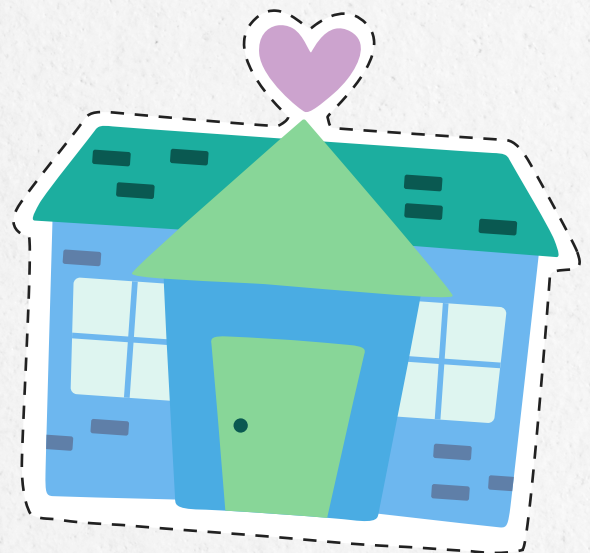
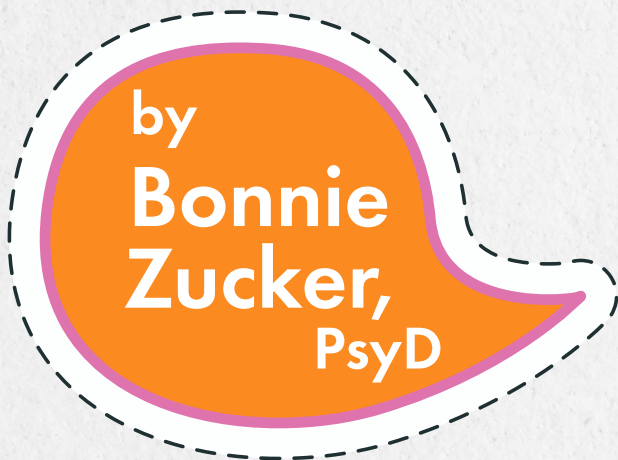


# Unstuck!

10 Things to Do to Stay  
Safe and Sane During  
the Pandemic





## Dear Reader,

The psychologists here at APA/Magination Press want to help you get through this very stressful time of change and uncertainty. The emotional part of experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic is our focus. We know that everything that was familiar and predictable about your life has temporarily changed, and while every person and every family will have a different experience, it is hard for everyone in one way or another. There are losses, uncertainties, and many things to adjust to, all of which can create a lot of feelings. Feelings are never right or wrong, they just are, and expressing your feelings can help. It is important to share your feelings with your family members, friends, and even teachers; it's not good to keep them in. If you find that you are struggling, ask for help. Asking for help is a sign of wisdom, strength, and maturity.

The good news is that there is a way to cope with all that you are dealing with! Research has shown us what healthy coping is all about. Remember, pandemics have a start date *and* an end date. This will not go on forever, and it is very important to remember that this is a temporary situation. You will look back at this time and it won't feel the way it feels now. But for now, it is important that you learn how to manage this time and everything you are feeling.

Next up are 10 worksheets to help you get through this, and feel unstuck! You can pick and choose—find the ones that fit most with what you need, or complete them all. If you feel comfortable doing so, and with your parent's permission, we would love for you to share your activities and tag us on social media. You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest @MaginationPress.

It is our hope that this offers some benefit. We are thinking of you, and sending our warmest wishes.

**Sincerely,**  
**Magination Press**



# 10 Things to Do

- 1: Managing Stress at a Stressful Time
- 2: Let It Go: Getting Your Feelings Out
- 3: Using a Growth Mindset
- 4: Quarantine Bingo
- 5: Dealing With Feelings of Sadness, Loss, and Grief
- 6: Banishing Boredom
- 7: Managing Anxiety and Worry
- 8: Finding Gratitude
- 9: Cultivating Creativity
- 10: Learning to Find Happiness and Thrive

1

## Managing Stress at a Stressful Time

This is a stressful time, to say the least. Even if you are not feeling much stress or even feeling *less* stress due to reduced schoolwork and fewer extracurricular activities, you are surrounded by stress. You may see your parent(s) or siblings feeling very stressed; maybe they are fighting more or acting irritable. Missing out on things you were looking forward to, which is a change to your expectations, is stressful. Many students are missing their graduations, proms, promotion ceremonies, time with friends, or playing sports. It may be your last year at your school, or with a favorite teacher, and you are missing the chance to process that. Or maybe you never got to do your school play that you had been rehearsing for or all of your soccer tournaments were canceled. Missing seeing your friends in person, missing your teachers and the feeling of being at school: all of that creates stress. These are losses and things outside of our control, and this make us feel stressed.

