

COMMUNITY VOICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

**REAL
TALK**


Glasswing
INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNITY VOICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

With the goal of fostering more honest and meaningful conversations around mental health, this document brings together real-life experiences and everyday practices shared by members of our community. Through their stories, we explore strategies that promote emotional well-being and practical tools to care for our minds, emotions, and relationships – helping us find balance and resilience in our daily lives.

A MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE TO WELLNESS

This guide is for you, to strengthen your personal well-being.

It is designed to help you find calm, inspiration and balance in times of stress or challenge. It is a personal space to reconnect with you in a simple, accessible way and is meant to help you build your safe place in your day-to-day life as a reminder that you can always take care of you.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS TOOL?

We share with you some recommendations to make the most of this strategy:

Know it well:

take time to explore each resource. Familiarize yourself with each strategy and technique included, so you know when and how to use them.

Integrate a routine:

make this tool part of your daily routine. You can establish small moments in your routine, such as at the beginning or end of the day, to use it and enjoy its benefits.

Listen to your body and mind:

learn to identify when you need a break or a moment of self-care. This tool can be a refuge on days of stress, exhaustion or simply to reconnect with yourself.

Personalize it:

make sure that your use of this tool reflects your needs and tastes. If you find other elements, such as placing a scented candle while doing the exercises or other actions that bring you calm or happiness, add them.

Be consistent:

even if you don't always feel stress, using this tool regularly can help you maintain a constant balance and prevent burnout.



A.

**TOOLS FOR
EMOTIONAL
CONNECTION**



Mercedes

SanaMente Training
Coordinator

PUTTING A NAME

TO WHAT I FEEL

Mercedes

SanaMente Training Coordinator

Guatemala

For a long time I lived on automatic. I took care of others, I did what was expected of me, but inside I felt shut down. I was lost. I felt many things, but I didn't know how to name them, and that made me believe that what was mine didn't matter. I swallowed the fear, the sadness, the tiredness... until I couldn't take it anymore.

When I started applying mental health tools in my life, something changed. I learned to recognize what I was feeling, to name it. To say: this is anger, this is sadness, this is frustration. And, most of all, I gave myself permission to feel it. Without judgment. No guilt. Just me, being honest with me.

Today, when something shakes me, I don't repress it. I listen to it. I ask myself: what is this emotion telling me? That act of naming what I feel gives me clarity, helps me choose how to respond, and brings me back into connection with myself.

Naming my emotions and allowing myself to feel them has been one of the most profound forms of self-care I have known. Today I know that feeling does not make me weak, it makes me free. And being okay with myself is what allows me to accompany others from a more genuine and present place.

A1. EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION AND REGULATION (GIVE A NAME TO WHAT I FEEL AND GIVE MYSELF PERMISSION TO FEEL IT).

Emotional recognition is the ability to identify and understand our emotions and those of others. It is like learning to listen to what our heart and mind feel, to better understand how we react to life situations.

Why is it important?

- **Protects our mental health:** Recognizing our emotions helps us to manage them and prevent them from accumulating or affecting us negatively.
- **Promotes more conscious decisions:** Knowing how we feel helps us to act in more appropriate ways.
- **It improves our relationships:** Understanding other people's emotions, helps us act more empathetically and compassionately.

In short, emotional recognition is the first step to living with greater balance and well-being. Would you like to explore how to develop it?

IMPORTANT



Emotional recognition

is the first step where we identify and understand our emotions and those of others. It involves paying attention to what we feel, naming those emotions and understanding their origin. For example, recognizing that we are sad because we had a disagreement with a friend.

Emotional regulation

is the next step where we manage our emotions in a healthy way. This includes modifying the intensity, duration or expression of emotions to better adapt to the situation. For example, using techniques such as deep breathing to calm anxiety before a presentation.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LEARN TO RECOGNIZE AND REGULATE YOUR EMOTIONS:

Emotional recognition



1. **Pay attention to your emotions:** take a moment to identify how you are feeling. Ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?"
2. **Label your emotions:** name what you are feeling, such as sadness, joy, anger or anxiety. This helps you understand them better.
3. **Explore the origin:** reflect on what situation or thought is generating that emotion. For example: "I am anxious because I have an important meeting".
4. **Accept your emotions:** recognize that all emotions are valid and are part of the human experience.

