LESSON

Your breath is always there for you. Whether you are at home or at school, you can rely on your breath to give you energy or calm you down. Breath work can support a learner to deal with anger, anxiety or frustration.

ACTIVITY

Let's try out a few different breath exercises! Choose the one you like the most, and keep practicing it:

The Balloon Breath:

1. Breathe in, filling your belly up like a balloon while you inhale.
2. Breathe out, shrinking your belly as you exhale.

The Flower Breath:

1. Imagine you are smelling a flower's scent.
2. Take a long breath in through your nose.
3. Breathe out through your mouth.

The Bee Breath:

1. Breathe in through your nose.
2. Breathe out through your nose.
3. When you breathe out, make a buzzing or humming sound, as if you are a bee.

The Snake Breath:

1. Inhale slowly through the nose.
2. Breathe out the mouth through the teeth with a long, slow hissing sound.

Blow Out the Candle:

1. Imagine a birthday cake is in front of you and it's full of candles.
2. Take in a deep breath in through the nose.
3. Breathe out through the mouth and pretend you're blowing out the candle.



CREATIVITY

C

LESSON

We are all naturally creative - it is part of human nature. Children are more connected with their creativity because they give themselves permission to be. They are in touch with their inner voice and instinctively trust themselves.

It is important to encourage creativity because it is a form of self-expression. It is also a way that children communicate their emotions and feelings.

ACTIVITY

Create something new using something old. Gather toilet paper rolls, old cartons and boxes, even old fabric. Caregivers can also use their imagination here or allow the learner to explore their home and find items. The learner can learn how to repurpose and recycle. They can also learn that things have value at different stages, not only when they are brand new.

For the caregiver: Join the learner, and give yourself permission to connect with your creativity through craft.

DOWNWARD DOG

LESSON

Physical health supports mental and emotional wellness. Yoga postures promote wellness in the body and the mind. We are going to learn our first yoga posture!

This posture removes tiredness and refreshes the brain. It will take practice to build strength to stay up for 30 seconds to a minute!

ACTIVITY

Have you ever seen a dog stretching?

We are going to copy this pose with our own body, and turn ourselves into a triangle.

How to do the Downward Dog pose:

1. Start on all fours with your hands placed directly under your shoulders, and your knees hip-width apart.
2. Let your palms rest flat on the ground, with your fingers outstretched on the floor.
3. Pushing into your hands and toes, raise your buttocks high into the air, forming a V-shape with your body.
4. Straighten your arms and legs, opening up your shoulders.
5. Move your head towards your legs, keeping your hips elevated.

Enjoy being upside down and changing your view!



DOWNWARD DOG



EMPOWER

EMPOWER

E

LESSON

What we believe about ourselves impacts our sense of personal power. Some of our beliefs are formed by what we repeatedly think.

Affirmations are words that we repeatedly say to form new beliefs. They empower us to embrace life. The following affirmations are phrases that will connect learners with their personal power and support them to build their self-esteem.

These phrases can be repeated at any time, and it is helpful to include them as part of a daily routine so that the beliefs become second nature. If these affirmations are coordinated with hand gestures, they are reinforced through a connection with the body.

ACTIVITY

Say the following affirmations aloud:

- I AM SO STRONG**
- I AM SO BRAVE**
- I TRY MY BEST**

As the learner repeats each word, they can connect their thumb with a different finger. Follow the example below:

- I - thumb touches pointer finger**
- AM - thumb touches middle finger**
- SO - thumb touches ring finger**
- STRONG - thumb touches pinkie finger**



FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

LESSON

Children sometimes suffer from big emotions and situations that are overwhelming. It is important that children learn how to identify and express their feelings in an appropriate manner.

Children who are able to express their feelings are less likely to have meltdowns and temper tantrums. They also have an easier time making friends and getting along with others.