There are a few key ways to manage stress, and cope with these changes.

**First**, focus on the four parts to “Well-Being” (these are things you’ve probably heard before, but maybe now you actually have the time to do them):

- **Sleep:** Most teens don’t get enough of it and they need 9-9 1/2 hours
- **Nutrition:** Eating healthy foods (think fruits, vegetables, beans)
- **Exercise:** Daily cardio for 30-45 minutes
- **Relaxation:** Having down-time to unwind and feel restored

**Second**, focus on what is within your control, not what lies outside of it. For example, you are in control of your attitude, your thoughts, and your actions. You are in charge of how you spend your time; you can choose to take this time to be more creative and find new interests.

Third, the main thing to remember is that this is about *adapting*. Those who adapt well will end up feeling better and doing better. Being flexible in the way you are thinking and reducing your expectations will help you be more adapted to this situation. Cue yourself: *What would someone who is flexible think right now? What would they do?*

Now that you've learned a bit about stress management, what is the one thing that you will work on? Is it getting more sleep, working out more, learning how to meditate?

Write that goal here: \_\_\_\_\_

By the way, relaxation and meditation are like magic. No one ever regrets taking time to relax and clear the mind of any thoughts. There are many apps that can help with this; one free favorite is "Insight Timer"—it has thousands and thousands of recordings that you can listen to and find one that works for you.

Lastly, did you know that if you "self-monitor" (which means you keep track of) your progress in working toward a goal, that you are 50% more likely to meet that goal? Creating a way of measuring your progress is key. You can use this chart or print a calendar online and use little checks or stars to keep track of your progress (for example, if your goal is to work out more, give yourself a check for each day that you work out):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday



# 2

## Let It Go: Getting Your Feelings Out

This activity is all about getting your feelings out and putting words to what you are experiencing. There are many benefits to expressing your emotions. By letting it out, you are not keeping it in. When we keep our feelings in, they tend to show up in other ways, like feeling restless in our bodies or having an irritable mood. You may express your emotions by writing it all out. Or, if writing is not your thing, make a recording and voice all of your feelings, concerns, sadness, stress, and so on. You can do this “free style” and just write or talk in an unstructured way, or you can use the prompts below. Afterwards, you may decide to keep this private, or you may feel like sharing it with a parent or close friend. Often, when others know how you feel, you feel better understood. Getting that validation—just someone knowing how you feel—can be relieving.

Using this space, a separate sheet, or actual journal, write “free style” about your feelings during this pandemic:



What is different about this time? \_\_\_\_\_

What's the same? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything different in a good way (ex: you have extra time with your family or can sleep in most days)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is most upsetting to you about this time? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the one thing you are missing the most? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are feeling stressed, where do you feel it in your body? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the worst part of staying in? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best part of staying in? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you miss seeing? \_\_\_\_\_

Who are you seeing too much of? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is the first place you will go once everything reopens? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the first restaurant you will go to? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you afraid of? \_\_\_\_\_

What or who makes you feel comforted? \_\_\_\_\_

3

## Using a Growth Mindset

Have you heard about “mindset”? Psychologist Carol Dweck studied this and found that there are two different mindsets: growth and fixed. A growth mindset leads to the best outcomes. When you have a growth mindset, you believe that you can become smarter or get better at doing something by putting forth good effort, working hard, and staying with it.

When you think this way, you are unlikely to give up, so you keep trying. It’s all about improving and believing in yourself. The opposite is the fixed mindset which is more about seeing things in a locked way: you are either good at math or not, or talented at art or not. When someone thinks this way, they don’t see the point in trying harder or sticking with something.

