



STAFF GUIDE



Emotional Wellbeing Team in Schools
(EWTS)
A programme of Support for Post Primary Schools



Take a Beat to calm the body.

**Empowering young people to take
ownership of their own bodies.**



Emotional Wellbeing Team in Schools
(EWTS)
A programme of Support for Post Primary School



Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership

SCAN ME



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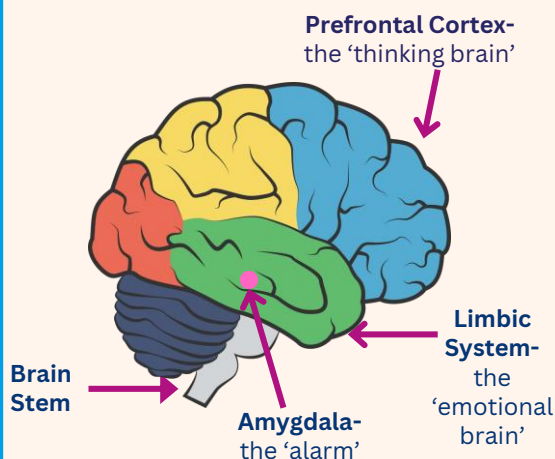
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With special thanks to **Carrickfergus Academy** for their support and input to this resource.

UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN & NERVOUS SYSTEM STATES

To better help young people in distress, we first need to understand the basics of how the brain works and what happens when the body's nervous system gets triggered.



Cortex: Thinking part of the brain and reasoning. The higher part of the brain.

Limbic System: Can be seen as the emotional brain.

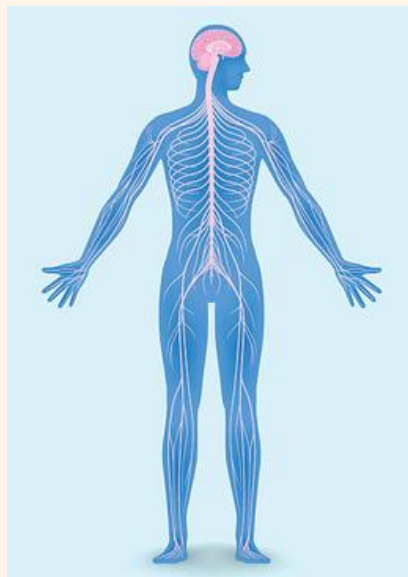
Amygdala: Regulates the stress response, like the brain's alarm system.

Brain Stem: The body's automatic functions like breathing, heart beating. Works with the limbic system to process and regulate emotions.

If we are to understand what happens when a young person's body becomes dysregulated we first need to understand the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS controls many of the body's functions that we don't even think about; like breathing, our heart beating, digesting food we eat. It has two main parts: the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system.

Sympathetic Nervous System

The body on high alert
Fight or flight
Associated with fear and anxiety
Heart rate is up
Breathing heavier/faster
Adrenaline released
Digestion shuts down
'Dysregulated'



Parasympathetic Nervous System

Associated with us being calm
Can be 'freeze mode'
Heart rate is down
Breathing is regular
'Rest and Digest' - bodily functions working
'Regulated'

DYSREGULATED - STUCK IN FIGHT OR FLIGHT

There are lots of things that can trigger a young person's sympathetic nervous system or threat system both inside and outside of school. Sometimes we might know what they are and sometimes it seems like it comes out of the blue.

What it might look like...