There are 4 basic types of feelings that you can teach the learner to identify and communicate:

SAD
MAD
GLAD
SCARED

ACTIVITY

Start by making a card or simple chart that displays each of the above feelings, so that we can explore them. This chart can be as simple as 4 emojis. The learner is invited to explore each feeling by **filling in the blanks**:

- 1a. When I am sad, it feels like ___
- 1b. ___ makes me sad
- 2a. When I am glad it feels like ___
- 2b. ___ makes me glad
- 3a. When I am mad it feels like ___
- 3b. ___ makes me mad
- 4a. When I am scared it feels like ___
- 4b. ___ makes me scared



GRATITUDE

LESSON

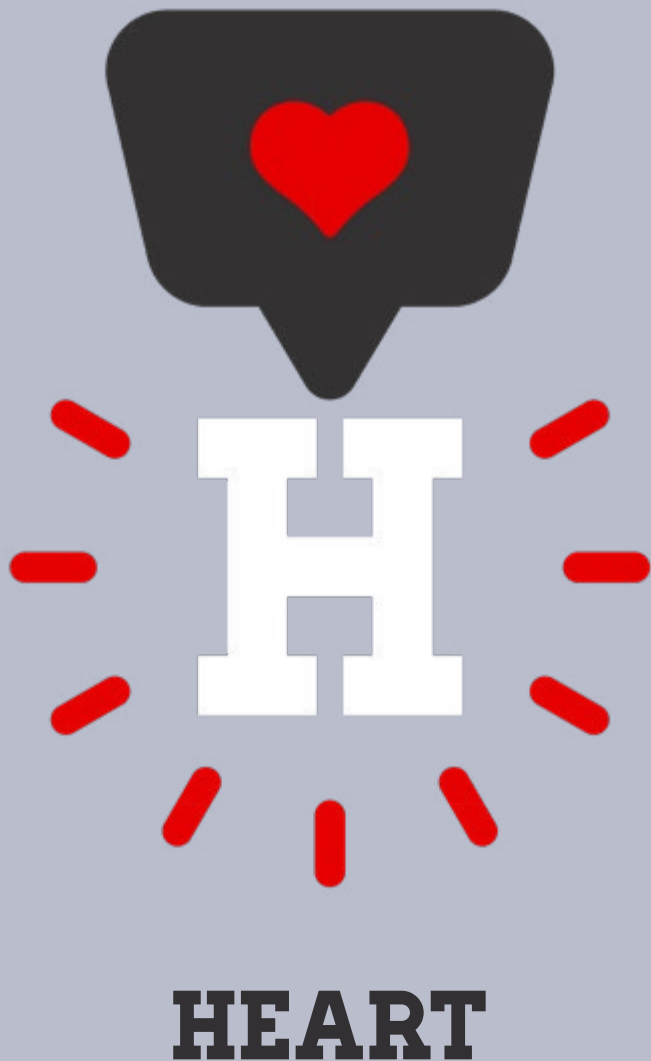
Gratitude is an attitude of thankfulness. It is the simple and profound act of appreciation; of saying Thank You. It is a mindset that encourages optimism and improves outlook.

It's easy to be grateful when things are going your way. When they are not, gratitude can be the last thing on your mind. Some days, the only thing you will feel grateful for is that the day is over. This is why it is important to establish it as a practice, so that you can train your mind to tune into abundance and see past your lack. Over time, it becomes a habit and you notice that you attract more of the things that you are grateful for into your life.

When you express appreciation with your mind as well as your heart, gratitude has the power to transform situations into enough; whether it's a tiny thing or a big thing. The feelings and thoughts of not having enough, not being enough and not doing enough create dis-ease within. Recognising abundance counters this, and creates wellness.

ACTIVITY

Today and for the whole week, write down **3 things that you are grateful for every day.**



HEART

LESSON

The physical health of our heart is very important to sustain the functions of the body. We need to support our heart, so that it can pump the blood around our body and deliver oxygen to the cells. Exercise supports heart health.

The heart is also a symbol of love. Giving and receiving love supports human wellbeing. When we feel sad or anxious or are grieving, it is difficult to connect with feelings of love. We can feel as if our heart has contracted and our chest feels tight. We can encourage the heart to stay open to love through some physical postures.

ACTIVITY

Backbends in yoga are also known as heart openers. This is because as we arch and round the back, we project the chest forward, giving the heart room to expand.