A1.2 EMOTIONAL REGULATION

1. Conscious breathing:

Practice inhaling deeply and exhaling slowly to calm your mind and body. Here are some simple ways to do this:



2. Apply the STOP technique:

The STOP technique is a brief and effective strategy to reduce stress and anxiety through mindfulness. It consists of:



A1.2 EMOTIONAL REGULATION

3. Cognitive restructuring

Change negative thoughts for more balanced and realistic interpretations.

FROM LIMITING THOUGHTS TO REALISTIC AND CONSTRUCTIVE

I only feel good when I have the approval of other people.

My well-being does not depend on the approval of others. **My decisions are valid because they reflect my values and needs.**

I cannot face the pain of my past.

I am able to accept, face and learn from my history. Every experience is an opportunity to become stronger and more aware.

I should not feel angry, hurt or sad.

All emotions are part of my humanity. **I allow myself to feel and process them without judgment.**

I must not trust anyone.

Trust is a choice based on experience. I can be careful, but also open to genuine connections.

Other people should know and meet my needs.

Expressing my needs is a form of self-care. Communication helps me build more authentic relationships.

These steps are easy to incorporate into your day-to-day life and will help you manage your emotions in a healthier way.

A.2

MANAGEMENT OF EMOTIONS THROUGH ART OR ART THERAPY

**(expressing my emotions
through art)**



Stefania

Integral Wellness
Officer

MY COLORFUL

SHELTER

Stefania

Integral Wellness Officer

Valledupar, Colombia

Since I was a little girl, art has been part of me. I remember coloring the walls and any surface I could find. Years later, in the midst of daily stress, I found again in color and art a form of emotional expression and self-care. It was not in a particular difficult moment, but because of a deep need to reconnect with myself, to find calm among the strokes and pigments.

Through color, I process sadness, tiredness and worries, transforming them into moments of joy and stillness. Each tone I choose I relate to my emotional well-being: blue gives me peace, red revitalizes me and green reminds me that we can always bloom. I do not seek perfection in drawing; I seek to feel, to heal, and to remind myself that I deserve moments just for me, where art accompanies me.

But this art does not stay only with me. I discovered that, like me, coloring can also bring light and calm to others. Whether in a space with friends, with children or simply showing what I do, I invite those around me to join me in this experience of connection and well-being, without judgment or expectations, just letting the color speak for them. It doesn't matter if someone thinks they "don't know how to draw": art is not to be evaluated, it's to feel free because it's not the result that matters, but the process.

Today, I invite those who are looking for a break to take a leaf, a crayon, and let themselves go. Because sometimes, in the small acts of creating without rules, we find the most authentic refuge: a safe place, a unique place, a place that is simply ours to have fun and learn.

"I HAVE FOUND THAT ART IS A REFUGE WHERE I FIND MYSELF, TAKE CARE OF MYSELF AND GIVE MYSELF PERMISSION TO BE VULNERABLE."

Emotional expression is the way we communicate our emotions, whether verbally, through gestures, facial expressions, body language or even through creative forms such as art. It is an essential part of the human experience, as it allows us to share how we feel with others and process our emotions in a healthy way.

We should not confuse emotional expression through art with emotional repression, which consists of hiding or denying our emotions, especially the negative ones, such as fear, sadness or anger. The objective of repression is to avoid feeling bad or to avoid conflicts.

Emotional expression is communicating our emotions to release discomfort and resolve conflict.

WHY IS EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION IMPORTANT?

- **Emotional release:** Helps us to relieve internal tensions and prevent emotions from accumulating.
- **Improved relationships:** Facilitates connection and empathy with others.
- **Psychological well-being:** Promotes greater emotional clarity and reduces the risk of problems such as anxiety or depression.