Complaining of sore head, muscles or tummy

Aggression toward others or oppositional



Can't concentrate or focus

Won't engage with you or others/withdrawn



Running away or avoiding places in school

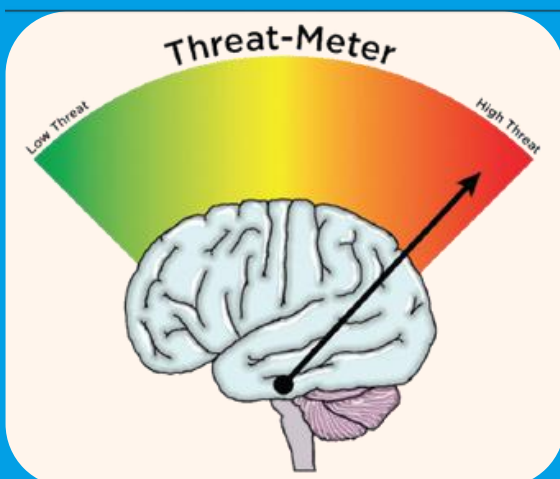
Low frustration tolerance



Emotional Outbursts



What's actually going on



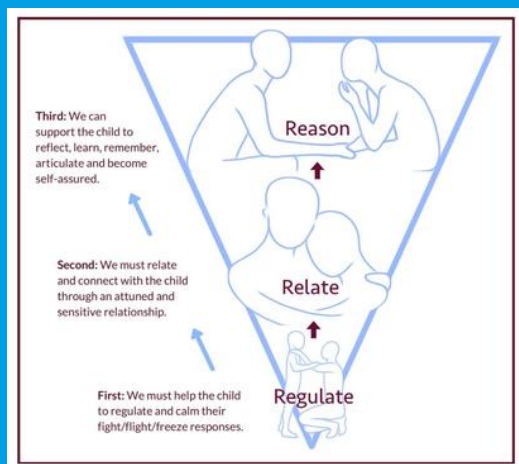
The young person is in threat/survival mode and their sympathetic fight or flight is activated.



The cortex or thinking brain is offline - they cannot reason or think clearly. The only thing that will work is to help regulate and calm the brain and body.

HELPING TO REGULATE

This is where **YOU** come in.
A young person is likely to need your help to regulate and calm their brain and body response. This won't always be obvious especially if they are pushing you away.



Dr. Bruce Perry said that to better help children and young people we must first help them regulate their body reaction, then relate and connect with them before they will be ready to reason.

Young people can only access their cortex/ thinking brain once they have calmed the body.

Make sure you're in a **safe space** and a calm environment

'Notice-
*'I can see you are...
having a tough time'*

Gently **bring them** to a regulating activity



HELPFUL TIPS

Use '**low and slow**'
tone and simple language

Don't ask too many questions
(**they can't answer**)

Self- Awareness
Notice your own state,
if you are triggered/stressed



INTRO VIDEO



Take a Beat to calm the body.

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HOW TO USE YOUR 'TAKE A BEAT' PACK

Although it is hard to actually know what nervous system state a young person is in, we can use our own observation (see 'Dysregulated- Stuck in Fight or Flight') and also we can use the symptom of an elevated heart beat. It is important to note that this is **NOT** a clinical assessment, rather encouraging and providing opportunity for a young person to see what rate their heartbeat is, and then use their choice and autonomy to choose an activity that will bring it down.

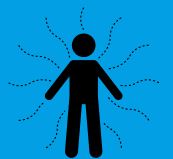


Invite the young person to place their finger in the finger heart rate monitor. (**ignore the O2%**)

The young person can then write their heart rate number onto the laminated worksheet shown on the right.



If their number is high then it may indicate that they are in fight or flight- this means there is extra energy pumping round their body that they need to release.



Encourage them to use their body to release the build up of stress energy in their body e.g. walking, pace back and forth, grip weights in the pack.



