

#### **ABOUT THE OK CHALLENGE**

In early 2025, OK You put out a call to high school students across the country, asking them to share their creative ideas for managing stress and worry. After all, when it comes to navigating challenging times, they are the experts on the subject.

From a pandemic to climate disasters, gun violence, and attacks on their identities, young people have been through it all — and through it all, they've continued to find new ways forward.

These students not only belong at the center of the mental health conversation — they have the wisdom, creativity, and lived experience to lead the way for their peers, younger students, and future generations.

From Oregon to Texas to New Jersey, students rose to the challenge, and with deep appreciation for everyone who participated, we are honored to present our 2025 OK Challenge finalists.

#### **1ST PLACE WINNER: ARI ROMERO** DEAL YOUR FEEL

I wanted to do the OK Challenge because it can be hard to figure out how to keep your mental health in a good spot when life is moving really fast. I wanted to make something that people can use to ground themselves and to have small wins every day.

My project supports inner wellness because it helps lay out a plan that someone can use to help structure their day. In addition, it helps boost a person's mental health because they are being reminded of things that are inspiring or funny. The activity also helps structure long term planning, as when you draw a card with a goal on it, you chip away at it, which helps people achieve long term goals. In total, this activity supports inner wellness by boosting mental health and confidence, while also giving a space to work towards big accomplishments.

### Deal Your Feel

Even the smallest plans and consistent events can help reduce your stress and move towards your OK What you need:

- Cardstock
- Pen or Pencil
- Colored Pencils
- Scissors
  - Ruler
  - Markers

Don't Forget to decorate each card to make the deck your own!

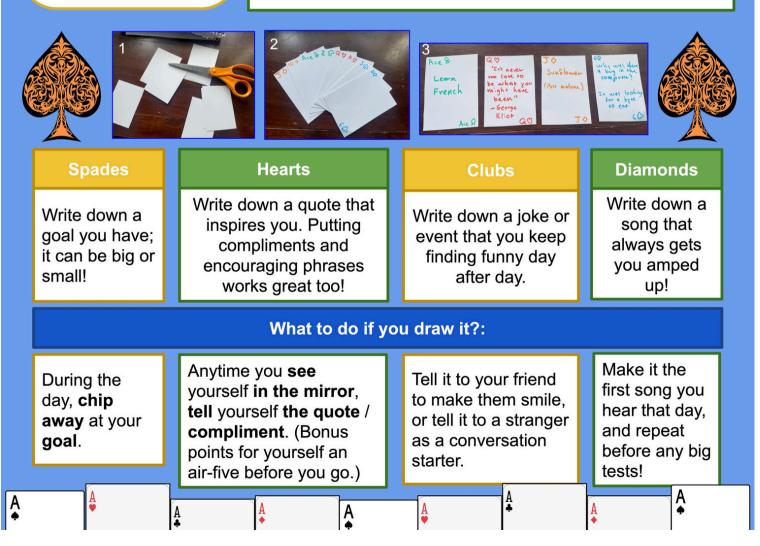
Instructions:

Every morning, right after you wake up, shuffle the deck and deal yourself three cards. Your goal for the day is to then use those cards to

structure your day.

How to use it:

- 1. Measure and cut rectangles that are 3.5" by 2.5"
- For thirteen cards, write a number in the corner just like a deck of cards, (starting at Ace, 2, 3, ...10, Jack, Queen, King). Label the set with one of the four suits (Spades, Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds).
- 3. Repeat until you have a full deck of cards!
- 4. For each suit, follow the directions below:



#### **2ND PLACE WINNER: HOPE NIELSON** HAPPINESS BUTTERFLIES

I wanted to create something that could capture all of someone's happy thoughts and moments. Personally, I love being creative and normally draw or dance to get rid of worries, so I thought I would be the perfect person to accept this sort of challenge. I thought about how butterflies always bring me joy, so I created a tree that collects happiness butterflies and slowly becomes more alive and joyful with each butterfly. It supports inner wellness by supporting the idea that you should be able to feel good about things in your life and remember that there are so many things to be grateful for. My hope is that as people create their own butterfly trees, as the butterflies grow, they will realize how their worries are much smaller than they thought.



