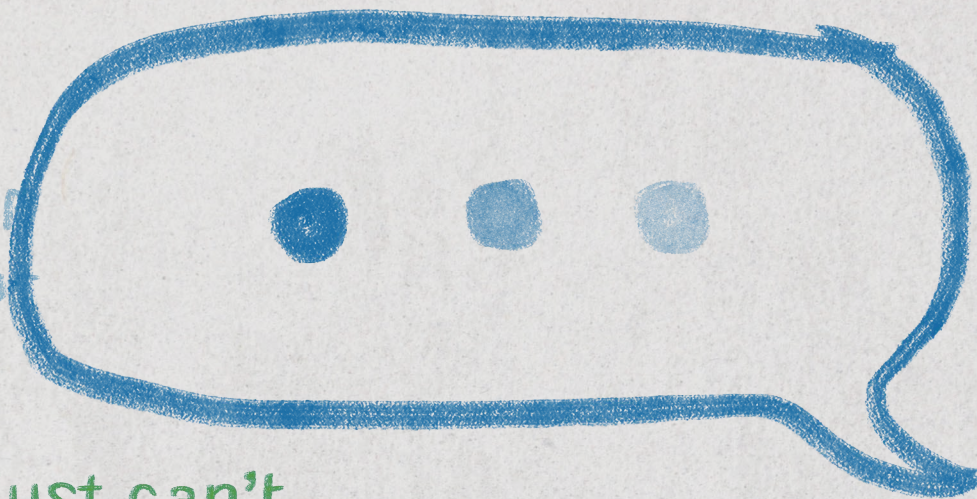


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INTRODUCTION AND CONTENTS



Hi there! Welcome to the *Ghosted* Educator Guide. We're happy that you and your students were able to see our production of *Ghosted*. We know that some of the issues in the show are hard to talk about—we also know that they are relevant and real for many of your students. The materials in this packet are designed to help you unpack and explore these issues.

This guide will walk you through different activities and lesson plans you can use to explore different aspects of mental health. We will use the characters from *Ghosted*—SYD, ANDRE, KAYLA and LIAM—to anchor the activities in a story the students are now familiar with. Exploring the stories of others often allows us to see our own stories more clearly.














There are a few different types of activities: creative writing, written activities, and active games. They will be marked with icons so you can quickly see which type of activity each one will be. Feel free to choose the activities that you feel most comfortable leading, and will be the most effective for your students. Enjoy!

 **Creative Writing**

 **Written Activity**

 **Active Game**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mental Health Handout.....	3
About Mental Health.....	3
Resources.....	3
About the Play	4
From Playwright Trista Baldwin.....	4
About the Characters.....	5
Anxiety and Stress.....	6
About Anxiety.....	6
Activities.....	7
 <i>Poem Generator</i>	7
 <i>Understanding Stress</i>	8
 <i>Action Plan</i>	9
Depression.....	10
About Depression.....	11
Activities.....	11
 <i>Monologue and Dialogues</i>	11
 <i>Scene Enactment</i>	12
 <i>Self-Care Bingo</i>	12
Supporting Friends / Boundaries.....	14
About Support.....	14
Activities.....	14
 <i>Boundaries</i>	14
 <i>It's Okay</i>	14
 <i>Yes / Okay / No</i>	15
 <i>The Three Bears</i>	16
Resilience and Mental Wellness.....	17
About Resilience and Mental Wellness.....	17
Activities.....	18
 <i>What's On My Plate</i>	18
 <i>Three Things</i>	20
 <i>Letter</i>	20

ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



Mental health is complex. There is no way to put the experiences of a unique human being into a box.

We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health.

We can be in poor health, have an illness, need treatment, and do things to support our health. We take care of our physical health by eating well, exercising, going to the doctor, getting sleep, among other things. There are some practices that are standard, but mostly we each figure out what works best for our bodies.

The same goes for mental health, and there are things we can do to support our mental health, or mental wellness. Things like going to therapy, having an adult we trust who we can talk to, taking care of our physical health, taking medication, thinking positively, meditating, being creative, among many other things, can support our mental wellness. But like with physical health, we can each figure out what we need to feel our best.

Whether or not we have mental health challenges, we can all support our mental wellness.

One approach to understanding mental health is to use diagnoses to help us understand the challenges that some of us face. Diagnoses include things like depression, anxiety, eating disorders, schizophrenia, PTSD, among many others. Each diagnosis, sometimes called a mental health condition, has a list of symptoms that someone experiences that fits that definition, and it can be helpful to have a label, or context, to the things we go through. But we can also treat mental health conditions, heal and change over time, and we are more than just our mental health conditions—we can always remember that mental health condition or not, we are who we are, and we can get support.

Sometimes, stigma can get in the way.

Stigma is a negative judgment or stereotype that is untrue. There are lots of stigmas around mental health issues - about the diagnoses themselves, or about specific people needing help. But any negative statement about struggle or getting help is **NOT TRUE**. If you hear a friend say something that might keep someone from feeling worthy of support, you can remind them that we don't always know what someone is going through, and that we all are worthy of getting help. If you find yourself thinking that you "shouldn't" need help, or can handle something on your own, you can remind yourself that asking for help is a **strong, powerful** thing to do. Whatever helps us live our best lives, and be our best selves, is worth it.

