

# COMMUNITY VOICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

**REAL  
TALK**

  
Glasswing  
INTERNATIONAL

# COMMUNITY VOICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

With the goal of fostering authentic and meaningful conversations about mental health, Glasswing has collected life experiences and practical strategies shared by members of our community. Through their stories, we can discover tools and approaches that support mental, emotional, and relational well-being.

This collective resource offers strategies like reflective writing, breathing exercises, meditation, and strengthening support networks. While simple, these tools have proven to be effective and have a profound impact on emotional well-being. The aim is to encourage the community to prioritize mental health in daily life and within safe spaces. Whether through self-reflection or supporting others, each shared story and tool contributes to both individual and collective well-being.

# HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

## Community stories

Discover the experiences of community members who have faced personal challenges.

## Well-being strategies

Each story is paired with techniques and practices that have worked for the people who share them. These real-life tools can help you manage your mental health.

## Reflect and apply

After each story, take a moment to reflect on how it relates to your own well-being journey. We encourage you to try out the suggested tools and adjust them to suit your needs, helping you make positive changes in your life.

# STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT YOUR WELL-BEING

We encourage you to explore these strategies and put them into practice to support your mental health and the well-being of those around you.

## **Strengthening your support networks:**

learn how maintaining healthy relationships with friends and family can be a fundamental pillar during difficult times.

## **Connecting with nature:**

explore how disconnecting from the work environment and connecting with nature can emotionally recharge you.

## **Emotional self-care:**

practice accepting your emotions without self-judgment to navigate difficult moments with greater self-compassion.

## **Mindful breathing exercises:**

discover how simple breathing techniques can help reduce stress and improve focus.



**CARING FOR MYSELF**

**AND MY COMMUNITY**

## Ernesto

Community leader

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For me, mental health is deeply influenced by our economic stability and family well-being. I've learned that financial stress can mentally drain us, affecting our ability to handle daily problems. That's why I've developed an approach to prevent that burnout, maintaining not only financial balance but emotional balance as well. Every week, I dedicate time to reflect on how to better manage the resources I have, plan for the future, and find peace with myself. I also believe that mental health isn't just a personal matter; it has a direct impact on the community around us. Together with my family, we've been supporting a neighbor who has struggled with substance abuse for years.

We constantly encourage him and provide resources to help him explore alternatives to improve his situation, such as finding ways to earn an income. We know his recovery won't be immediate, but we believe that, little by little, he can make progress.

This act of support not only benefits him, but it also gives us a sense of purpose and connection with others. I believe that by helping others, we also strengthen our own mental health because personal well-being is intertwined with the well-being of the community.

**"BY SUPPORTING OTHERS, WE STRENGTHEN OUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH BECAUSE PERSONAL WELL-BEING IS INTERTWINED WITH THE WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY."**

# BUDGET TRACKING TOOL BASED ON PRIORITIES

Every week, in a notebook or on a piece of paper, write down:



## **Income:**

all the money you received.



## **Expenses:**

divide your expenses into simple categories like food, transportation, leisure, savings, etc.



Total both to get a clear idea of how much you spent and earned.

**Review the expenses in each category and ask yourself:**



**Does this expense  
reflect my priorities?**



**What was most important to  
me this week?**



**Were there unnecessary  
expenses that didn't bring  
me well-being?**

Mark with a ✓ what was necessary and an ✗ what wasn't. This will give you a clearer picture of your finances, aligned with what truly makes you feel good.



Finally, reflect and define an action for the next week:



**Do I feel good about  
how I spent my money  
this week?**



**What changes would I like to  
make next week to better  
align with my priorities?**

This tool not only helps us organize our finances, but it also aligns with our priorities, giving us a greater sense of control over our spending and income.

**HAVING A CLEAR VISION OF YOUR FINANCES CAN HELP REDUCE ANXIETY. TAKE A MOMENT EACH WEEK TO REVIEW YOUR EXPENSES AND SET A REALISTIC BUDGET THAT GIVES YOU PEACE OF MIND.**



**Verónica**

Technical mentor

# WRITING, REFLECTING, AND GROWING:

## MY EMOTIONAL TOOL

### Verónica

Technical mentor

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One of the ways I've learned to manage my emotions is through writing. For a long time, when I had a bad day, I focused only on what went wrong. But over time, I discovered that even on the hardest days, there's always something positive to hold onto. So, I began using the technique of personal journaling. I write about what made me feel bad during the day, no matter how many things, and right next to it, I note down what made me feel good, even if it's just a small thing.