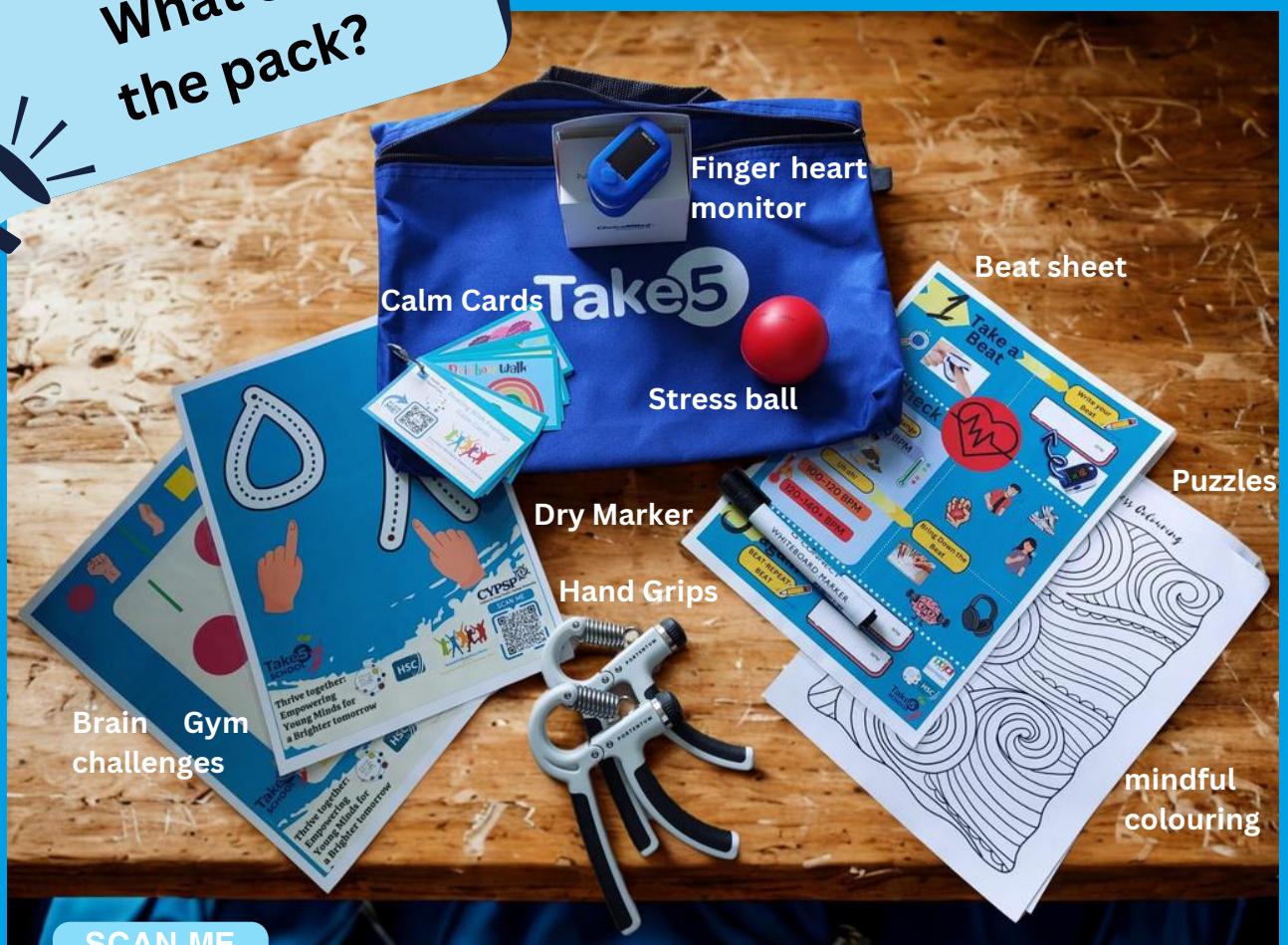
If using Take a Beat- note that the second reading will likely be high after movement or exercise. Use your observation to now suggest a more calming activity before taking the next reading.



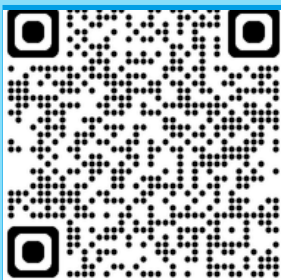
HELPING TO REGULATE USING TAKE A BEAT

‘Take A Beat’ is a resource pack designed to be added to your toolbox for helping a young person *regulate themselves*. It was designed in partnership with the Northern HSC Trust, Health and Wellbeing Team. We wanted to combine some *interactive tools* and an *opportunity for a young person* to tune into their body directly, to influence their energy state. You can offer the young person the choice of using ‘Take a Beat’.

What's in
the pack?



SCAN ME



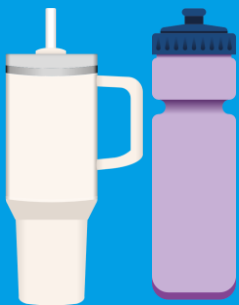
Please scan here to access a printable version of
the EWTS Calm Cards and more.

IDEAS FOR REGULATING AND KEY TIPS

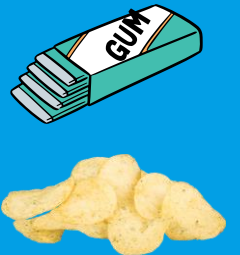


Other **FIDGETS** including blu tac, rubix cube, spinners etc. They work to help use some energy build up as well as serving as a distraction and aid for calming.