We all struggle in life sometimes, and it doesn't necessarily mean we have a mental health condition. If you feel like you need support, you deserve it. If what you're experiencing is getting

in the way of your ability to genuinely enjoy your life, then you deserve support. If you generally feel great, you still deserve support.

This is important. You can always seek help, no matter what. There are people and resources that are here for you. There are specific people and resources within your community, so feel free to ask a teacher or someone you trust if they can help you find someone. In addition, below are resources you can always access from anywhere.

RESOURCES

ONLINE

OK2Talk

www.ok2talk.org

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-Young-Adults

Teen Mental Health

www.teenmentalhealth.org

PHONE

Did you know that there are “warm lines” where people will talk or text with you about what you’re going through without judging you, even if you’re not “in a crisis?” You can call or text anytime.

National Suicide Prevention

Hotline 24/7

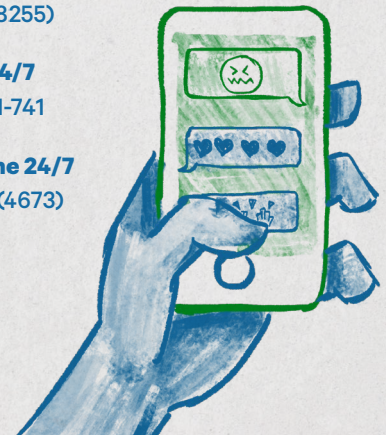
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line 24/7

Text “Start” to 741-741

Rape Crisis Hotline 24/7

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)



FROM PLAYWRIGHT TRISTA BALDWIN



Ghosted is a play about the often-stigmatized topic of anxiety and depression. When I was approached by Seattle Children's Theatre (SCT) to write this play, I remembered how hard it was when I was in high school to talk openly about sad or anxious feelings. I remembered feeling alone with questions about whether I was "normal" for certain feelings or reactions I had. And I thought about all the things I have learned since that time. The first thing to do was start a conversation.

Writing *Ghosted* has been a community endeavor as well as a personal one. Early in the process, SCT had me in contact with members of their teen panel. I listened to teens talk about what their impressions were of how their schools and peers handled talking about anxiety and talking about depression. I heard stories from teens about friends they worried about, periods of anxiety or depression that they personally overcame, and how adults in their lives were best able to help them through.

Depression and anxiety have affected me personally in a number of ways. As a former professor of creative writing, many of my students were impacted by mental health issues. There were a few times that I was told of a rumor that a student of mine was suicidal. It was so hard to know what to do. In *Ghosted*, the character of Kayla reflects some of my own feelings: what can I do to help? What should I do? What shouldn't I do?

I was always aware that my concern for my students was heightened by grief—by my own experience of loss. My brother died of suicide when he was just 17, a junior in high school. He was suddenly and without warning gone from this world. My own grief leads me, sometimes, to worry too much when I see a young person struggling with depression. But what is too much? What is enough? These questions can be haunting and hard.

The greatest fear when a person you know seems seriously depressed is that you may lose them. That the person could "ghost." In the moments where I myself have struggled

with depression, it is like a part of me disconnects, drops away, and I am just a "ghost" of myself. That is why the play is called *Ghosted*. It is driven by the fear of this sudden disconnect. Of losing connection to a friend—or even to your sense of self.

As I wrote *Ghosted*, I thought of my family's experience, my students experience, and I listened to teens talk about their experiences of being worried for a friend, or themselves. How would they know when a friend needed help? How would they know if they themselves needed help?

So much is clearer in the light.

In *Ghosted*, Syd is willing to shine light on her own struggle with her recently-diagnosed anxiety. By being vulnerable, Syd empowers Andre and the other characters to do the same.

When we don't share difficult things with others, it can reinforce the stigma around them. If we don't know anyone else who is struggling, we might feel our own struggles are too weird, too wrong, or too big to share. But when someone opens the door and admits they are having a problem, it can throw light on everyone's problems, and suddenly we are not so alone.

Ultimately, *Ghosted* is about breaking down the barriers to talking about anxiety and depression as a first step to understanding. None of us are ever as alone as we think we are. And that's a good place to start to get better.

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS



SYD

Syd has been diagnosed with anxiety and experiences panic attacks. She talks about mental health freely with the people around her, and encourages the other characters to support their own mental wellbeing as well.

ANDRE

He's a star athlete, and has been struggling to feel like himself. He's experiencing a lot of pressure, and expresses a sense of hopelessness and disconnection from his life.

KAYLA

As Andre's girlfriend and the only person he's told about what he's feeling, she is very focused on figuring out how to help him. She isn't sure where to turn, and is losing herself in the process.

LIAM

He is getting into trouble at school, with bursts of anger, yet is also a curious person interested in those around him. His mother is living with substance use disorder, and Liam is struggling to feel supported in his family.

While SYD is the only character who expresses having a diagnosed mental health condition in the play, the activities throughout this guide refer to the characters alongside mental health issues they might be experiencing. Feel free to refer to the characters as you work with your students, so they can feel grounded and connected to the play they saw together.



ABOUT ANXIETY



“Anxiety” is a term often used casually to describe feelings of stress and worry. For example, speaking in front of a group can make us anxious, but that anxiety also motivates us to prepare and practice. Driving in heavy traffic is another common source of anxiety, but it helps keep us alert and cautious to avoid accidents. However, when feelings of intense fear and distress become overwhelming and prevent us from doing everyday activities, an anxiety disorder—a diagnosable mental health condition—might be the cause.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States. An estimated 40 million adults in the U.S. (18%) have an anxiety disorder. Meanwhile, approximately 8% of children and teenagers experience an anxiety disorder. Most develop symptoms before age 21.