It is important to learn to express our emotions in an appropriate way, respecting both our needs and those of those around us. Would you like to explore how to develop this skill?

Here are general and simple steps to learn how to express your emotions properly:

- **Choose the right moment:** Look for a calm moment to express your emotions, avoiding doing so in the middle of an argument or when you are very upset.
- **Don't apologize for your emotions:** Remember that all emotions are valid and you don't need to apologize for feeling them.
- **Practice regularly:** Emotional expression is a skill that improves with practice. Spend time reflecting and communicating your emotions every day.
- **Use creative tools:** Try writing in a journal, drawing or using music to communicate your emotions.



CREATIVE TOOLS



Drawing emotions

Take sheets of paper and colors, and draw how you feel at this moment. Don't worry about technique, just let the colors and shapes flow according to your emotions.

Intuitive painting

Use watercolors or acrylics to paint without a previous plan. Let yourself be carried away by the movements of the brush and the colors that catch your attention.

Writing and drawing combined

Write an emotion you are feeling on a sheet of paper and surround it with drawings that represent what that emotion means to you.

Emotional collage

Cut out images, colors and words from magazines that represent your emotional state and paste them on a sheet of paper or notebook.

Sculpting with clay or plasticine

Mold figures without thinking too much, simply letting your hands reflect your emotions in the form.

Body movement

Activities such as dance, yoga or even walking can help you release accumulated emotions and connect with your body.

Narrative techniques

Create a story about your emotions and experiences. This helps you make sense of them and process them constructively.

Emotion mask

Create a paper or cardboard mask that represents how you feel. You can decorate it with colors and materials that help you express your inner state.

These steps will help you communicate your emotions in a healthy and effective way, strengthening your relationships and your emotional well-being.



A.3

**TAKE TIME TO
FEEL**



Salvador

Social worker

A MOMENT TO FEEL MY EMOTIONS

Salvador

Social Worker

El Salvador

As part of my job I accompany many people every day. I listen, I guide, I motivate. But I also have my own emotions that need space. I have realized how important it is to pause in the midst of the hectic pace of everyday life and give myself a space to myself where I can unload what I feel, identify how I am and process it. Allowing myself to feel, even if it's not always pretty, is also a way to take care of myself, and this happens when I find myself through music. I love listening to salsa. I dance to this genre but the truth is that I enjoy singing it more when I'm in the car. This is the best medicine to take care of myself before and after a hard day's work.

Every time I go in the car, alone, I play salsa and sing loudly. That space, while I go from one place to another, has become my refuge. It's not only joy: sometimes I sing because I'm sad, tired or need to let go.

I have learned how important it is to have that channel that helps us to feel and let go. Sometimes it's music in the car. Other times it's exercising with my friends. The essential thing is to create that space within the routine: not to wait to explode and overflow to look inside, but to schedule daily moments to be with oneself and be aware of what is going on inside. Because to the extent that I allow myself to feel, I can also better accompany others.



SCHEDULE A TIME TO FEEL THE EMOTIONS

The purpose of this technique is to **allow emotions to be experienced in a conscious and controlled manner**, to prevent them from interfering with daily life. It is about assigning a specific time to feel and process emotions, preventing them from dominating the day unexpectedly.

Although this technique is often used to process difficult emotions, spending time connecting with positive emotions is a tool for connecting with positive emotions. Its benefits include:

- **Reflect on happy moments:** you can set aside time to remember pleasant experiences and reflect on what made you feel good.
- **Cultivate gratitude:** spend a few minutes thinking about the things you are grateful for, as well as fostering positive emotions such as joy and contentment.
- **Plan pleasurable activities:** scheduling time to enjoy hobbies, spend time with loved ones or simply relax can help you strengthen those positive emotions.

This practice not only improves your emotional well-being, but also allows you to appreciate and amplify the happy moments in your life.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Reduction of emotional avoidance or repression

Helps to accept emotions instead of fighting them.