Liquid or other **TIMERS** are an invaluable resource in schools. They are a positive small aid that brings about a sense of calm, distraction and reduction in anxiety as it brings the focus to one thing and blocks out other external stimuli.

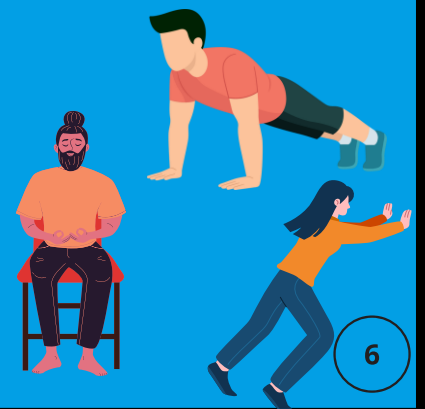


Similar motions to breathing techniques, **SUCKING ON THE STRAW** of a water bottle or **CHEWING** sweets, gum or a dry crunchy snack will provide oral deep motor pressure to help regulate.



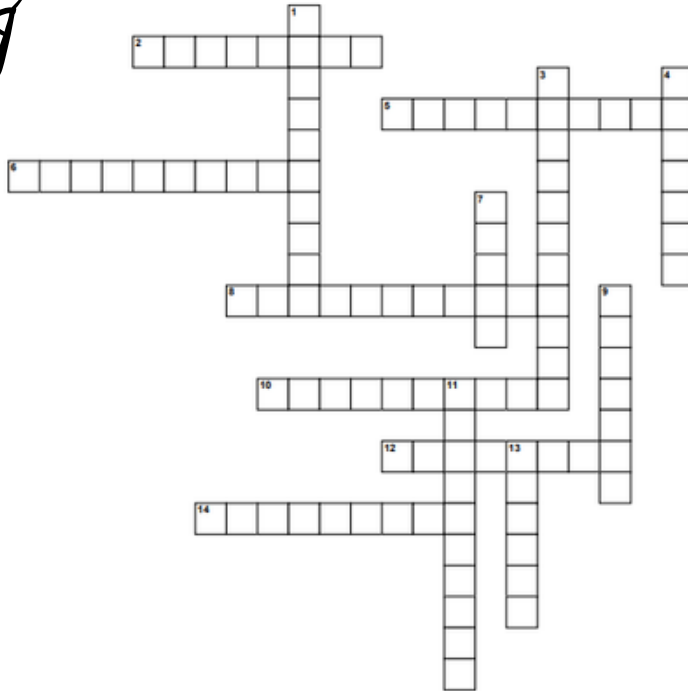
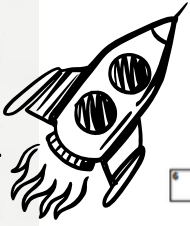
BREATHING exercises are a powerful way to calm the body. Try some of the suggested ones in the pack or use bubbles 'how many bubbles can you blow? Try to blow the biggest bubble.' Other options are to use straws to blow a cotton wool ball from one end of the table to the other.

Suggesting **CHAIR PUSHES**, **WALL PUSHES**, **PLANK** or **PRESS UPS** are great ways to catch and release the build up of stress energy in the body.





Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing



Across

- [2] Positive attributes of a person.
- [5] Feeling excited and ready to take action to accomplish a goal or idea.
- [6] Limits or rules we set for ourselves within relationships.
- [8] A combination of being present and acceptance of the here and now.
- [10] An experience that can influence sleep patterns, hygiene, enjoyment of activities etc.
- [12] Things you do regularly to maintain your mental health.
- [14] Acknowledging things you appreciate to boost your mood.

Down

- [1] Hostile or violent behavior or attitudes towards another
- [3] symptoms, such as thoughts, feelings and behaviors, that indicate your mental health might be at risk.
- [4] Worry, nervousness or fear that can also lead to physical symptoms.
- [7] A strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure or hostility
- [9] A person, place, event or situation that causes unwanted emotional or behavioral response.
- [11] Belief that one's self has value.
- [13] _____ skills help you manage your problems or symptoms when they arise.