SYMPTOMS

Anxiety disorders are a group of related conditions, each having unique symptoms. However, all anxiety disorders have one thing in common: persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening. People typically experience one or more of the following symptoms:

Emotional symptoms:

- Feelings of apprehension or dread
- Feeling tense or jumpy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Anticipating the worst and being watchful for signs of danger

Physical symptoms:

- Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath
- Sweating, tremors and twitches
- Headaches, fatigue and insomnia
- Upset stomach, frequent urination or diarrhea

TREATMENT

Different anxiety disorders have their own distinct sets of symptoms. This means that each type of anxiety disorder also has its own treatment plan. But there are common types of treatment that are used. Please visit our Anxiety Treatment page for more in-depth information on the following methods:

- Psychotherapy, including cognitive behavioral therapy
- Medications, including antianxiety medications and antidepressants
- Complementary health approaches, including stress and relaxation techniques

Source: nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Anxiety-Disorders

ACTIVITIES



POEM GENERATOR

In the play, SYD shows us some ways she manages her anxiety, like taking deep breaths and working to organize her thoughts. She also uses creativity to express her internal world. This activity is to get us thinking creatively, expressing any thoughts and feelings that we feel inspired to share, within the structure of a poem. Invite your students to write down each line's prompt, and then complete the line with the first thing that comes to mind—and it doesn't have to rhyme! Students can choose to complete some or all of the line prompts, with the result being a poem that is uniquely theirs, while getting them out of their heads and focusing on something creative.

TITLE

I am

FIRST STANZA

I am (two special characteristics you have)
I wonder (something you are actually curious about)
I hear (an imaginary sound)
I see (an imaginary sight)
I want (an actual desire)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

SECOND STANZA

I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
I touch (an imaginary touch)
I worry (something that really bothers you)
I cry (something that makes you very sad)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA

I understand (something you know is true)
I say (something you believe in)
I dream (something you actually dream about)
I try (something you really make an effort about)
I hope (something you actually hope for)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)



UNDERSTANDING STRESS

All of the characters in *Ghosted* seem to feel stress at different times, and in different ways. KAYLA finds it stressful to be the only person who knows about what ANDRE is going through. SYD feels stress when those around her are arguing, leading to a panic attack. LIAM is dealing with life stressors with a challenging home life, and ANDRE is under a lot of stress to be “successful.” We all have things in our lives that cause us stress, and it’s important to understand how they affect us, and how we can live with—and work through—the stress that we feel.

Part One: Where My Stress Lives

You can begin by asking the class a few questions to get the conversation started:

What are things that can cause us stress?

What might stress look like in our bodies?

Do different types of stress affect different parts of our bodies?

By keeping the questions general and hypothetical, students might feel more permission to answer (rather than asking “What does stress look like in YOUR body?”), and can start thinking about their own experience as you move into the activity.

Pass out copies of the outline of a body to each student. Have them spend a few minutes writing down stressful experiences, or types of stress, on or near the parts of their body that might feel that stress. You can talk through some examples, like “When I feel stressed about a test, my shoulders get really tight” or “When I’m fighting with a friend, my stomach feels twisty like it’s in knots.” Let them know that they’ll be invited to share what they come up with in groups or with the class, so they can be mindful of that as they decide what to write.

You can then invite students to form pairs or groups of 3-4 to talk through what they wrote, or go straight to asking the class as a whole. You can draw parallels of similarities, and point out how interesting it is that different people have different reactions to the same stressors. You can validate that it all makes sense, and there’s no one way, or right way, to feel stress.

Part Two: Types of Stress

Sometimes, stress can be helpful. Feeling a little bit of stress about an upcoming test can help motivate us to study more. Other types of stress can feel bad, like being stressed about a fight with a friend and not knowing how to make it better. And some stress can really hurt us, like if we’re so stressed about something that we can’t focus on anything else. We can call these types of stress: Positive, Negative and Toxic Stress.

Have your students write Positive, Negative and Toxic at the top of a piece of paper, making three columns. Invite them to spend a few minutes writing down examples of each type of stress from their life, or things they imagine might be each type of stress. You can then have them share in small groups, or with the whole class. You can notice together that not everyone will put a particular stressor in the same category; what’s Positive for some might be Negative or Toxic for others. It can even vary for each of us individually; test stress might be Positive sometimes, and Negative or Toxic at other times. You can also point out that the difference between Negative Stress and Toxic Stress can be the lack of a support system - internal or external - and therefore the ability to tolerate the stress.

You can invite students to spend a few more minutes thinking outside the box, moving things around, drawing arrows, putting the same stressor in multiple categories. Life doesn’t always fit neatly into columns, especially when it comes to mental health.



ACTION PLAN

In the play, SYD showed us her action plan for how to support herself. When she feels a panic attack starting, she knows to try to breathe deeply, think positive thoughts, find somewhere that feels safe, sit down, and ask for what she needs. Whether we have a diagnosed / diagnosable anxiety disorder or not, it's important to think about our own action plan. When we start to not feel okay, if we have an action plan, it can be much easier to keep ourselves from entering into a crisis state.