This balance helps me remember that days are never entirely negative, and there's always something, however small, that's worth highlighting. Writing has become my tool for venting and reflecting. For those who want to start, I suggest that after writing, take a few minutes to think about what you've written.

It has helped me a lot to analyze what I write, because in doing so, I discover that in my own words I find the strategies I need to face difficulties and enjoy the positive moments more.

This process has helped me take care of my mental health and find emotional balance, and I'm convinced it can be helpful for anyone looking for a way to connect with their emotions and take care of their well-being.

**"WHEN I REFLECT ON WHAT I WRITE, I DISCOVER THE STRATEGIES I NEED TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND ENJOY THE POSITIVE."**

**Gratitude and reflection journal:** take a few minutes at the end of the day to write down at least one thing you are grateful for.

**Ask open-ended questions:** when writing about a situation, ask yourself: What can I learn from this? How could I have handled it differently? Open-ended questions help you explore your thoughts and feelings, helping us understand our emotions better.

## FOUR WAYS TO START WRITING

**Observe patterns:** after writing for several days, review what you have written and look for patterns in your emotions, reactions, or behaviors.

**Take Time to Reflect:** don't just write down the events but also reflect on how they made you feel and why, and what behaviors you can change.

**“WRITING HAS TAUGHT ME THAT  
THERE’S ALWAYS SOMETHING  
POSITIVE, EVEN ON DIFFICULT DAYS.  
BY REFLECTING ON MY OWN WORDS,  
I DISCOVER THAT I HAVE THE TOOLS  
I NEED TO MOVE FORWARD.”**



# MY PATH TO A MORE BALANCED MENTAL HEALTH

## César

Administrative chief

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Working in a hospital is demanding. My role as the head of the administrative division, with 16 department heads under my supervision, means I'm solving problems every day—and doing it well, because lives are at stake. Although I love what I do, the responsibility, combined with family commitments, generates high levels of stress and pressure that, for a long time, I didn't know how to manage.

One of the biggest changes I've made to improve my well-being is arriving at the hospital half an hour before starting my workday. I dedicate that time just to myself, either practicing breathing exercises or simply listening to music. This personal space allows me to start the day feeling calmer, more focused, and balanced.

Learning to breathe correctly has also been vital for me. Before, I didn't give much thought to something so basic, but now I understand how much it can impact my well-being. Every time I feel overwhelmed by work stress, I pause and use the breathing exercises I've learned. This helps me stay calm, centered, and able to carry on with my responsibilities.

**"I HAD NO IDEA HOW MUCH MY BREATHING COULD INFLUENCE HOW I FEEL. LEARNING TO BREATHE PROPERLY CAN QUICKLY IMPROVE MOOD, REDUCE STRESS, AND INCREASE ENERGY AND CONCENTRATION."**

# TIP:

## CONSCIOUS BREATHING IS A POWERFUL TOOL

We often underestimate the power of deep breathing. When we feel overwhelmed, learning to breathe with intention can help us regain calm and make better decisions under pressure.

### BASIC STEPS TO PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING:

1

**Find a quiet place:** sit in a comfortable position with your back straight and feet flat on the ground. Relax your shoulders.

2

**Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen:** this will help you feel how your body moves as you breathe.

3

**Inhale deeply through your nose:** draw air into your abdomen, making the hand on your abdomen rise. Ensure your chest stays as still as possible.

4

**Exhale slowly through your mouth:** feel the air leaving your body as the hand on your abdomen lowers slowly.

5

**Repeat the process:** do this 5 to 10 times, focusing on the slowness and depth of each breath.





## MY SPACE OF CALM:

# MEDITATION AS A TOOL TO RECONNECT

## Tatiana

Community doctor

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If I had to choose one resource to take care of my mental health, it would definitely be practicing meditation. This practice offers me a space of tranquility and reflection amidst any situation, and the best part is that it's very accessible. All I need is my phone to access platforms like YouTube or Spotify, where I find meditation playlists or guides. It's a simple and portable resource that allows me to reconnect with myself at any time of day.