Adopting a growth mindset can help you cope with this pandemic. Having a growth mindset almost acts like a cheerleader for you to do better. It allows you to see that there are endless possibilities to grow.

Can you think about something that has been hard for you to do, or hard to master?

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How could you think about it differently, using a growth mindset? And what can you do to change it?

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Is there something else about this time that you would like to change which is within your control? If so, what can you do to change it? If you had a growth mindset, how could you think about it?

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If you can’t come up with anything specific, what can you do to practice sticking with it? Can you find a complicated puzzle or large jigsaw, or try to learn something that you think would be hard to understand? Use this time to discover how to have a growth mindset. If you do, you will end up being more resilient once the pandemic ends!



# Quarantine Bingo

Directions: Try to get Bingo by completing all of the activities in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line. You can encourage others in your home to play with you!

4

Family game night.	Send a friend a card or text a funny joke.	Do a 10 minute arm workout.	Read a chapter in a book.	Eat 5 different fruits or vegetables today.
Do an art project.	Learn all 50 state capitals.	Get dressed for no reason.	Listen to a relaxation track on the app Insight Timer.	Learn a new dance.
Take an online tour of a museum.	Send a teacher a thank-you email or message.	<b>Free Space</b>	Look up or list every sports team for the state of your choice.	Go on a family walk.
Memorize a rap song.	Do 3 yoga poses.	Watch funny animal videos with your family.	Do a jigsaw puzzle.	Complete a chore without being asked.
Help cook dinner.	Go outside and find out what kind of tree that is.	Create a collage for a friend.	Do 50 jumping jacks.	Clean out your closet.

**\* Some ideas for virtual museum tours:**

**Picasso Museum (Barcelona):** <http://www.bcn.cat/museupicasso/en/museum/presentation.html>

**Salvatore Dali Museum (Figueres, Spain):** <https://www.salvador-dali.org/en/museums/dali-theatre-museum-in-figueres/visita-virtual/#>

**The Museum of Flight (Seattle, WA):** <https://museumofflight.org/Explore-The-Museum/Virtual-Museum-Online>

**National Women's History Museum (Alexandria, VA):** <https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/online-exhibits>

# 5

## Dealing with Feelings of Sadness, Loss, and Grief

The second activity gave you the chance to get all of your feelings out. You may have expressed sadness caused by all of the losses you are experiencing due to this pandemic. This activity is specifically about processing loss and grief. Unlike when you have a personal loss, at this time, everyone around you has a sense of loss for what is being missed. There is the loss of a normal routine, plus the loss of all the things you were looking forward to and expecting would happen. Things that you felt were predictable are now changing.

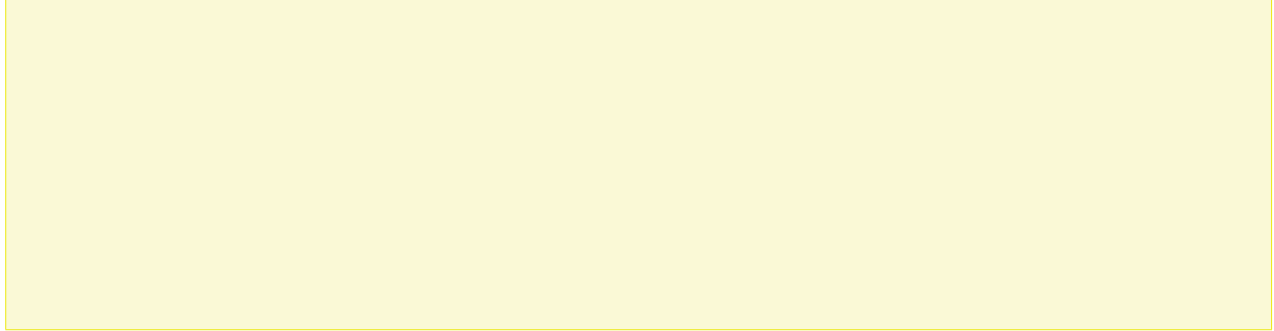
Grief is a normal reaction to loss. Dealing with loss and moving through grief involves understanding your feelings, giving your feelings the room they need, and then moving forward to adapt; in this case, adapting to a new normal. It can feel overwhelming at times, and like it's a lot of work to adjust. When you go back to school and in public, you will likely wear a mask and need to wash your hands a lot; that can feel very strange and unsettling. Yet, it can also bring a feeling of protection as wearing a mask and washing your hands is within your control. When dealing with loss, it's important to focus on what is *within your control*. Another very important thing to do is focus on the present moment. You might make a daily mantra that you tell yourself such as *"In this moment, I am okay. In this moment, everything is fine."*