Designate four areas of the room, and have a poster paper or board space in each area.
You can pre-label the four areas:

- ***To help myself when I feel stressed or anxious, I can tell myself:***
- ***To help myself when I feel stressed or anxious, I can help my body by:***
- ***To help myself when I feel stressed or anxious, I can talk to:***
- ***To help myself when I feel stressed or anxious, I can take action by:***

Have students choose which area they feel most connected to right now, and go to that area, making sure there are at least two people in each area. Give the students a few minutes to brainstorm examples together, writing out anything and everything they can think of (whether it's true for them, or something they imagine can be helpful).

You can then invite each group (or a representative from each group) share their list with the rest of the class. After a group presents, see if anyone else in the class has any other ideas to add to the list.

Alternatively, you can have students walk around the room and write ideas on any or all of the posters, and then discuss each one as a class.

You can close the activity by having each student make their own action plan, bringing a piece of paper around to each of the four areas, and writing down the things that feel like they might be helpful for them (and adding any others not already on the posters).

ABOUT DEPRESSION



Depression, as a diagnosable mental health condition, is more than just feeling sad or going through a rough patch; it can be debilitating and can require medical care. Left untreated, depression can be devastating for those who have it and their families. Fortunately, with early detection, diagnosis and a treatment plan consisting of medication, psychotherapy and healthy lifestyle choices, many people can and do get better.

Some will only experience one depressive episode in a lifetime, but for most, depressive disorder recurs. Without treatment, episodes may last a few months to several years.

An estimated 16 million American adults—almost 7% of the population—had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. People of all ages and all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds experience depression, but it does affect some groups more than others.

SYMPTOMS

Depression can present different symptoms, depending on the person. But for most people, depressive disorder changes how they function day-to-day, and typically for more than two weeks. Common symptoms include:

- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of concentration
- Loss of energy
- Lack of interest in activities
- Hopelessness or guilty thoughts
- Changes in movement (less activity or agitation)
- Physical aches and pains
- Suicidal thoughts

TREATMENT

Although depressive disorder can be a devastating condition, it often responds to treatment. The key is to get a specific evaluation and treatment plan. Safety planning is important for individuals who have suicidal thoughts. A patient-centered treatment plan can include any or a combination of the following:

- Psychotherapy including cognitive behavioral therapy, family-focused therapy and interpersonal therapy.
- Medications including antidepressants, mood stabilizers and antipsychotic medications.
- Exercise can help with prevention and mild-to-moderate symptoms.
- Brain stimulation therapies can be tried if psychotherapy and/or medication are not effective. These include electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) for depressive disorder with psychosis or repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) for severe depression.
- Light therapies use a light box to expose a person to full spectrum light in an effort to regulate the hormone melatonin.
- Alternative approaches including acupuncture, meditation, faith and nutrition can be part of a comprehensive treatment plan, but do not have strong scientific backing.

Source: nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Depression

ACTIVITIES



MONOLOGUE AND DIALOGUES

Part One: Monologue

This activity allows students to think creatively about what it might be like to live with depression. In the play ANDRE talks about feeling unmotivated, disconnected from the people in his life, and feels like there's no future for him. He shares these thoughts through dialogue, and KAYLA tells us a little bit about ANDRE's experience as well. But what if we could hear straight into ANDRE's mind?

In this activity, you can invite students to create a monologue from the perspective of ANDRE, or another person or character of their choosing—they can even make someone up. As they prepare with pen and paper, you can read them the following activity description:

"A monologue isn't just internal thoughts—it's a tool used in theater to let an audience know what's going on a character's mind. It can include thoughts and feelings that the character wouldn't normally say out loud, but because it's the theater, we can use our imaginations to see that for this character, they are indeed alone even though they're speaking out loud. Here are the prompts for your monologue:

1. Write in the first person: "I, me, we."
2. Write from the perspective of someone with depression. See if you can find creative ways to incorporate some common symptoms of depression, like a lack of concentration, lack of motivation, trouble sleeping, hopelessness, low energy.
3. Think about how thoughts and feelings in your mind work. When you feel sad, are you thinking, "I feel sad right now?" It's probably not as direct as that, so try finding creative, specific ways to express a feeling, like "I feel like my hands aren't my hands, like some stranger is living my life."
4. See if you can find a light, even just a spark—even with the pain we carry, there might be something that can give us hope, even if we can't always see it.

5. Your monologue should be between 5-8 sentences."

Give students about 10 minutes to write their monologues, and then invite them to share with a partner. They can read their monologues to each other, and/or talk about what it was like to write the monologue.

Part Two: Dialogues

In the play, KAYLA seems to have trouble finding what to say to ANDRE that will help him feel better. Sometimes, her well-meaning comments seem to upset ANDRE or cause him to turn away from her. In this activity, students will explore the kinds of comments that might be unhelpful to someone living with depression, vs. what might be helpful. You can read the following activity description:

"A dialogue is a conversation between two or more characters on stage. In this exercise, the character whose monologue you just wrote will be one character, and their friend will be the other character. You're going to write two different scenes:

1. First scene: Have the scene start with the friend asking: "Hey, are you doing okay?" and your character saying, "I don't know." Then have the conversation go a few more lines, with the friend saying at least one thing that is trying to be helpful, but could actually make someone with depression feel bad.
2. Second scene: Start the scene in the same way, with the same first two lines. But now, have the friend say at least one thing that could be genuinely helpful for someone with depression."