We can practice the Camel Pose to keep the heart open and release any feelings that might be trapped there. Note that it is normal for people to feel emotional as they do this. Releasing emotion is an important part of wellness.

How to do the Camel Pose:

1. Kneel with your toes pointing backwards.
2. Rest your hands on your hips, and curve or arch your back.
3. Push your tailbone forward.
4. Either stay here, or keep moving, slowly dropping your palms behind you to hold onto the soles of your feet.
5. Gently drop your head back if it is comfortable for your neck to do so.

To come out of the pose, lift your head up again, bring your arms to your hips and straighten your back.



IMAGINATION

IMAGINATION OPENS UP YOUR WORLD

I

LESSON

Imagination keeps children connected to their creativity. It also allows them to expand their ideas of what is possible. It is a pathway to creating new realities beyond the ones that are obvious. Powerful ideas emerge from imagination.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner to imagine their favourite day:

What would they eat?

What would they wear?

Who would be with them?

Ask them to draw the images or write a story to share the visions from their imagination. It is important to encourage them to dream as wildly as possible.

JUMP FOR JOY

J

LESSON

Jumping jacks improve coordination, mobility and cardiovascular health. They are a great way for children to get fit and comfortable moving their body.

It helps to make it more of a game rather than just pure fitness.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner to make an 'X' with their body and then an 'I' OR make a Star shape and then a Candle shape.

You can time them and see **how many jumping jacks they can do in 2 minutes.**

This is something to return to and see if they can steadily improve.

Doing it with them will add to the fun!



JUMP FOR JOY



KEEP IT UP, KEEP GOING

K

LESSON

You are nearly halfway, and it is a good time to congratulate the learner (and yourself!) for sticking with the programme!

Consistency is difficult, and it is important to honour when milestones are reached. Reflection helps improve learning outcomes as the learner can see how far they have come and notice where adjustments might need to be made.

ACTIVITY

Take this opportunity to ask the learner **how they are feeling about their A to Z's**. You can use the Feelings Card from before.

Whatever the response, encourage them to keep going. Emphasise that it is an adventure and there is still a lot more in store for them to discover and explore.

Seeing things through to completion, helps build focus and a sense of esteem.



LOVE

LOVE

L

LESSON

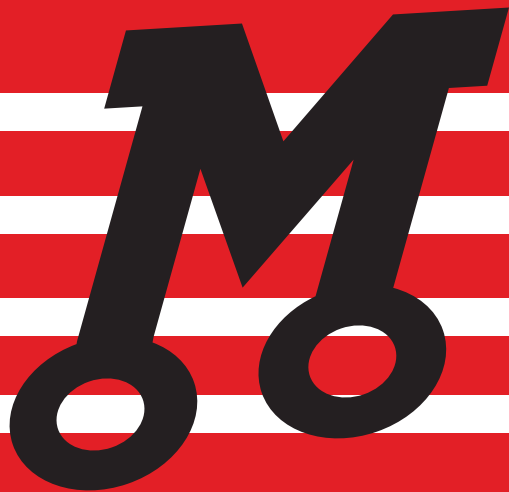
Self-love builds confidence and is a lifelong asset. Your ability to love yourself influences your ability to love others.

Self-love also impacts how you treat yourself, and how you allow others to treat you. When you love something, you take care of it. This is a key ingredient for wellness.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner to identify **5 things** that they love about themselves.

Affirm them!



MUSIC

MUSIC

M

LESSON

Music and melody can change your mood!

Many children connect naturally to music and sounds. Music has the power to uplift and energise. When you want to change the mood, playing the right kind of song will do the trick.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner to **pick a song or you can share a song** that is uplifting and encourage the learner to sing and/or dance along.

It is not about learning a particular dance move, but responding to how the music makes you feel.

Let the music guide the movements.



NATURE

NATURE

LESSON

Lesson:

Nature is beneficial for the mental health of children. Time spent outdoors taking in deep breaths, restores and refreshes. If a sense of wonder and curiosity is created about nature, it also encourages children to pay attention to it and learn the many lessons that it teaches us. For example, we learn about cycles by observing seasons or the rising and setting of the sun. If learners form a connection with nature, they are also more likely to pay attention to their external environment and want to take care of it.