The losses you are experiencing are real and meaningful, and yet, for some of them, there may be ways to minimize them by being flexible and coming up with an alternative. What can you do to adapt to this new situation and discover an alternative way to acknowledge or celebrate a milestone? For example, if you are missing the end of the year celebration at school, might you have one at home? Could you do a virtual hangout with your friends and all watch a movie together? How can you make a birthday celebration at home the most fun it can be?

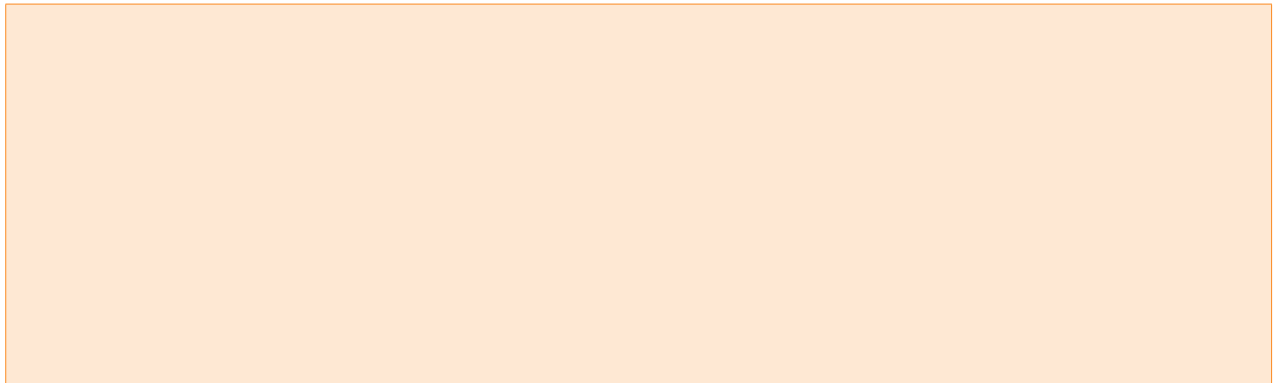


**Here is a three-part activity to help you work through loss and grief:**

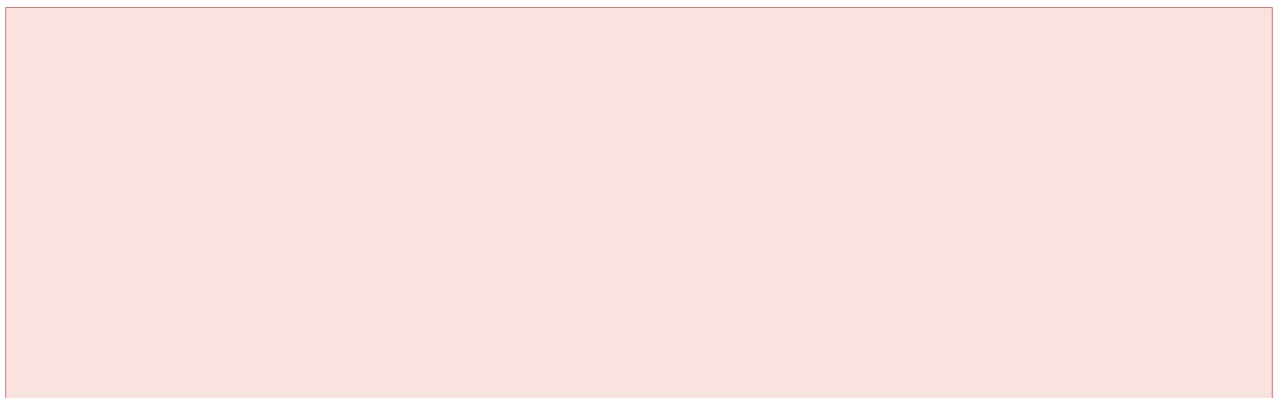
**First**, list all the losses you have had and possibly will have during this pandemic (such as not being able to go to camp over the summer, or take a family trip):



**Second**, write about how you feel. This is another chance to “let it all out,” and try not to hold back at all. Of these losses, which one feels the biggest? How does it make you feel? For example, you might feel sad, hopeless, or angry.



