

## Attending to the Social-Emotional Health of our Students

The following activities come from MindBeat™. These activities step away from curriculum to focus on the social-emotional and mental health and well-being of your students. The Mental Health Moments provide a toolkit for your teachers, which in turn will foster greater academic well-being. I share these ideas with you in hopes that it will be helpful during this period of school closure, where students may have limited social exposure and disruption of routines. During this time, it's more vital than ever that we remember that it is only when students are emotionally safe that any learning can happen. Enjoy these activities with your students!

### Mental Health Moments #9-12

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#### **Mental Health Moment #9: At-Home Scavenger Hunt**

*submitted by Nomora Pearyer, ESS Clinician*

Take a break in your day, away from the computer screens and explore a bit. This at-home scavenger hunt is a sure way to shake up your day, move around the house and an easy way to find one item you have been searching for since last year! Great activity for all ages.

How many of these items can you find around your house? Create teams, or go solo... who found the most?

Stuffed animal	Sunglasses	Potted plant	Pen	The Letter B
A random sock	A receipt	A book	Keys	A Ruler
A candle	Fresh fruit	A ball	A scarf	A square
A cat	Flowers	A flashlight		

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

<https://www.aboutamom.com/free-indoor-scavenger-hunt-printable/>

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#### **Mental Health Moment #10: The Mindful Jar**

*submitted by Jessica Spar, ESS Clinician*

This activity can teach children how strong emotions can take hold, and how to find peace when these strong emotions feel overwhelming.

First, get a clear jar (like a Mason jar) and fill it almost all the way with water. Next, add a big spoonful of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter to the jar. Put the lid back on the jar and shake it to make the glitter swirl.

Finally, use the following script or take inspiration from it to form your own mini lesson:

“Imagine that the glitter is like your thoughts when you’re stressed, mad or upset. See how they whirl around and make it hard to see clearly? That’s why it’s so easy to make silly decisions when you’re upset – because you’re not thinking clearly. Don’t worry this is normal and it happens in all of us (yep, grownups too).

[Now put the jar down in front of them.]

Now watch what happens when you’re still for a couple of moments. Keep watching. See how the glitter starts to settle and the water clears? Your mind works the same way. When you’re calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle, and you start to see things much clearer. Deep breaths during this calming process can help us settle when we feel a lot of emotions” (Karen Young, 2017).

This exercise not only helps children learn about how their emotions can cloud their thoughts, but it also facilitates the practice of mindfulness while focusing on the swirling glitter in the jar.

Try having the kids focus on one emotion at a time, such as anger, and discuss how the shaken settling glitter is like that emotion.

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## **Mental Health Moment #11: Bird Watching**

*submitted by James Marsh, ESS Clinician*

Bird watching can be a wonderfully relaxing activity that you can do both inside and outdoors. There are many birds around and it takes some mindfulness to be able to spot something small in a bush or tree that may not be moving. It is also not just spotting them but also trying to identify what type it is. You can create a list and keep track of all the different types of birds that you see. There are many guides online that can help you to identify birds that you are not familiar with.

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## **Mental Health Moment #12: Positive Family Observations**

*submitted by Shari Kerr, ESS Coordinator*

Set aside one day of the week to sit down for 30 minutes as a family and discuss positive actions or behaviors observed that week. Each family member can take a turn, stating 1 positive thing they observed each of the remaining family members do that week. Observations can be as small as waking up on time because it displays independence, or larger such as helping a younger sibling who was struggling with virtual education content.