After giving students about 10 minutes to write their dialogues, invite them to share with a partner. They can read their monologues to each other, and/or talk about what it was like to write the monologue.



SCENE ENACTMENT

This builds on the dialogue activity above. You can invite a student to volunteer their scenes to be acted out and discussed. Volunteer actors can come up—reminding students that you don't have to have any acting experience to do a wonderful job!—and read and act out the scenes. You can ask the class what they noticed, how the two scenes were different. Where might the friend have been coming from with the well-meaning but unhelpful line? How was the helpful line a positive thing to say?



SELF-CARE BINGO

This bingo activity is meant to give students a variety of coping mechanisms that might help them spend the time learning more about how to take care of themselves. This activity is not meant to be used as a solution for students who may be dealing with issues of depression or an anxiety disorder. They can definitely help, but it's not a substitute for treatment and support from professionals.

Week One

Challenge your students to create a Horizontal/Diagonal Bingo. This will allow students to try something from each of the four types of coping mechanisms: Creative, Physical, Meditation/Mindfulness, and Outreach. The reason behind this is that we are all different. Different strategies work for different people, and for some, physical coping mechanisms might not work as well as creative ones, and so forth. During this week, encourage students to reflect on how each of the coping mechanisms worked for them by asking questions such as:

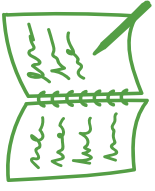





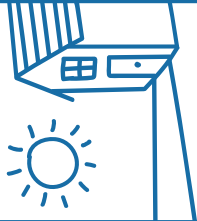

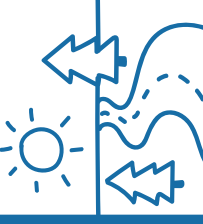


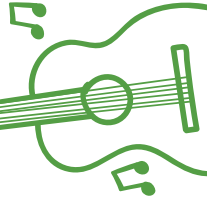
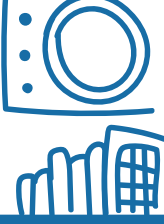


- *How much did you enjoy that activity?*
- *Did you feel less stressed/anxious after completing that activity?*
- *Would you use this activity again during times of high stress/anxiety?*
- *Do you have other ideas of activities that have worked for you during high stress/anxiety?*

Week Two

Challenge your students to create a Vertical Bingo. After reflecting on week one, have students each choose one of the four types of coping mechanisms that they believe worked best for them and challenge them to complete all four activities in that category to create their vertical bingo. This will help students begin to create a habit of self-care and help in building resilience.

SELF-CARE BINGO

BUILD RESILIENCE
WAYS YOU CAN

	CREATIVE	PHYSICAL	MEDITATION/ MINDFULNESS	OUTREACH	CREATIVE	PHYSICAL	MEDITATION/ MINDFULNESS	OUTREACH
	Journal	Take a Shower/ Bath	Breathe/ Meditate	Call/Text Friend/ Family				
	Draw/ Doodle	Exercise	Develop Personal Mantras	Get Out of the House			<i>change my thoughts change the world change my thoughts change the world</i>	
	DIY (knit, craft, puzzle, etc.)	Go for a Walk/ Drive	Read a Book	See a Therapist/ Doctor				
	Learn an Instrument	Be Productive (clean, cook, organize)	Listen to Music	Call a Hotline				

**CAN YOU GET
4 IN A ROW?**

The activities in this section are to help students navigate how to best support each other and themselves, and gives them ideas and concrete tools for how to help, and when to reach out to a trusted adult for help.

ACTIVITIES



BOUNDARIES

Knowing what our boundaries are when supporting our friends is incredibly important, for both our own wellbeing as well as our friends' wellbeing. In GHOSTED, we saw KAYLA struggling with how to support ANDRE and what he was feeling. She didn't know whom to talk to, or even if she should talk to anyone, and she felt worried about him. When our boundaries are really Open, we can end up taking on more than we know how to hold, and potentially missing opportunities for our friends to get support from adults and professionals. When our boundaries are really Rigid, we might miss signs that our friends are not okay, and might leave them feeling without any support at all. If we are able to have Balanced Boundaries, we are able to listen to our intuition and offer support within our ability, and step back when it feels like we might not be the best support at that time.

Invite students to reflect on the boundaries they set in their own lives as they support their friends. Do they generally say "yes" to things, even if they might not want to? Do they generally say "no" to things even if it might be something

they enjoy? Are they able to assess how they feel in the moment and say "yes" or "no" depending on how they feel? Or some combination? They can explore these questions however they'd like, by writing, drawing, writing a poem, or anything else.

Please note that talking about boundaries can be challenging for some people, so offer encouragement that even if we don't like the type of boundaries we typically set, we can work on the choices we make. We might not always be free to set the boundaries we want to set, so help the conversation stay specific to supporting our friends. If a student appears triggered or seems to be struggling, see if they need additional support, perhaps from a counselor or a crisis text line or phone number.

You can invite students to share with a partner, or go straight to having a conversation as a class. You can ask questions like, "is it easier to set boundaries in certain situations?" and "What might help us say 'no' to things we're not feeling able to do?"