Children might need encouragement to step away from the screen or get off the couch, so it will be helpful to play a game.

ACTIVITY

1. Take a walk in nature with the learner and play, **I Spy**.

"I spy with my little eye something beginning with T" (a tree for example) / "I spy something green"...

Encourage them to identify things as well.

2. Pick colours and ask the learner to identify things in nature of the same colour.



OPEN THE DOOR

OPEN THE DOOR, STEP OUTSIDE

LESSON

This session reinforces the previous session about nature. It is another opportunity to explore the outside world. This is key to cultivating balance between an indoor and outdoor life. The body produces Vitamin D when it is exposed to the sun. This supports the production of calcium to support the health of the teeth and bones. Vitamin D is also a natural way to boost immunity.

Even if the sun is not shining, fresh air is invigorating!

ACTIVITY

It is time to recap the **Balloon Breath**. Taking deep breaths outside is a useful way to reset and stimulate the body and brain.

The caregiver can explain how the trees produce oxygen for us to breathe and they also absorb the carbon dioxide that we produce when we breathe out.

This is a reminder of how we are connected to nature and why we must respect and take care of it.

Remind the learner that the **Breath is their Bestie** and they can always take a deep breath, to pause and decide how to react in any situation. It helps when they are nervous, scared or upset.



PLAY

LESSON

Most children do not have to be taught how to play. They are in touch with their intuition, and naturally connect with their environment and the things around them. Over time, we are discouraged from playing and we lose the many wellness benefits associated with play.

Play should be encouraged as it develops present moment awareness. When people play, they can become completely involved in what they are doing, and lose a sense of time. It is a way to step out of the rigidity of overscheduled lives and connect with spontaneity. It eases anxiety and promotes a sense of wellbeing. Everyone can benefit from play; there is no age limit.

This is a wonderful opportunity to get everyone involved!

ACTIVITY

Today, the learner can choose their favourite game. We would encourage games other than video games, so that they can reduce screen time.

Some ideas:

Hide and seek, perhaps a treasure hunt, uggaphu (jump rope), diketo/amangqalutshe (marbles), board games.

We encourage the caregiver to play the game with the learner. If they don't know the game, the learner can teach them the rules. This is also an opportunity for the learner to practice explaining and sharing their knowledge. The caregiver might discover another side to the learner. The play can start off planned but leave room for spontaneity and getting lost in the moment. This can seem difficult when we are used to a strict schedule.

Flexibility is also important for wellness!



**QUIET
TIME**

QUIET TIME



LESSON

Many children can get overstimulated by the activities and sensory stimulants packed into their day. Introverted children struggle to cope with the amount of energy that they expend in social situations.

Quiet time is useful to recharge and restore. It is also helpful to regulate the nervous system.

ACTIVITY

Encourage the learner to **spend 5 to 10 mins in a quiet environment**. You might have to build up the time slowly. Challenge them to see how long they can spend quietly, time them and then keep challenging them to increase the time. This time can be unstructured.

Give the learner space to explore their creativity, and see what calming activities they are drawn to. Exclude screen time from this activity, because it is a stimulant.

Even if the learner claims that they are bored, do not be discouraged. Boredom is not necessarily a bad thing. Many creative ideas have come from the need to find ways to entertain oneself. Let the learner discover.

You could also encourage quiet time to happen closer to bedtime, to support the learner to wind down before they go to bed.



REST & RELAX

REST & RELAXATION

R

LESSON

Learners experience stress and are sensitive to their environments. Things like school and family life might cause strain.

While stress cannot always be avoided, it's important to learn how to complete the stress cycle, i.e. experiencing the stressor and recovering from this stress. This is how our nervous system recuperates. If we do not unwind after a stressful moment/situation/day, the stress gets compounded, and this is where we can become vulnerable to depression, anxiety and long term dis-ease. We can only heal and recover when we are in a restful state. Incorporating rest into daily life prevents unhealthy work patterns later in life, and teaches learners the importance of balance - a key component of wellness.

Good sleep is important for rest. It is easier to fall asleep if we set a regular bedtime with reduced stimulation, and eat at least 2 hours before bedtime. Naps and other restful activities such as daydreaming, spending time in nature and listening to soothing music are also good.

ACTIVITY

The caregiver can guide the learner through the following instructions:

Lie down on the floor on a yoga mat or thick towel. Get as comfortable as you can. With each breath, feel your body sink into the floor. Feel your head on the floor, shoulders on the floor, backs of your arms, and the backs of your head. Feel your bum, your calves and heels on the floor. Tense the toes and then relax them. Tense the calves and then relax them. Tense the knees and then relax them. Tense the thighs and then relax them. Tense the buttocks and then relax them. Feel your legs relaxed on the floor. Squeeze your fingers into a fist and then relax them. Squeeze your shoulders up to your ears and then relax them. Feel your arms relaxed on the floor. Squeeze your tummy and then relax it. Tense your jaw and then relax it. Squeeze your face and then relax it. From the tip of the toes to the head, feel that your body is soft like a marshmallow.



SENSES

SENSES

S

LESSON

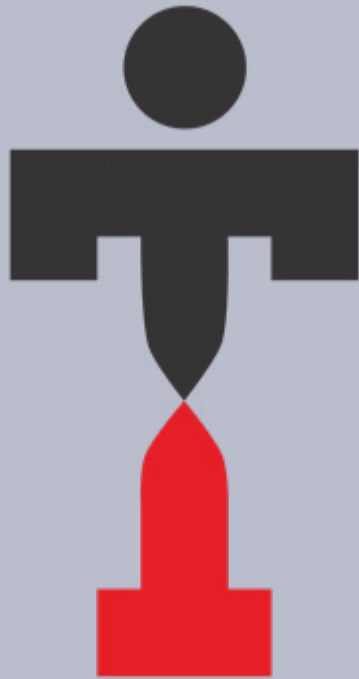
Tuning into the 5 senses is a way of keeping connected and present to the world around us. When children are nervous and worried, it is often a function of the mind running away with them.

This exercise can be used in different situations to bring the learner out of their mind and back into the present moment by connecting with the sensations in their body.

ACTIVITY

Close your eyes and identify:

- 5 things** that you can see
- 4 things** that you can hear
- 3 things** that you can feel
- 2 things** that you can smell
- 1 thing** that you can taste



TWIST

TWIST

T

LESSON

We can support our body and our emotions with movement. When we twist, we squeeze the tummy and other digestive organs inside the body. When we squeeze, we cut off blood supply and when we come out of the twist, the blood supply rushes back in. This helps with the circulation of fresh blood. The fresh blood can help cleanse the cells of any built up waste, this is a detox.

Twists also keep the spine flexible and strong. When we open up the back and the chest, we can also release tension, helping to ease anxiety and lift the mood.

ACTIVITY

Practice a spinal twist to improve spinal flexibility. Twists also encourage the organs to release toxins:

1. Sit cross-legged
2. Straighten the spine
3. Using a firm hold, grab the shoulders with fingers forward and thumbs back
4. Start twisting the torso to the left and then to the right
5. Inhaling to the left and exhaling to the right

Tips: Move the neck as well so that the whole spine moves. Try moving faster and faster as you create a swirl of good energy around you.



UBUNTU

UBUNTU

LESSON

'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'
(A human is a human because of other human beings)

This saying is the foundation of the philosophy of Ubuntu.

Ubuntu is the practice of how to be a human being that respects other human beings and all forms of life.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner to map out/draw/list all the people that support them to live their life. Let them think broadly - from farmers who grow their food, to parents, to helpers, to transport providers, teachers and siblings.

Keep probing the learner to realise that they would not be able to be themselves without all the people that support them. They can also recognise how nature supports them, from the sun rising at the start of the day to the rain that falls and nourishes the vegetables that they eat.



VEGETABLES

VEGETABLES

V

LESSON

Vegetables keep you fit and strong!

What children consume makes a big difference to their emotional, physical and mental health. For example, the effects of sugar on children are well documented.