**Third**, what can you do to cope? Is there another version of the activity you could do? Do you need to come up with your own mantra? Will exercising or meditating help you feel better?





## Banishing Boredom

With everything on hold, it's easy to feel bored. Being in the same home, with the same people, day in and day out, can feel a bit boring. Yet, you also have the gift of time. Many children and teens are so busy after school and on the weekends that they have little down-time. What will you do with this newfound time, and how will you make it count?

If you have a screen (TV, phone, gaming device, laptop), it can be easy to be on it all the time. Screens are addicting because they can cause your brain to release the “feel-good” neurotransmitter called dopamine. The problem is that if you are on screens too much, it zaps your energy, hurts your eyes, and can make you have trouble with attention. So, limit the time you spend on screens: take breaks and get outside or do something else. Be on for an hour, then do another activity for the next hour. Set it up in advance so you are aware of the time; maybe your screen even has a convenient timer! Here are some suggestions to interrupt the cycle of boredom (and be sure to balance your screen time with breaks):

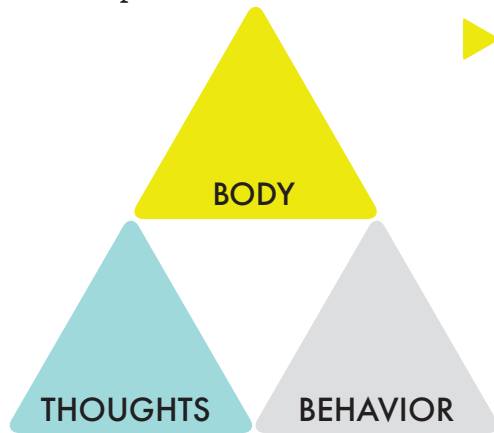
What are new hobbies or activities you are interested in trying? You can look at the Quarantine Bingo for ideas, such as going on a virtual tour of a museum online or learning all 50 state capitals. Can you get more into reading or doing art, or learn yoga?

What new skill can you learn during this time? Is there something you are curious about or always wanted to be good at? If you are already super into a sport, can you read a book on it or watch tutorials on YouTube to improve your skills?

What activities can you do with your family that will make this time more exciting? Are you able to go on a hike near water, or even a family walk in your neighborhood? Can you have a cookie contest to see who can bake the most delicious cookies? Can you watch all of the Lord of the Rings movies or The Voice together? Try to be creative and list three things you can do with your family:

## Managing Anxiety and Worry

In a pandemic, it is normal to worry and feel anxious. On top of all the stress and changes, you may worry about you or someone you care about getting coronavirus. You may have struggled with anxiety and worrying a lot before the pandemic (anxiety disorders are the most common psychological problem). Regardless, anxiety can be helped by addressing its three parts:



▶ **For the body:** find an app, like Calm or Insight Timer, to learn relaxation and calm breathing. There are many amazing apps that can help. Being in the present moment, and being mindful of your body and the space around you can help you feel grounded in the moment you are in. Also, doing restorative activities like taking a relaxing bath or getting comfortable with a soft blanket and reading a good book can really help.

▶ **For the thoughts:** write down all of your worries. Make a recording of them to “externalize” them and play it back, offering a different perspective on how they sound. If you are struggling with worries every day and it’s interfering with your life, make a “worry recording” where you list out all of your “What if...” thoughts and play it back for ten minutes a day until you become bored by the thoughts. It sounds counterintuitive to do this, but the brain becomes bored by information that is repeated over and over. Think of a commercial you’ve seen a hundred times: it’s hard to pay attention to it. For the first few days, your anxiety may go up, but at about day four or five of listening, you will start to find these thoughts unalarming and boring.