IT'S OKAY

This prompt is to help students think about setting their own boundaries. Sometimes, it comes down to giving ourselves permission to put our needs first. It's like the instructions on the airplane: put your own oxygen mask on before helping the person next do you. If we don't have our own oxygen, we won't be able to effectively support those around us. Having boundaries isn't being selfish, it's being human.

Invite students to spend some time writing in response to the following prompts:

"It's okay to say "no" when:"

"It's okay to say "yes" when:"

You can discuss as a class, seeing what each person has found in terms of feeling empowered to say "yes" and "no" when we need and want to do so.



YES/OKAY/NO

Have students partner up, ideally with someone they're comfortable with, and stand facing each other at least six feet apart. Throughout this game, one person in the pair will be giving direction, and the other will be moving according to the direction they were given. However, the person moving will always have the agency to not move according to the direction if the direction is to move closer and the moving person does not want to do so. The first round will be the person giving direction simply giving direction, but the second round will be a little bit contextualized, with the moving person asking for help, and the direction person deciding if they feel comfortable giving that help. The game is an exercise in a) feeling into ourselves and what feels comfortable, b) clearly communicating a boundary, c) respectfully adhering to a boundary someone else has set.

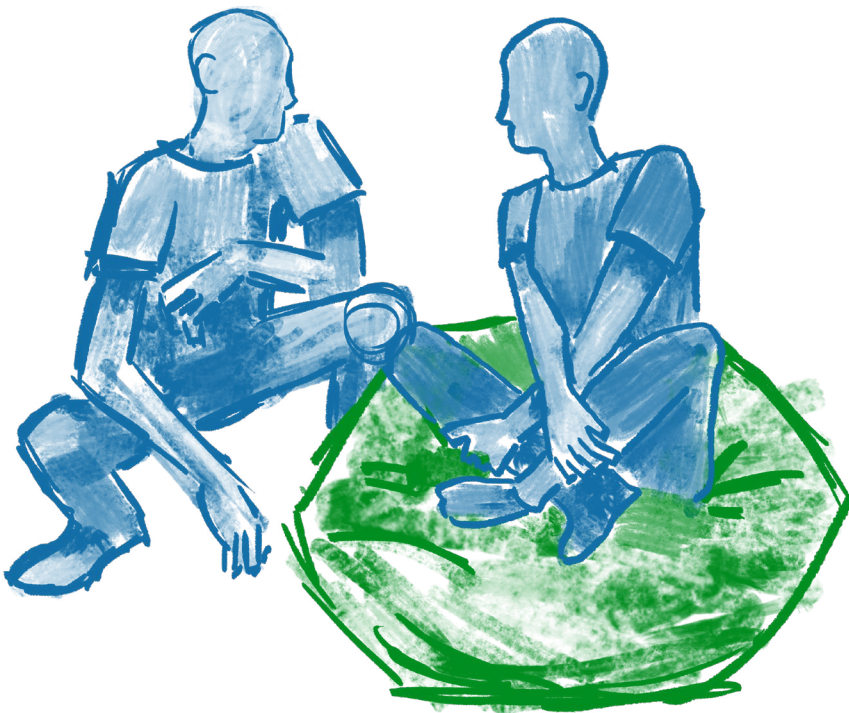
Have the pairs choose who is Person A and who is Person B. Person A will begin by giving direction.

- **When Person A says, “Yes,” Person B will take a step towards Person A.**
- **When Person A says, “Okay,” Person B will stay where they are.**
- **And when Person A says, “No,” Person B will take a step away from Person A.**
- **Remember, when Person A says, “Yes,” Person B can respond with “No” if they do not want to take a step closer.**

After a few minutes of this, pause the activity and have everyone turn to face you. Ask if anyone would like to share what that was like for them. What was it like to say yes? To say no? When did you know what you wanted to say? What was it like for you to think about what you wanted to say next?

Have them repeat the activity with Person B giving direction, and have the same debrief.

Now, repeat the activity one more time, but this time, when Person A is giving direction, they'll actually be responding to Person B. Person B will ask, “Can you help me?” and Person A will respond with “Yes,” “Maybe” or “No” (this time “Maybe” meaning Person B stays where they are until they are ready to ask again). Partway through, pause the activity and give Person A the opportunity to change their “No”s into a “No, but I know someone who can.” When the activity is done, ask for reflections on what that was like, and also ask if it felt different to say “No,” vs. “No, but I know someone who can.” Repeat one more time with Person B giving direction, and Person A making the ask, and debrief.



THE THREE BEARS

This activity is to help students figure out what they have the capacity to hold, and what to do with the things that feel too big for them.

Part One: Making the List

Have students make three columns on a piece of paper, labeled: “No Problem,” “Not Sure,” and “Too Much.” You will offer up a list of scenarios, and they will write down which column each one falls in for them. You can liken it to the Goldilocks and the Three Bears story, with some scenarios feeling too hard (Too Much), some feeling not quite right (Not Sure), and some feeling just right (No Problem). You can add that they can put a star next to the ones that feel context-specific; in general, the scenario fits into one column, but sometimes it can be in another too. The scenarios you can offer are:

- *My friend tells me their parents are fighting all the time and they don't feel like they have anyone to talk to.*
- *My friend tells me they haven't felt like they had a reason to live for a long time.*
- *I've been having lots of nightmares and haven't gotten a full night's sleep in months.*
- *I find a letter my friend wrote that looks like a suicide letter.*
- *My friend's partner broke up with them and they call me crying most nights.*
- *My friend tells me that they have OCD, and I'm the only person they've told.*
- *I find myself shaking and having trouble breathing sometimes, and don't know what's going on.*
- *My partner tells me that they don't want to be more open with me because they have PTSD, but they didn't tell me what kind of trauma they experienced and I'm scared I'll do something wrong.*
- *My friend tells me they've been seeing a therapist and they'd like to tell me about what that's like for them.*

Give students a few minutes to categorize the scenarios. Affirm that everyone might respond to each scenario differently, and there are no right or wrong ways to categorize them. Then, you can have students debrief in pairs, small groups, or as a class. They don't have to share their lists with anyone but you can have them discuss the process. Were some scenarios tricky to categorize? What helped you decide which column to put things in? How does it feel to have scenarios in each column?

Part Two: Who You Gonna Call?

Discuss as a class what we can do when the scenarios in the Not Sure or Too Much categories come up. Have them brainstorm trusted adults, resources, and opportunities for additional support, and help them build that list with the resources in the beginning of this guide if needed. You can have students write down all of the resources they come up with, or you can keep track of what they say, and later make a list to pass out to them to keep.

ABOUT RESILIENCE AND MENTAL WELLNESS



Resilience is what keeps us going when things get difficult. It helps us recover from struggle, heal from pain, and find strength from within. We can build up our resilience, especially when things are going well, so when challenges arise, we have practiced accessing our resilience and know how to persevere. We all have the capacity for resilience.

We also all have the capacity for mental wellness. Whether we have mental health challenges or not, we can all practice mental wellness—the things that strengthen our mental health and help us be able to live our best lives. Mental wellness looks different for everyone, as do mental wellness practices. They can be solitary things, like being creative, being active, taking medication, etc., or things that involve others, like going to therapy, calling a friend, talking to someone we trust, or doing an activity with people who make us feel good. For SYD, sitting in the bean bag is an example of a mental wellness activity. For KAYLA, it was going to talk to the school counselor. All of the characters in *Ghosted* are engaging with mental wellness in their own ways, grappling with what might be able to help them feel their best.



ACTIVITIES



WHAT'S ON MY PLATE

This activity can be helpful as we work to figure out why we feel the way we feel. In *Ghosted*, we saw LIAM struggle with things like being upset and violence, but then we also saw him be calm with a sense of humor. Perhaps he needs some support in really looking at what's going on in his life, what's on his plate, and what he can use some help with.

You can either pass out copies of the activity, or have students draw their own circle or column. Then give students a few minutes to write down everything they can think of that takes up space in their life, mind and body. You can instruct students with the following:

“This exercise is called What’s on My Plate. You’ll notice we’ve divided the plate into four sections. We are not saying one aspect of our lives is more important than another, we’re just using this as a tool to help us organize our plate. We have Responsibilities, like work, school, teams, clubs, chores, things like that. Then, we have Relationships, like siblings, parents, friends, partners, communities, etc. Next, we have Interests, like our passions, favorite things, hobbies, etc. And finally, we have Goals, like our dreams, career goals, financial goals, who we want to be. Take time to list as many things on your plate as you can. You will be sharing this with at least one other person, so share what you feel comfortable sharing.”

After a few minutes of working, you can give an additional prompt:

“Next we’d like you to delve into your plate further. Put a heart next to something you feel feeds or sustains you. Put a check mark next to something you wish someone could help you with. Put a star next to something not everyone knows about you.”

Then you can have students find a partner and share what's on their plates, and they can also talk about their process in writing everything out. You can then have a debrief with the full class, asking questions like:

- ***Did anyone learn anything interesting?***
- ***What was it like to reflect on what's on our plate?***
- ***What was it like to share what's on our plate?***
- ***How can sharing what's on our plate help us when we're facing challenges?***
- ***How can identifying what's on our plate help us when we're facing challenges?***