#### Make butterflies to bring happiness to your OK self!

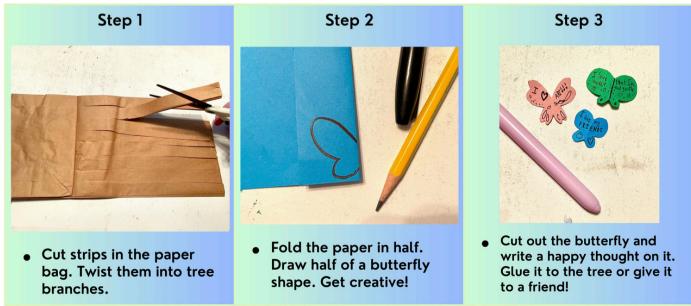
You can customize butterflies with your own designs. Write positive thoughts--things you're grateful for, things you love, things you wish for--and start your own butterfly tree.

#### Materials

- any paper you have
- a brown lunch bag
- a pen or marker

- tape or glue
- scissors

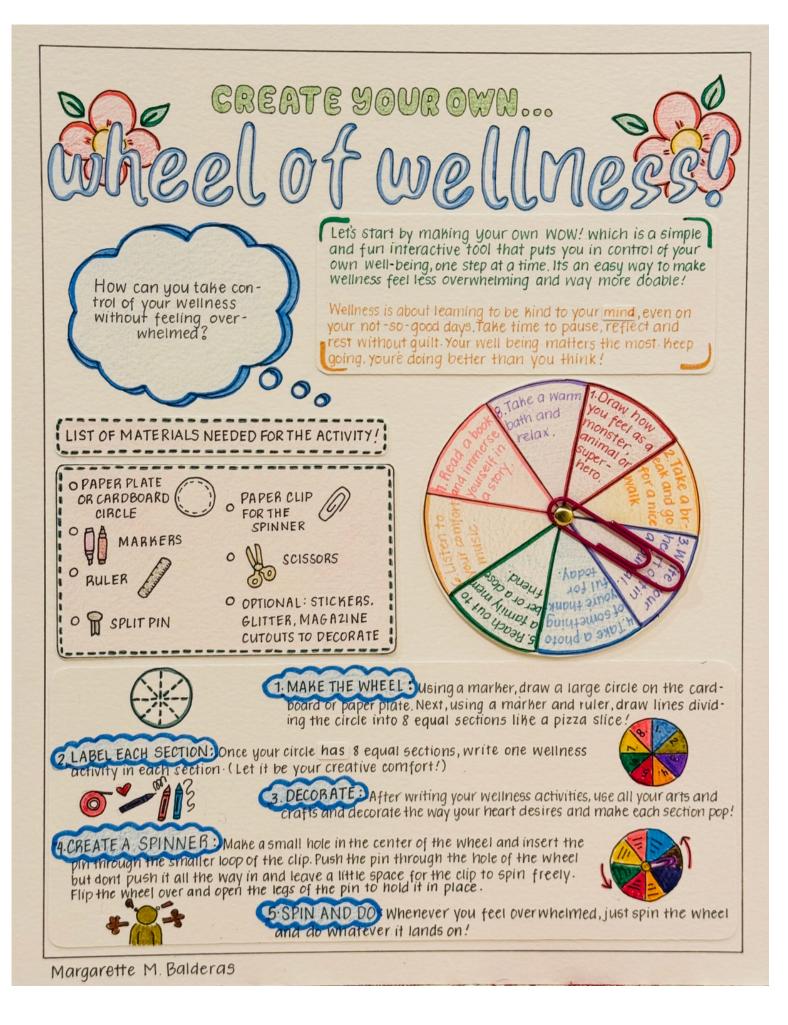




Each day, you can add another butterfly to your collection. When you want to connect with your OK self, read the butterflies again.