▶ **For the behavior:** anxiety can make you want to avoid things. For example, if you are afraid of showing your face on video-conferencing, try to challenge yourself and start the video. Or if you are nervous to say hello to your neighbor, challenge yourself to face your fears and say hello (while keeping physical distance of course). Anxiety can also make you feel like you have to ask a lot of questions or ask for reassurance from your parents. When you do this, it can make the anxiety worse, so try to challenge yourself by writing the questions down instead and delay asking them.

**List three things you will do to reduce your anxiety:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



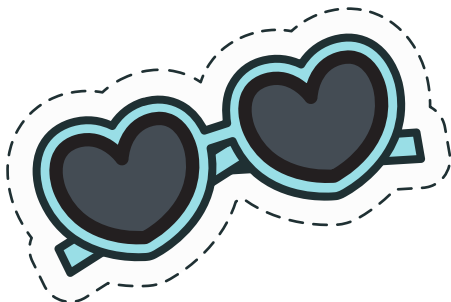


8

## Finding Gratitude

Gratitude is a feeling of appreciation or being thankful for what you have or what you are experiencing. You can feel grateful for the people you love, those you feel close to, those who help you and teach you. You can feel grateful for things you have, such as a full pantry of food, a favorite sweatshirt, or a tech device. You can also feel grateful for nature, such as the feeling of the warmth of the sun on your back, the soothing sound of the rain, or a bird chirping around. You can feel grateful for experiences you've had. At this time of the pandemic, there may be things that you didn't realize just how much you appreciated. In this way, you can find more gratitude.

Research has shown that spending time acknowledging what you are grateful for, focusing on that appreciation and awareness of all that you have, leads to a deeper sense of fulfillment in life. It's sort of the opposite of feeling sad and deprived. Your challenge now is to figure out what you are grateful for, and to live in a state of gratitude, not a state of deprivation. You can do this, even in the context of a pandemic!



To help guide you, here is a Gratitude Web for you to write in all the things you are grateful for. There are 20 circles so try to identify 20 things, people, places, experiences, qualities, and so on, that you are grateful for. We are grateful that you are taking the time to reflect and do this activity!