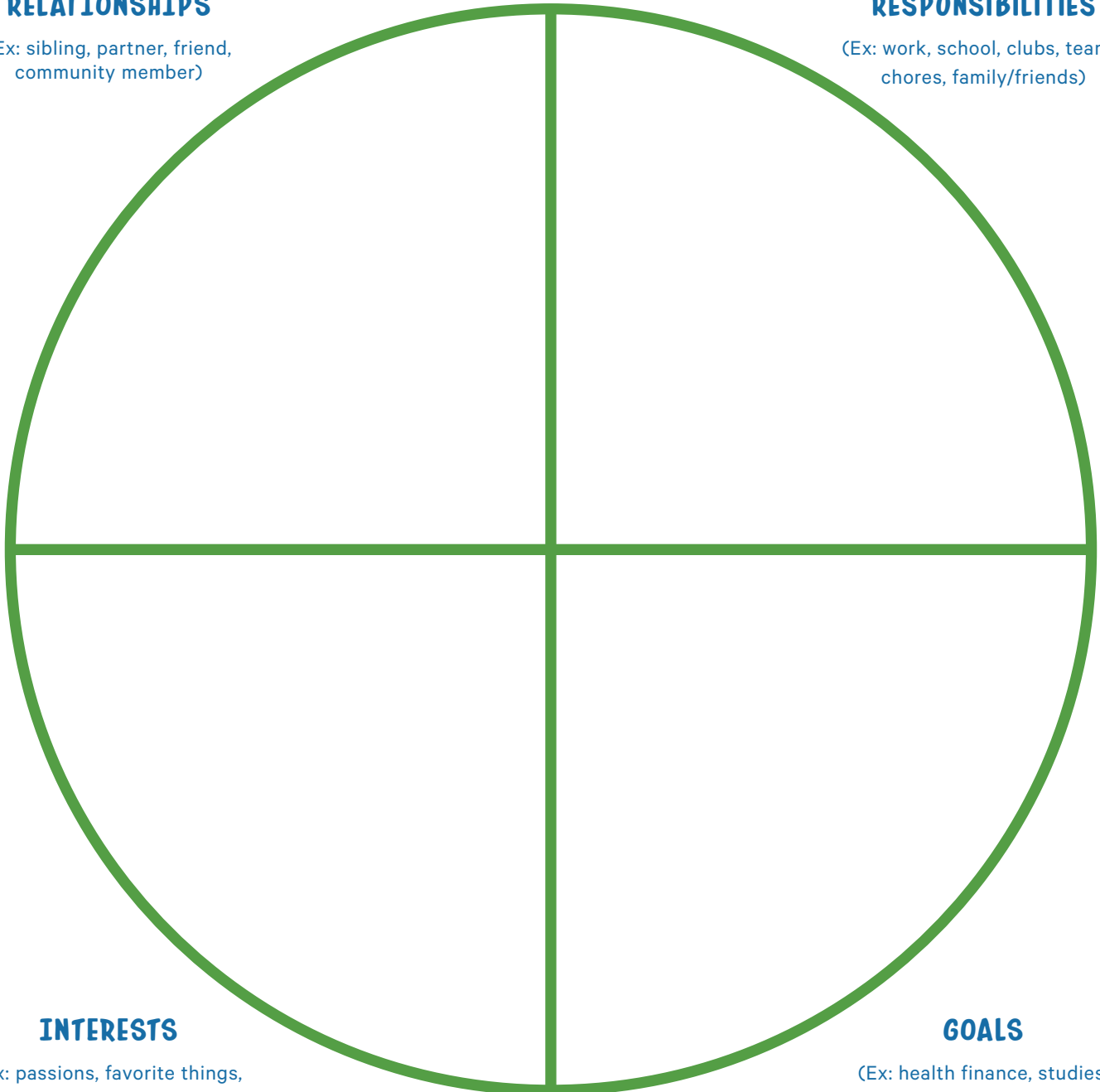
WHAT'S ON MY PLATE?

RELATIONSHIPS

(Ex: sibling, partner, friend, community member)

RESPONSIBILITIES

(Ex: work, school, clubs, teams, chores, family/friends)



INTERESTS

(Ex: passions, favorite things, hobbies)

GOALS

(Ex: health finance, studies, school, career)



THREE THINGS

This game is to help students practice mindfulness in an active way. By focusing our attention on naming three things within the category given to us, we are allowing our whole self to be present. By practicing noticing, without judgment, the things we say, we are strengthening our compassionate muscles for ourselves and for others. The characters in *Ghosted* demonstrate nonjudgmental mindfulness after SYD has an anxiety attack; they notice together what happened, and process the information nonjudgmentally, without jumping to any conclusions. This game is a low-stakes way to practice that process.

Invite the students to stand in a circle together. The game will move clockwise, with one person naming a category, and the three people to their left name three things from that category (one at a time). Then the fourth person names another category, and the next three people name three things from that category, and so on. For example, someone could say “Colors,” and the next three people would name three colors.

The game isn’t about being fast, and it isn’t even about being right; it’s about being present. Encourage students to say the first thing that comes to mind. If someone can’t think of something, or if someone says something that’s outside of the category, help the class respond nonjudgmentally: “wherever you are, whatever you say, is perfect. What you said didn’t fit into the category, and that’s okay. Try to let go of any feelings of judgment or regret, and let’s just notice what is said, and let it go.”

You can debrief in a circle, or have students return to their seats. Ask them what that was like, or if they felt present in moments or throughout the exercise. Were they able to feel at peace even if someone said something “wrong?” What helped them let go of feelings of shame or fear? How can this mindset help us in our lives in general?



LETTER

This activity is about gratitude. Being grateful for what we have, who we are, and the people who support us can help build up our resilience and show us that even when things feel difficult, we have something we can hold on to.

Students will have about 15 minutes to write a letter to someone or something they love, who inspires them, supports them, and/or helps them feel safe. Who is that person who’s always on your side? Or that person who tells you the truth when you need it? Perhaps what we love or inspires us is a hobby, a place, or maybe this is an opportunity to write a letter of gratitude to ourselves. How are we being purposeful with our words of gratitude to others?

You can let students know that they’ll be reflecting on their letter and the process with someone else in the class, but they won’t have to share the contents of the letter if they don’t want to.

After they’ve had time to write, have students discuss in pairs. They can read their letters to each other, and/or talk about their process in writing the letter. Then you can debrief as a class, with questions like:

- ***Would anyone like to share what they wrote?***
- ***What was it like to write a letter of gratitude?***
- ***What was it like to listen to someone’s words of gratitude?***
- ***Why was it important to be mindful of things / those who inspire or love us?***

You can close by saying they can share their letters with the person they wrote it about, or keep them for themselves as a reminder of someone or something who has their back.