Honest
Supportive
Respectful
Kind
Trustworthy



SUDOKO

		2			9			
		3	1					
9			5	7				4
			2					
3	5							8
		1			7	6		
2	4						1	5
		8					9	
	6						7	

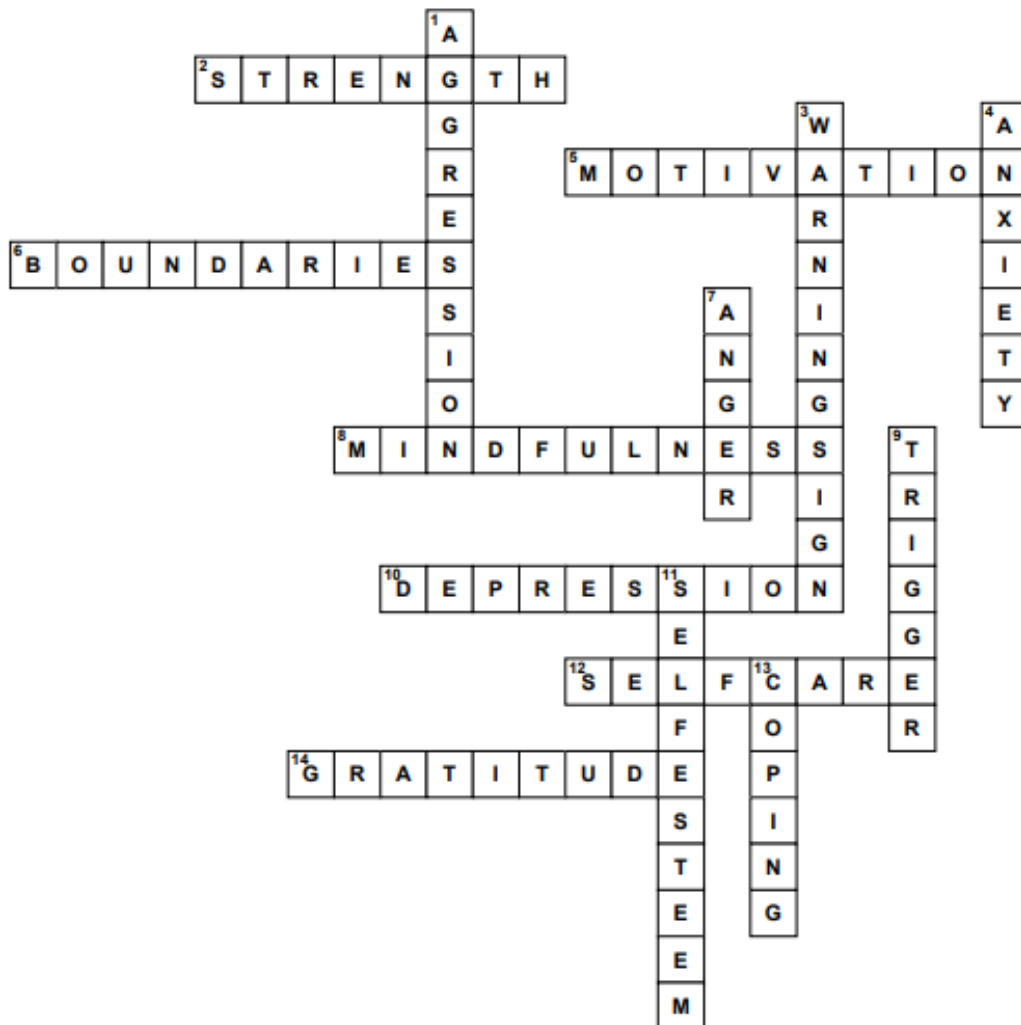
Can't solve it? Check the solution at <https://sudoku.cba.si/>

Real Connections Word Search

R Q D P P H Y M H J C O Y F R
D A R B O R T K A X V T L X E
G I L N P D T Z B J R T V I S
Q T E U H S E S X O M B X I P
F S R M P D R F P C H I M Q E
T S I U S O P S Y C W M J N C
H E M L S Y P V Y P P G Q P T
D N I K D T M V Y S O T J O F
B M R R H X W O U W I E S V U
C P N C G V S O I A M E U Q L
Z M D Q D K A K R R A I D O Y
I R U T T O G P T T H H L N M
L B Z M C W G I F Q H L Q K F
F L M G N N O J V J V Y X X V
S U P P O R T I V E M T S E D