#### **3RD PLACE WINNER: MARGARETTE BALDERAS** WHEEL OF WELLNESS

I decided to participate in the OK Challenge because I wanted to be part of something that encourages positivity and motivates people to prioritize their well-being. As a student, I often find myself overwhelmed by things such as my academics and responsibilities, so I came up with the Wheel of Wellness activity, which is an interactive tool designed to help people manage their well-being in a simple and engaging way. I have several destressing activities that I also practice when I feel overwhelmed, and I thought that I could tie it all together in one tool and make it more fun. My activity empowers people to take control of their wellness and have fun at the same time. It is about taking a second to check in with yourself and reflect. This activity made me realize how important it is to slow down and check in with myself often. I hope it can help more people see wellness in a more fun and manageable way, and remind people that the strength is already within us, we just have to find the right tools to bring it out!



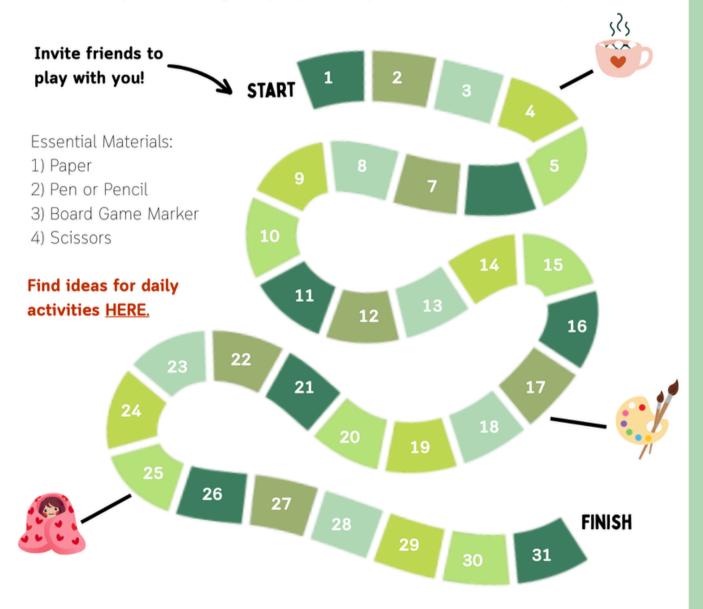
#### LEAH ALMEIDA LITTLE MOMENTS: A BOARD GAME

Today's world is constantly busy — it always feels like we're rushing from one task to the next, making it easy to miss the small things in life. I believe that it's these small moments that make life beautiful, so I created this board game to make slowing down and taking in the details fun and easy. Mindfulness doesn't have to be complicated or serious. It can be as simple as sitting outside in the sun for five minutes! Each of the activities on this board game makes space for the small joys that make life better. It's intended to help ground people, even in the busiest of times, by taking a couple minutes each day to engage in an activity that makes you pause and reflect. As a high school student juggling the academic, social, work, and familial responsibilities, I know firsthand how overwhelming life can get and how easily stress can creep into the picture. That's why I believe it's so important to have simple ways to reconnect with your "okay self", which knows that things will be all right, even in the chaos. Taking care of our mental health doesn't have to be a huge commitment. Sometimes, it's just about slowing down and appreciating what's already around us. This game is my way of sharing that feeling.



## LITTLE MOMENTS: A Board Game

Sometimes, life can get busy and overwhelming. Little Moments is a board game designed to help you slow down, breathe, and make it through the month by transforming every day, ordinary events into extraordinary ones.



If you're having a particularly stressful day, try to remember that life is about appreciating the little moments. Being mindful can be simple and easy. Take things day by day, week by week, month by month – you've got this!

#### MAYA ALTUG MINDFULNESS MAP AND "WHAT'S IN MY CONTROL?"

I decided to participate in the OK Challenge because I thought it would be fun and a chance to get creative! I've had the idea of a Mindfulness Map since I was little, and am glad I could finally put it onto paper. This project allows individuals to come up with fun ways to practice mindfulness, and is a great reminder to be mindful throughout the day.

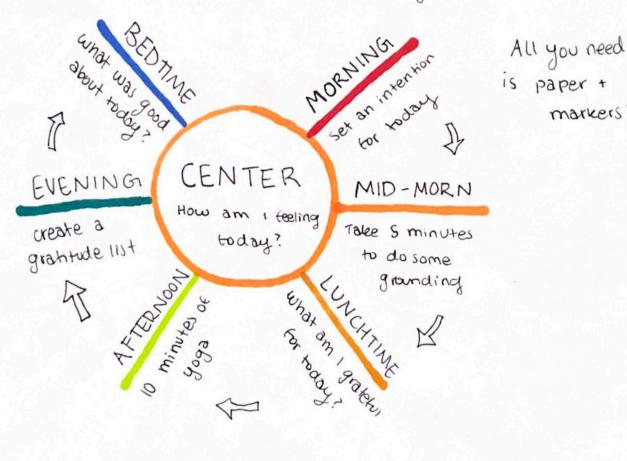
"What's in My Control?" is a project that helps you rebalance by remembering what you can and can't control in a situation. It really helps put things into perspective when you're feeling overwhelmed.

## MINDFULNESS MAP ANG

What are some activities you do to practice mindfulness? let's brains form and make a map together! Dick 5-6 times of day to check in and practice mindfulness. The goal of this map is to encourage you to stop and take breaks Chroughout the day. Allow this to serve as a visual reminder.



create prompts or activities for each time of day. These can stay the same or be retrested every once in a while!



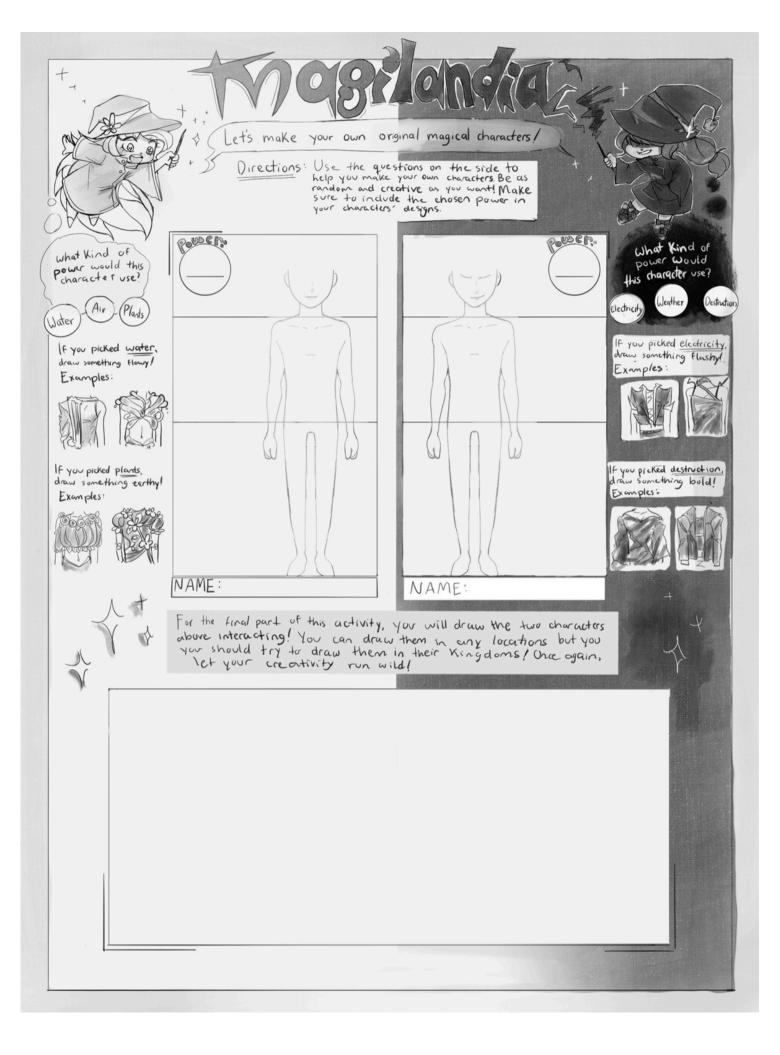
HAN GI THIS SOMEWHERE VISIBLE, USE IT THEOUGHOUT YOUR DAY!

markers!



#### ALESSANDRA ARTEAGA MAGILANDIA

Making fantasy or magical characters has always been enjoyable for me. I wanted to turn my interest into an activity that could be enjoyed and done by others. My project supports inner wellness since it helps others express themselves through drawings with an unlimited amount of creativity. Drawing whatever you want can also be very therapeutic and rewarding to many. Creating this activity has been helpful for me as it allowed me to experience making and creating something new. I worked with different styles and techniques I wasn't used to in order to get the results shown in the artwork.



#### ALEXA AYBAR FRANKENSTEINING PAPER

I participated in the OK Challenge because I wanted to share a relaxing hobby of mine with other young people. When I'm feeling like one of my sketch pages is empty and lacks character, I start a collage with newspaper, fabric, and found objects. Making collages helps me think outside the box when I have stress due to art block and can't find inspiration to draw. Collaging helps the mind be clear and helps with the creative process.



#### JONAH BEANBLOSSOM CREATE YOUR OK PLACE

I love drawing architecture and interior design, and so when I am stressed or I need a break, I relax by drawing something or somewhere that makes me feel safe and happy. My activity helps you focus on what is important to you, recenter yourself, and focus on yourself when you need it most. It has helped me find a passion that I love, and has also helped me create a space where I can focus and be myself, both in my head, and in real life. Supplies: For this project, you will need: two pencils or pens of different line weights, paper, and an imagination or reference image



### **PROJECT:** Create your OK place

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE OUR FAVORITE PLACE, WHETHER IT'S HOME, A REAL PLACE, OR AN IMAGINARYYY, CRAZYYY, AND WHIMSYYY ONE! EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN'T ALWAYS BE THERE PHYSICALLY, OUR BRAINS CAN HELP YOU BE THERE MENTALLY.

#### STEP 1

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THE PLACE WHERE YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE IN. OR IF YOU ALREADY SEE A PLACE THAT YOU LOVE USE THAT AS A REFERANCE. STEP 2 SEE ALL THE BIG DETAILS FIRST (WHERE THE WALLS START AND END. WHERE A TIP LADER IS, WHERE DORWAYS ARE) AND USING PERSPECTIVE POINTS HELPS A TON! DRAW THOSE DETAILS ON YOUR PAPER IN LIGHT LINES. STEP 3 NEXT, SEE ALL THE MEDIUM DETAILS (FURNITURE, WALL ART, SHELVES) AND DRAW THEIR OUTLINES IN LIGHT LINES. TIP STEP 4 YOU WILL THINK OF ALL THE SMALL THINGS WHEN DRAWING, SO IT'S BEST TO DRAW THE SMALL DETAILS (STUFFED DO IT LAST TO GET AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ANIMALS, RUGS, COOL TOYS, LIGHTS) AND DRAW THOSE DETAILS IN LIGHT LINES **STEP 5** DARKEN THE LINES. WITH YOUR OTHER PENCIL OR PEN. TO DRAW ATTENTION TO IMPORTANT DETAILS.

MAKE SURE TO HAVE FUN AND KEEP GOING! YOU CAN LABEL YOUR SKETCHES AND SEE HOW YOU IMPROVE, OR HOW CRAZY YOUR OK PLACE GETS!

#### SCHON BEANBLOSSOM COLLAGE MIND MAP

I came up with this idea because collage is already one of my favorite mediums. Additionally, I have heard of mind maps as a way for creatives to work through problems and plan out ideas. I thought this would be an interesting way to combine my hobby with a mindfulness exercise! Creating a mind map or vision board is really useful if you feel overwhelmed or your mind feels cluttered. Putting inner thoughts and ideas down on paper helps you visualize what is giving you stress. Anxiety and stress often cause us to catastrophize small issues and overthink every little thing. When you are tasked with visually representing those inner thoughts, it makes you reconsider what issues are worth spending mental energy on. This activity has been extremely helpful for me to cope with stressors in my life. I can get caught in a cycle of worry and overthinking. Creating a mind map gets me to focus back into the present and really interrogate the worries I'm having. I always try to include current likes and interests on my mind map as well. This brings me creative inspiration and positivity!

## COLLAGE Mind Map

Collage is a great artistic outlet for stress and anxiety. When your mind is clouded by frustration and stress, it may feel impossible to find clarity. In these moments, it can be extremely helpful to visually map out how you're feeling.

Mind mapping helps us rationalize our inner thoughts and identify sources of stress. Sorting and arranging the different colors and shapes is calming, especially for those with a creative mind.



### 3. ARRANGE AND GLUE!

Arrange your pieces BEFORE gluing! Slowly glue down your different elements once you are happy with their position. TIP: Start by laying colors, abstract shapes, and bigger pieces!

### 1. COLLECT

Roughly cut out meaningful words, eye catching colors and textures, relevant objects, and anything else that inspires you!

## 2. CUT

Once you are satisfied with the elements you picked out, begin cutting them into their final shapes.







#### TSION ERMIAS PINBOARD

I wanted to participate in the OK challenge to give other students reliable advice on how to deal with stress in a healthy way! This activity supports inner wellness as it uses box breathing techniques to allow viewers to completely forget about the stress they are dealing with and reflect on all their achievements and the goals they are working towards. While working on this activity, I felt a bit stressed managing the homework from the IB program. However, sitting down and focusing on the things I love helped me refocus my attention on what really matters, which is happiness!

# PinBeard

Pin-Board is inspired by student's tendency to procrastinate or scroll on Instagram/Youtube as a way of escaping the academic pressure that comes with taking challenging classes. One of the best ways I cope with stress is by browsing Pinterest. So, if you're looking for something to do when you're bored, consider pinning your life goals and achievements on a Canva Vision Board!

INSTRUCTIONS:

Materials Needed: Electronic Devices and most importantly...Creativity!

1. Access "Canva" by either logging in or signing up.

2. On the home page of Canva, locate the toolbar and click on "Custom Size." Input the dimensions 24 x 18 inches.

3. Once you have your blank vision board, head to Pinterest or your photo gallery. Look through your photos or references of life-related things that bring you happiness. This could include places you want to visit, recent trips, photos of friends, music, food, fashion trends,

or future life goals like potential careers.

4. Take a moment to reflect on the significance of these objects. Shift your focus away from school/work and think about what makes you feel special and unique. You can practice steady box breathing techniques to help refocus your attention on this activity.

5. After you have gathered all your selected images, go back to your Canva vision board and add them one by one in whatever order you choose.

6. Once you've finished, set your vision board as the background on one of your electronic devices. As you return to your work, take a moment to look at all the images you've placed and use them as a reminder to acknowledge the things in life outside of school/work that

you love!



#### Made by: Tsion E.

These photos represent the items, places, and beliefs that define who I am. What defines you?

#### LUKE HISTAND TRASH CREATURES

If there's one thing about the world, it's that there's a lot of trash in it. What's most annoying about this is the potential in this trash. Plenty of artists are taking advantage of garbage's infinite uses, but it's not as mainstream as it should be. When coming up with my project, I wanted to figure out something that would tackle not only the problem of trash, but something that would be fun for the creator, too! My activity supports inner wellness by promoting a fun and simple craft for those in turmoil to do, while also ultimately benefiting the earth. Creating this activity has given me a new perspective on random trash I find around my house. Instead of getting annoyed by it, I see it as potential. I also now have my own mini army of trash creatures!

LE HELPING EAR #2 Organize your fayhand see if it sports and identify Jaw on a Ĵ kreature 1 real VIE. YOUR HERLTH WHI HSSeMOLE YOUR - A fore? -AFANCY PURC? ASK N #00 (ino por DE GLAD TO BENEFIT YOUR HE David worry about specified tarnes give you a good lawh! And BOOM! You've just saved some litter from entering the environment while Ouce you've finished creating your tash -Pow Creature, you can put it in your roam -Look around your house for ON a windewsill, anywhere where it'll 6 A bioken × NCARPER courdy F could ! 1 [RASH! SUPPLIES Drawing Tools -A way !

#### SARA JAURIGUE BAG OF HOPE

I wanted my activity to not only help calm stress, but also help solve problems. What I have realized is it is so easy to compartmentalize and write off your stress because you think that it will be easier. Stress can tear away at a person, which I have seen through strangers and friends. I did this activity to not only help other people navigate their stress, but also mine. I think we all could practice more on creating habits that help support our own mental health. This activity helps people realize what goals they want to embody to reach a place where they can feel emotionally and mentally stable. This activity has helped me realize that stress is such a big factor in mental health, but there are ways to help support yourself through it too. I learned that I have resources to help me, but I can also help myself. Doing this activity taught me that I can be my own support system, too.

## **BAG OF HOPE**

#### WHY TRY THIS ACTIVITY

Sometimes in stressful situations we can get so caught up in the moment we lose track of what we are trying to actually achieve. This activity is for when you're feeling stressed. It will help you look further into what you are trying to gain out of a situation.

#### MATERIALS

- Small paper bag
- Markers, stickers, etc
- Sticky notes or small scraps of paper
- A pencil

#### 01. DECORATE YOUR BAG

Use any materials you want (markers, stickers, colored pencils) and decorate the outside of your bag!

#### 02. WRITE A NOTE

On paper, write down what you hope to achieve from the stressful moment you are in. Also, you can write multiple notes on the same topic because your aspirations and goals can change! Getting an A on my English test

Forgiveness

#### 03. PUT YOUR NOTE IN THE BAG

Fold your piece of paper and put it in your bag. When your bag fills up you can look back at your notes!

#### HOW THIS ACTIVITY CAN HELP WITH STRESS

This activity helps us realize our goals when we are under stress. It can help us better understand why we are doing something and what motivations we should put towards it. It can help us realize that it's OK to just take a breath while figuring things out. In stressful events, it is important to know what we are working towards and how to get there.

#### CHRISTIAN KHING ZEN GARDEN

The OK Challenge really made me think about providing others with a way to handle stress. The Zen garden encourages mindfulness through slow, repetitive motion. By raking patterns and arranging stones, the mind naturally settles. It's a hands-on way to relieve anxiety, focus on the present, and create a calming personal space. Zen gardens are easy to personalize and share. They can be used anywhere (on a desk, in a classroom, or as a group activity). It makes wellness feel more accessible. Designing this project brought clarity and peace. It was a reminder that simple tools can make a big difference. The process of creating something meant to inspire calmness also brought a sense of purpose and joy.

## zen Garden

A mini Zen garden creates a calm space using simple materials. Drawing patterns helps slow thoughts, ease stress, and encourage mindfulness.

Materials Needed:

- Small container (wooden box or dish)
- Fine sand or gravel
- Smooth stones, crystals, or shells
- Mini rake (toothpick, fork, or DIY version)

#### Steps:

- Fill the container with sand.
- Arrange stones to create balance and beauty.
- Use the rake to draw circles, spirals, or lines.
- Erase and repeat to reflect inner calm.

Working with a Zen garden offers a peaceful and focused activity that calms the mind. The repetitive motion of raking sand and rearranging stones provides a sensory experience that grounds attention in the present moment. This quiet ritual becomes a gentle reminder to pause, breathe, and let go of racing thoughts. Even brief sessions with the garden can create a sense of clarity, relaxation, and emotional reset.

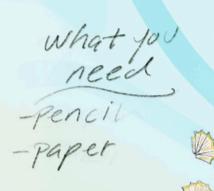




#### STELLA STOWE ZEN TANGLE

I like to doodle a lot but sometimes I feel a lot of pressure in needing to make it perfect or erase and try over again. With Zen Tangles I can just relax and draw mindlessly. You can make a small one or a huge one. Also, it isn't too hard to stop and put down. This activity helps me when I'm feeling stressed or overstimulated. It's a quiet thing I can do in class to calm down.