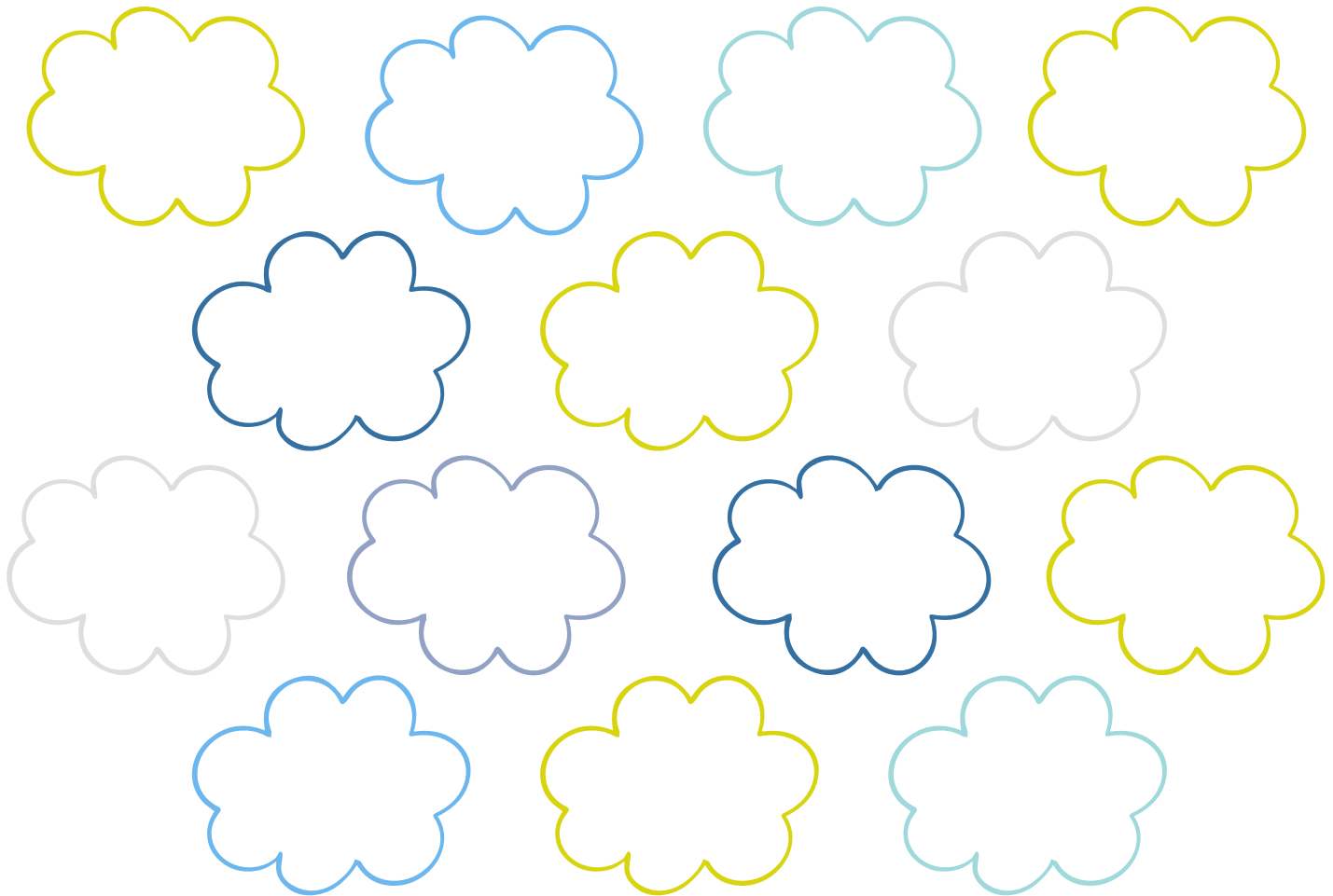


## Cultivating Creativity

You may already be a creative person, or you may want to become more creative. It's easy to get stuck in a routine of doing the same things. Now that your routine has temporarily changed, there is an opportunity to tap into your creativity. This page is about cultivating creativity; you may have already listed some ideas of how to be more creative under the Banishing Boredom section, but let's come up with even more ideas on how to be creative.

There are many ways to be creative: doing art, writing, choreographing a dance, making interesting TikTok videos or short films, doing makeup design, or reorganizing your room. Being creative also means coming up with new solutions to problems, breaking the routine and doing something new or different, or coming up with a new angle to see something. There are really endless possibilities for being creative.

Think about what you are most interested in doing to cultivate your own creativity, what will spark joy for you, and list your ideas here in these creativity clouds:





## Learning to Find Happiness and Thrive

Staying healthy and safe is the main goal of this pandemic. Learning to manage your emotions and focus on what you can control is another main goal. But there is a third goal, and that is to learn how to be happy and thrive at this time. You must give yourself permission to be happy and find ways to feel joy and peace. There is a great quote (by an unknown author) on peace: "Peace. It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart." This is what thriving is all about: being resilient and thriving means going through a tough time and coming out on top.

How can you stay positive during this time? What can you do to feel joy and happiness? How can you find ways to celebrate being alive? These are questions to consider. You can even ask yourself, "What would a positive person think about this?" or "What would someone who sees things with a positive attitude do in this situation?"



- List something you feel negatively about:

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- Now write down how you can think about it differently and what you can do about it:

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- List three things that have gone well today:

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- List three things you are looking forward to:

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Other ideas that encourage happiness:

- setting a small goal and meeting it
- hosting a celebration for your family and making it special
- exercising
- meditating
- reading your favorite book or watching your favorite movie
- listening to music and dancing
- expressing gratitude to others: tell them what you appreciate about them
- doing something nice or helpful for someone else
- spending time doing something you love to do
- using positive self-talk statements, such as "I can handle this" and "I've got this!"

**FREE  
SPACE**

Write or Draw Whatever You Want!



Write or Draw Whatever You Want!

A large, empty rectangular area with a dashed black border, intended for writing or drawing.

**Bonnie Zucker, PsyD**, is a licensed psychologist in private practice. She specializes in the treatment of anxiety disorders and is the author of *Something Very Sad Happened: A Toddler's Guide to Understanding Death*, *Anxiety-Free Kids*, *Take Control of OCD*, *Parenting Kids With OCD*, and co-author of *Resilience Builder Program for Children & Adolescents* and two relaxation CDs. She lives in Bethesda, Maryland.

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