Solution

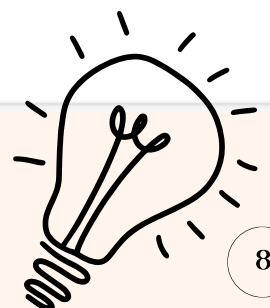


Across

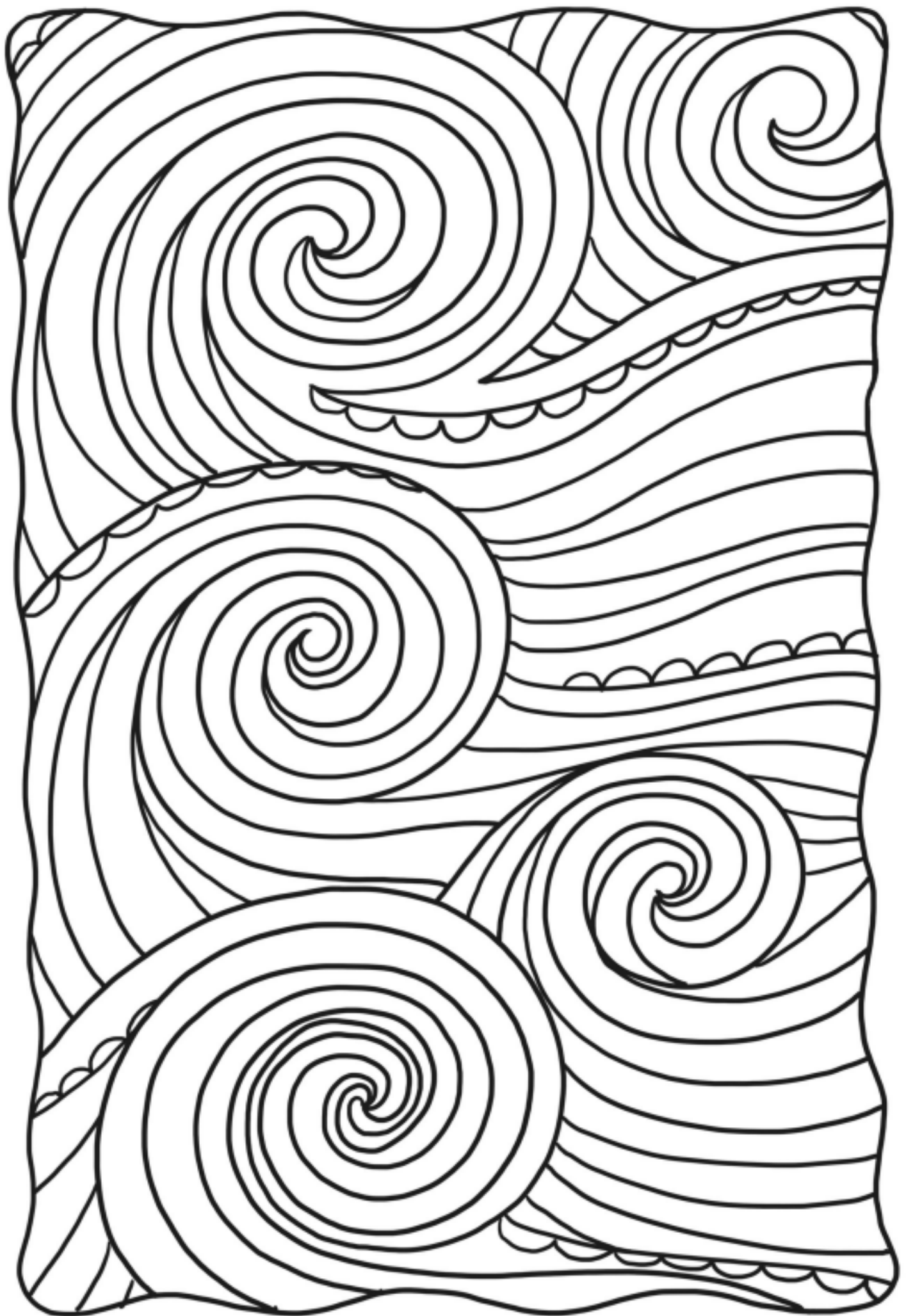
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Mindfulness Colouring





NOTES:

