Welcome to the Stretching & Breathing Activity Cards (adapted from 5 Minute Mindfulness (5MM)) specifically for the HealthMPowers Empowering Healthy Choices in Schools, Homes, and Communities program.

- Activity cards are designed to make stress management accessible, easy and fun!
- The cards provide protective, comprehensive approaches to support mental health through physical activity.
- 5MM incorporates adaptive physical activity training in a non-stigmatized environment.
- Empowering imagery promotes optimism.
- Teachers or facilitators can lead these activities for the entire class or group.
- Students can take a card and demonstrate to peers in partner activity or small group.

This material was funded by USDA’s SNAP and other HealthMPowers partners. This institute is an equal opportunity provider.
THRI

VE

dare

glow

\textcopyright{} Janie Hunt Welsh
• Please take out your journal (or paper) and begin to free-write for the next 2 or 3 minutes.
• Free-writing means sharing your thoughts and feelings onto the paper, and continuing writing without stopping.
• Think about all the areas in your life where you are thriving. Take a moment to explore the phrase "I thrive ..."
• Now think about the opportunities coming up where you can explore courage. Take a moment to write about how daring you are going to be.
• What does being brave feel like? Take a moment to write your ideas.
• Finally, consider what it feels like to be truly happy in this moment.
  ◦ What does happiness look like for you?
  ◦ In what ways are you truly glowing ... from the inside out.
• Continue writing for at least 2 minutes.
• Complete the exercise by circling your wrists and toes.
Sit or lie down in a comfortable position, with eyes closed.
Slowly breathe in. Slowly breathe out.
Start with your head, tensing your facial muscles, squeezing your eyes shut, puckering your mouth and clenching your jaw.
Hold, then release and breathe.
Tense as you lift your shoulders to your ears, hold, then release.
Make a fist with your right hand, tighten the muscles in your lower and upper arm, hold, then release. Slowly breathe in and out, then repeat with left hand.
Concentrate on your back, squeezing shoulder blades together. Hold, then release. Breathe in and out.
Suck in your stomach, hold, then release. Breathe in and out.
As you breathe in, press down onto the chair and try to grow taller at the top of the hip. Relax and take in a slow breath, then exhale.
Tighten your right hamstring, hold, then release. Slowly breathe in and out, then repeat with left hamstring.
Flex your right calf, hold, then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with left calf.
Tighten toes on your right foot, hold, then release. Repeat with left foot.
i am enough.
• Begin in easy seated position and bring your awareness to your breath.
• Slow down and relax by breathing in through the nose.
• Exhale and breathe out through the nose.
• As you breathe in, see if you can draw just a bit more air into the lungs.
• As you exhale, see if you can breathe out just a bit more than the time before.
• In this moment practice the affirmation "I am enough" three separate times.
• The first time, just say the words and notice them.
• The second time, try to actually believe the words you are saying.
• The third time, emphasize the words "I am" and simply notice what happens without judging or self-criticizing.
• Take at least 2 minutes to journal about your experience.
Sitting in easy seated position, bring the awareness to the breath.
Gently breathe in through the nose.
Take your time and gently breathe back out through the nose.
As you draw in your next breath, think about your skeletal system: the bones in your body.
Take note of how strong the bones are.
Think about all that your bones are made of. Notice how solid they are.
As you draw your next breath in, notice the areas where you are flexible, or where your body can bend.
Notice whether your muscles stretch or find tension.
Your body is both strong and flexible. Resilient and tough.
As you take in your next breath, practice the following affirmation:

"I am resilient.
I am strong and unbreakable."
I AM a rockstar & in process taking it one day at a time POWERFUL
Sitting in a chair, your feet are parallel, hip distance apart.
Cross your right leg over your left leg in a 90 degree angle with the right ankle crossing over the top of the left knee.
Inhale and gently stretch forward in the hips with the legs staying crossed.
Unwind and return to starting position.
Cross your left leg over your right leg in a 90 degree angle with the left ankle crossing over the top of the right knee.
Inhale and gently stretch forward in the hips with the legs staying crossed.
Unwind and return to starting position.
Repeat this activity 3 times on each side.
Notice how the tension in the lower back is released.
Beginning in easy seated position with both feet parallel on the floor.

Draw air into the nose and slowly relax as you breathe in and out.

Relax your jaw, neck and eyes. Continue flowing the breath into the nose and out of the nose for 3 cycles.

Notice what colors are dancing around inside of your eyelids. Do you see any shapes. Just take a moment to notice as you breathe in and out.

On your next inhalation, breathe in for a count of 7.

Taking your time, exhale to a count of 11.

Breathe back in through your nose to a count of 7.

Breathe out through your nose to a count of 11.

Take your time and continue for two more cycles of breathing, gently inhaling for 7, exhaling for 11.

When you are finished, return to your regular breathing.

In this moment, set a goal or intention for your day.
• Sitting in a chair with feet parallel, hip distance apart. Place your hands on the knees to symbolize calm and stillness.
• Bring your chin down slightly so the back of the neck is free from stress. Relax your jaw and eyes. Breathe in through the nose and relax.
• Breathe out through the nose and relax.
• With your next inhalation and exhalation, create a goal of loving kindness for yourself for the week. (How can you be even more kind to yourself this week? Is there something you can create that is an outward sign of this kindness?)
  ⊳ Perhaps you will set a goal of doing a calming activity each evening.
  ⊳ Perhaps you will set a goal of practicing kindness to someone else.
• Continue thinking about your goal of loving kindness and see how specific you can be in how you will achieve it.
• As you take in your next breath, “seal” that goal or intention inside your body like a promise.
• When you are ready, slowly bring yourself back into this room by noticing the sounds inside of this space. Slowly open your eyes whenever you are ready.
• Begin by standing with your feet parallel, so that you are at least an arm’s length from anyone on either side of you.
• Try to line up your ankles so they are directly under your hips, your tailbone lines up directly under your belly button and your shoulders are relaxed and down.
• Bring your chin down slightly so that the back of the neck is long and simply notice your breath as you work in slow motion, drawing the breath in to the nose and back out.
• Very slowly bring your palms together so they are at your heart center and simply feel your heart beat on the other side of your thumbs.
• As you press down into the left foot evenly, slowly bring your right toe to the arch of the left foot. Resting the right toe gently at the arch of the left foot.
• Breathe in and see if you can rotate the right knee toward the right wall. Simply breathe in and out, staying internal and calm in this moment.
• Slowly float out of the pose and repeat with the right foot. Grounding down into the four corners of that right foot, inhale and bring the toe of the left to the arch of the right.
• Continue to feel your heart on the other side of your thumbs as you slowly rotate the left knee toward the left wall. When you are ready, see if you can lift the left toe off of the ground, even just for a moment.
• Breathe in slow motion as you enjoy tree pose for another two or three breaths.
Beginning in a standing position with both feet hip distance apart.

Relax your neck and your jaw as you find a place in front of you to focus on with your eyes to improve your balance.

Gently press into the floor with each of the toes on your feet.

Breathe in through your nose and raise both arms over your head.

Gently grab your left wrist with your right hand and lift up through the left side as you gently fold over to the right side, forming the letter "C" with your body.

Breathe in and out as you stretch through your left side.

Inhale and return to center with both hands over the head. Gently grab the right wrist with the left hand.

Lift up through the right side as you fold over to the left.

Feel the stretch through the right side body.

Breathe in and out.

Inhale and return back to center with both hands over head.

Repeat the exercise 3 times, timing the movement to your breath.
RADICAL KINDNESS
• Beginning in a standing position with both feet hip distance apart.
• Breathe in through your nose as you raise both arms over your head.
• Gently breathe out through the nose as you lower both arms behind your back. Clasps the hands behind the back if you would like an extra stretch.
• Inhale and look up to the ceiling with your hands clasped behind the back or just reaching backward.
• Open your heart to the sky as you look up. Stretch the arms behind the back.
• Exhale, fold forward and bring the elbows to the knees.
• Shake your head "yes and no" in order to release anything stressful in the neck.
• Keeping the elbows on the knees, straighten and bend the legs to stretch the hamstrings.
• Inhale and press into the feet as you bring both hands over head.
• Repeat the exercise five times to stimulate the heart and feel more awake and energized!
Be an individual.

Remember always that you not only have the right to be one.
• Sitting in a chair, make sure your feet are parallel in front of you, fully touching the floor.
• Bring your palms face down on the knees to symbolize calm and stillness.
• Close your eyes and simply notice the colors that dance inside your eyelids.
• Gently bring your attention to the four corners of each foot.
• Press energy into the big toe, then the far pinky toe, then the right side back of the heel and finally the left side back of the heel.
• Now press evenly into all four corners of the feet at the same time, creating an imaginary box on the floor. Completely relax the feet as you exhale.
• Bring your chin down slightly so the back of the neck is lengthened and free from stress. Relax your jaw and eyes.
• Notice your thoughts without judgment as they flow in and out of your mind.
• Breathe in all things that are possible. You are full of potential.
• Breathe out and invite everything that is stressful to leave your body.
• Begin in an easy seated position and bring your chin down slightly so your neck is long.
• Notice your thoughts without judgment as they flow in and out of your mind.
• Imagine the shape of a box with four even sides.

\[ \square \]

• The next time you breathe in, count to 4 and imagine drawing one edge of that box with your breath. As you breathe, you draw the line.
• Pause for a count of 4 and imagine the second edge of the box being drawn.
• As you breathe out, imagine drawing the third edge of the box as you exhale.
• Pause for a count of 4 and complete the shape of the box.
• Continue "box breathing" for at least two minutes.