For me, self-care represents everything I do to keep my life in balance. This means dedicating time to activities that recharge me: getting enough rest, listening to music I enjoy, exercising, and nurturing healthy and meaningful relationships. Through these actions, I find a better way to manage my emotions, face daily challenges, and maintain a sense of personal stability.

**"MEDITATING WITH A PLAYLIST I CAN SEARCH FOR  
ON MY PHONE ALLOWS ME TO MANAGE MY  
EMOTIONS, FACE DAILY CHALLENGES, AND  
MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PERSONAL STABILITY."**

# HOW TO START MEDITATING

If you're new to meditation, here are some practical tips to get started:

1

**Find a guide:** use free apps like Headspace or Insight Timer, or simply search for beginner meditation guides on YouTube.

2

**Establish a routine:** set aside a few minutes each day to practice meditation. You can start with just five minutes and increase the time as needed.

3

**Mindful breathing:** if you don't have much time, a couple of minutes of deep, mindful breathing can help you find calm during a busy day.

4

**Relaxed environment:** find a quiet place where you can sit comfortably. You don't need much, just a space where you feel at ease.

**REDUCES STRESS AND  
ANXIETY LEVELS.**

**IMPROVES CONCENTRATION  
AND FOCUS.**

## **BENEFITS OF MEDITATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH:**

**PROMOTES GREATER  
AWARENESS OF YOUR  
THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS.**

**HELPS DEVELOP EMOTIONAL  
RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF DAILY  
CHALLENGES.**



**María de Jesús**

Community leader

# THE POWER OF KEEPING MY BODY AND MIND ACTIVE

## María de Jesús

Community leader

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I believe it's important to keep the body active to avoid diseases related to mental health. Exercising or working helps you not dwell on problems, because you get sick when you worry too much about things you can't change.

That's why I like to go to the park to exercise. Walking every afternoon helps me think about other things, and I feel good having a peaceful place where I can move without worries. This space is very important to me because it helps me deal with problems and keep my body and mind healthy.

By exercising, you can avoid depression, for example, because the body is in motion and focuses on other things. Even though we are always exposed to problems and difficult situations, having these spaces where we feel safe and active is essential for our well-being.

**"WALKING EVERY AFTERNOON HELPS ME  
THINK ABOUT OTHER THINGS, AND I FEEL  
GOOD HAVING A PEACEFUL PLACE WHERE I  
CAN MOVE WITHOUT WORRIES."**

# HOW TO INCORPORATE MOVEMENT INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE:

Walk outdoors



Establish a daily routine



Explore other activities like stretching, yoga, or gardening



Engage in physical activity with friends or in groups



## TO REFLECT:

**What type of physical activity do you enjoy the most? How can you incorporate it regularly into your life?  
Are there spaces in your community where you can do outdoor physical activities and feel safe?**

**"IF YOU EXERCISE AND STAY ACTIVE,  
YOU AVOID ILLNESSES OR SITUATIONS  
THAT AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH."**





**Marvin**

Glasswing Fellow

**COMPARTE  
TU MEJOR  
VERSIÓN**

# MUSIC, AN INSTRUMENT FOR CALM

## Marvin

Glasswing Fellow

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For me, music is a refuge during difficult times. It helps me find calm when things aren't going well. I play the guitar, and that connection with music allows me to deal with the tough situations I face in my daily life.

Besides playing, I also love listening to music. When I do, I disconnect from problems and reconnect with myself. It's in those moments that I realize how important mental health is to being at peace with yourself.

Being a counselor to others is also something I'm passionate about. I'm always learning so I can share my knowledge, which has taught me not only to put myself in someone else's shoes but also to be aware of what I need to feel well. Sometimes, I need time to reflect and ask myself: How am I? What do I need? During those times, music and walking help me reconnect.

**"WHENEVER I NEED TO RECONNECT WITH  
MYSELF, I LISTEN TO MUSIC."**

# THE IMPACT OF MUSIC ON MENTAL HEALTH

Music can be a powerful tool for emotional well-being. Some of the main benefits it provides include:

1

## **Reduces stress:**

it can help lower cortisol levels, the stress hormone, allowing us to relax.