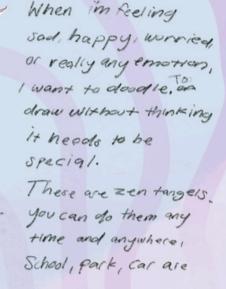


() on your paper,

not

draw a box to

your liking



Just a Rew

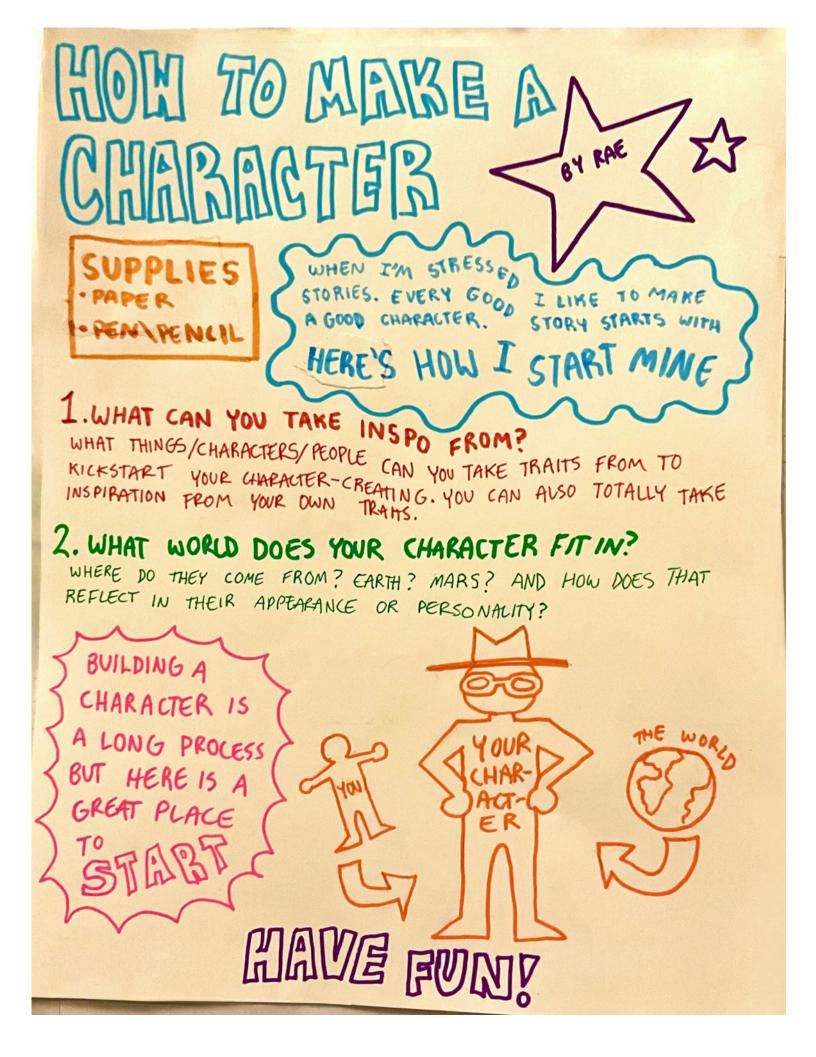
Brake your pencil and your paper and draw some wavy lines

3 now draw some curvy

(4) now you are done ! make more. they will all be diffrent and unique

#### RAE THOMPSON COLLAGE MIND MAP

I came up with these projects by thinking about what calms me down. One I use regularly and one is a more silly/fun idea. My "How to Make a Character" project is a great way to think about yourself and the world around you and what kind of characters you'd like to see, and my Candy Craft project can help calm you down while you snack! The OK Challenge has helped me see how my own habits can be turned into helpful projects.





By Rae

My Creations!

Tasty and easy craft, have your fun and eat it too!

snack to calm down and feel a bit creative

Supplies: - Gummy Candy of your choice (I like dots)

-Scissors or a kife

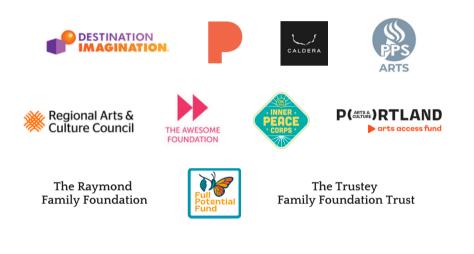
Plan your design, what do you want to make? Al flower? Al friend?
Cut your candy into easy-to-work with shapes, like squares or circles, cut more as needed

3. Construct your creation, follow your plan or go wild!

4. Eat or display!

Make your own tasty Candy Creatson! Just don't get too attached. . ...

#### THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE CHALLENGE, AND TO OUR ALLIES AND SUPPORTERS:



#### THE OK CHALLENGE IS A PROGRAM OF OK YOU

OK You is a nonprofit that offers free creative resources for navigating big emotions and staying connected to our OK selves. Learn more about our programs and resources at okyou.org.