This session is an opportunity to explore the conversation about foods that are nutritious and support growth and those that detract from it. It is helpful to explain the concept of vitamins to children.

ACTIVITY

Pick 3 vegetables and make a chart with the veggie on one side and its benefits on the other. For example:

Spinach

Vitamin A (supports the surface of the eyes)

Vitamin K1 (supports blood clotting, so that when you get hurt, you can form a scab and heal)

Iron (supports production of haemoglobin that ensures oxygen flows to the tissues of the body)

Carrots

Vitamin A (supports the surface of the eyes)

Potassium (helps muscles to contract, supports blood pressure control)

Vitamin K1 (supports bone health)

Butternut

Vitamin A

Vitamin C (boosts immunity and supports wounds to heal).



WATER

WATER

W

LESSON

There is no wellness without water. Water cleanses us on the inside and out. It is important to sustain all life on planet earth. Water is precious for humans, animals and plants.

If learners understand how important water is, they can be encouraged not to waste it. South Africa is an arid country and we can all benefit from being mindful about how we use water. Closing taps properly and closing the tap while we brush our teeth are simple habits we can integrate into our daily lives.

Hydration is a key component of wellness. Very often, we can mistake signs of dehydration for hunger. If we are not properly hydrated, we become irritable, lethargic and can develop headaches.

It is important to learn the importance of drinking enough water. If children are not used to drinking water, they will prefer juice and other flavoured substances. The problem with flavoured drinks is that they often contain a lot of sugar, which has other effects.

ACTIVITY

A water challenge!

Encourage the learner to drink 2 glasses every day. If they manage to keep it up for the whole week, they can be given a reward.

OR

Adopt a plant to water regularly

Let the learner identify a plant at school or at home to take care of. They might need to get advice from their educator or parent about how much water the plant needs each week.

The learner can use a big bowl and a small container. Take something out of the recycle bin, like a small plastic bottle. Have the learner dip the bottle in the big bowl of water to fill it, then water the plants that way.



X-RAY VISION

X-RAY VISION



LESSON

Take care of what is inside. Our inner world is just as important as the outer world. Even though we can't see our heart and our bones and our blood flowing, there are many systems working to support us. Even though we can't see our feelings, they affect us. Even if no one else can see our thoughts, they still exist.

We need to treat ourselves like we have X-Ray vision into our inner world. Many of the tools and lessons that we have learnt support us to take care of what you can't see from the outside.

ACTIVITY

Create a body map on a big sheet of paper:

1. Ask the learner to lie down on a big sheet of paper
2. Trace the outline of the learner's body
3. Ask them to draw in everything that is 'Inside Me'
4. They must pretend that they have X-Ray vision and can see everything
5. It might be fun to include a pair of glasses or goggles to support their imagination

If you don't have a big enough sheet of paper, the learner can work from a scaled outline.

Body mapping is also a technique that is used for people to explore how their experiences have impacted their body. For example, the learner could be prompted - where does it hurt? They can indicate that on the body map.



YOU

YOU

LESSON

You matter, your voice matters!

All people have a need to be seen and heard. This is foundational to building self-esteem. When we give children enough attention, then they are less likely to develop unhealthy habits to secure this attention.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner to teach you or a sibling any of the wellness tools that they have learnt during the program. When we really understand something, we are able to explain and teach it.

The learner will be encouraged to find their own words and they can be encouraged to share the information with their friends and other family members.



ZEBRA

ZEBRA

Z

LESSON

Just like a zebra, everyone has their own stripes. It is important to understand yourself and all the ways that you are unique. Self-understanding is a key component of self-acceptance and wellness. It is a critical part of building confidence. Peer pressure is more likely to occur when a person is not confident to separate from the crowd and do their own thing.

No one has the same fingerprints as anyone else. This is a simple example of how we are all made differently. This is a starting point to initiate a conversation about what the learner understands about their unique attributes.

ACTIVITY

Ask the learner: **What makes you, you?**

Bata

Unit 1, Manchester Park, Manchester Road, Pinetown, 3610,
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
bata.customerservices@bata.com

+27 31 701 4951