2

## **Improves mood:**

songs we like or associate with positive memories can stimulate the production of dopamine, the neurotransmitter linked to happiness.

3

## **Fosters emotional connection:**

playing an instrument or singing allows us to express emotions that we might not be able to communicate with words. This can create a sense of emotional relief and self-awareness.

4

## **Facilitates emotion management:**

listening to or creating music can help process intense emotions, like sadness or anxiety, by allowing those emotions to be expressed and released in a healthy way.

5

## **Enhances concentration:**

for some people, music can improve concentration and productivity, especially when used to block distractions.

**INCORPORATING MUSIC INTO YOUR  
DAILY ROUTINE, WHETHER BY  
LISTENING, PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT,  
OR CREATING SONGS, CAN BE AN  
ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO  
PROMOTE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.**



**Veraliz**

Hospital staff

## A SPACE FOR ME:

# TAKING CARE OF MY BODY AND MIND

## Veraliz

Hospital staff

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After learning the relaxation technique "The Stone in the River," I decided to adapt it to my daily life. I used my phone to record a video with my own voice, where I repeat affirmations and positive thoughts. I added the sound of a flowing river to enhance the visual and auditory experience. Now, every night before going to sleep, I play it. This simple habit has helped me rest better and start the day with more energy.

The self-care strategies I've incorporated have not only improved my sleep but also taught me to balance body and mind. I've changed my diet, dedicating time to nourishing myself properly. I've also learned to reserve moments for myself, where I read, rest, and most importantly, treat myself with more love. This balance between the physical and emotional has allowed me to achieve a sense of inner peace and well-being.

**"THIS BALANCE BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HAS ALLOWED ME TO ACHIEVE A SENSE OF INNER PEACE AND WELL-BEING."**

# STEP BY STEP GUIDE:

## create your own relaxation method inspired by "The Stone in the River"

- 1 Choose a sound that relaxes you (running water, wind, or any other natural sound).
- 2 Record a message with positive affirmations or words that help you relax.
- 3 Combine your voice with the chosen sound and save the file on your phone. Listen to it before sleeping or during stressful moments.



**Vilma**

Psychologist



## MY SUPPORT NETWORK:

# THE PILLAR OF MY MENTAL HEALTH

## Vilma

Psychologist

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Just a few months ago, my father passed away. Although the grieving process is still difficult, today I can say that my family and I are in a better emotional place. I come from a large and close-knit family that always finds reasons to celebrate, whether it's a small achievement or a significant event. Every celebration becomes an opportunity to gather and share family moments. I am convinced that this family unity and constant support is what has made the difference in coping with the loss of my father.

My mental health lies in my support networks: my family and friends. They are the ones who hold me up during difficult times and with whom I love to celebrate the beautiful moments life gives us. These relationships are essential for me because they allow me to feel accompanied, understood, and supported at every step of my life.

Moreover, something that adds fulfillment to my life is maintaining a deep connection with nature. On weekends, I completely disconnect from work and daily worries. Alongside my family, we seek places that allow us to appreciate nature's beauty. Being outdoors, surrounded by natural landscapes, gives me the peace I need to recharge and continue with my responsibilities during the week.

**“WHEN PROBLEMS ARE SHARED, THE BURDEN IS LIGHTER.”**

# WHERE CAN I FIND MY SUPPORT NETWORKS?

1

**People who listen to me, I can trust and keep me company:** close family and friends who know me, allow me to be myself, and seek my physical and emotional well-being.

2

**Pets:** they fill us with unconditional love and reduce stress levels.

## How to be a support network for others?

1

**Active listening:** give your full attention to what the other person is saying.

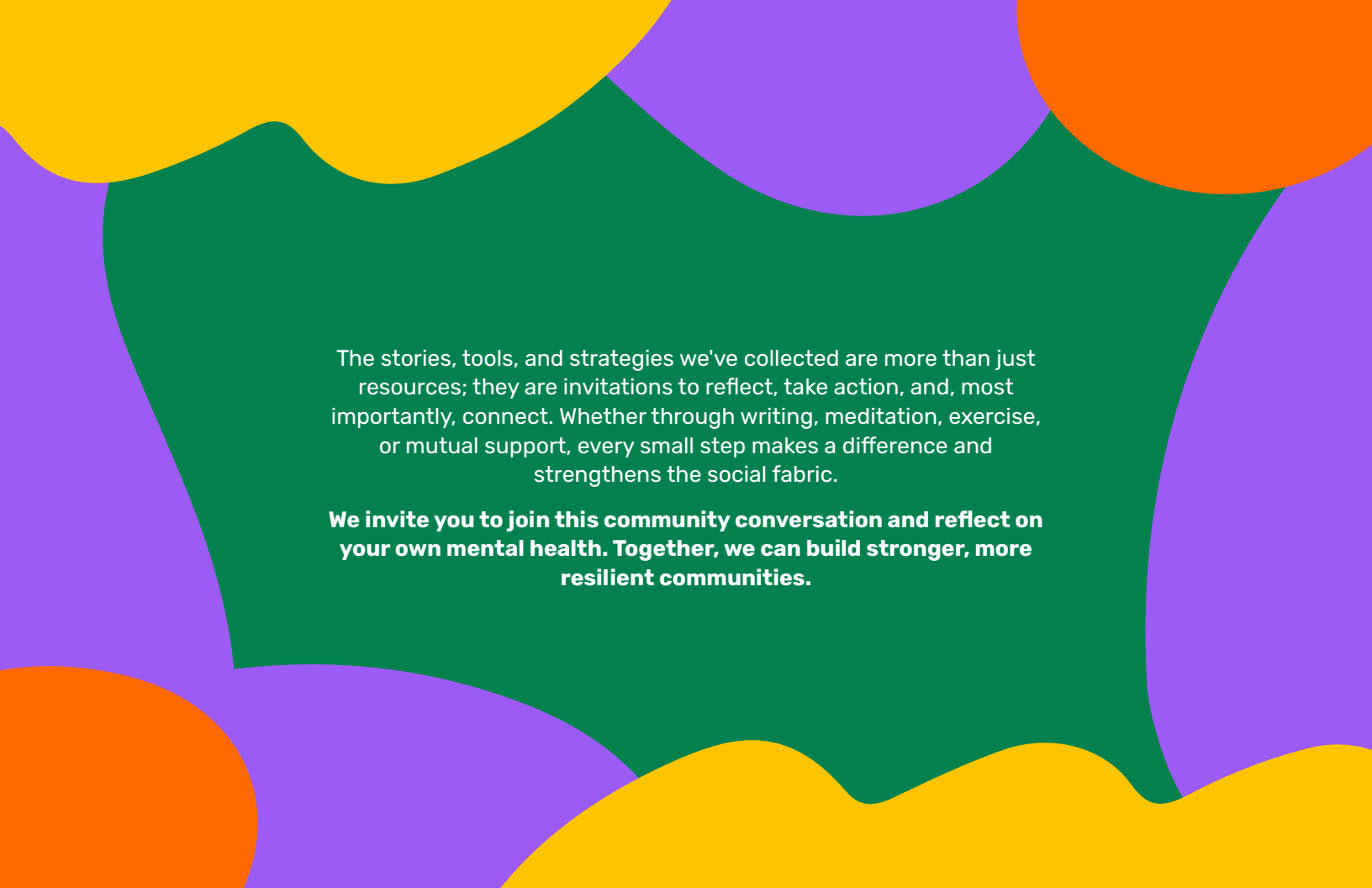
2

**Validate emotions:** ask for clarification when needed, but avoid making assumptions or judgments.

3

**Practice empathy and emotional intelligence** refrain from labeling or judging others; instead, focus on being understanding and supportive.

**LISTENING WITHOUT JUDGMENT,  
OFFERING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT,  
AND BEING THERE DURING DIFFICULT  
TIMES CAN HAVE A PROFOUND  
IMPACT ON SOMEONE'S LIFE.**



The stories, tools, and strategies we've collected are more than just resources; they are invitations to reflect, take action, and, most importantly, connect. Whether through writing, meditation, exercise, or mutual support, every small step makes a difference and strengthens the social fabric.

**We invite you to join this community conversation and reflect on your own mental health. Together, we can build stronger, more resilient communities.**

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