Greater emotional regulation

allows processing of feelings without them accumulating or becoming overwhelming.

Better focus on day-to-day life

by setting aside time to feel, emotions are prevented from interfering with other activities.

Development of self-awareness

fosters a healthier relationship with one's emotions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- **Choose a time of the day:** define a specific time (e.g., 10–15 minutes) to reflect on your emotions.
- **Find a quiet space:** find a place where you can be without distractions.
- **Allow yourself to feel:** during this time, focus on what you feel without judging it or trying to change it.
- **Express your emotions:** you can write, draw or simply reflect on what you are experiencing.
- **Close with a conscious action:** at the end, decide how you want to continue your day without those emotions controlling you.

This technique is especially useful if you tend to avoid emotions or feel that your feelings overwhelm you at unexpected times.

EXERCISE EXPANDED WORD

STEP
1

Choosing the keyword

Think of an emotion or concept you have felt recently. It can be something concrete like joy or fear, or more abstract like rebirth or change. Write it large in the center of the sheet.

STEP
2

Expansion with related words

Surround your key word with other words that complement it. Ask yourself: What triggers this emotion in me? How would I describe it with metaphors or images? How do I feel it physically? Example: If you chose "calm," you could add breeze, softness, blue, silence, balance.

STEP
3

Visual expression

Use colors, shapes and patterns to reflect what your word represents. Some ideas: If it's a strong emotion, use intense strokes and vibrant colors. If it's something serene, use soft tones and flowing lines. You can create patterns, symbols or even small illustrations that reinforce the meaning.

STEP
4

Reflection and connection

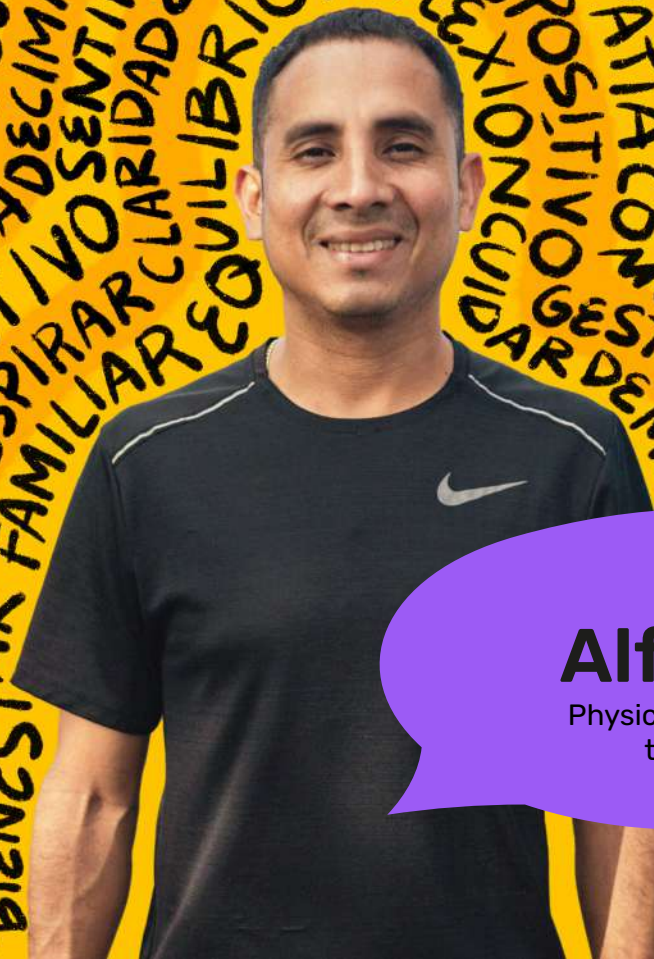
Look at your work and think: How do I feel when I look at it? Did I discover something new about the emotion I chose? Is there a hidden message in the colors and shapes I used?

This exercise is perfect for releasing thoughts and connecting with emotions intuitively. This technique works best when it becomes a regular habit. Experiment with different approaches to discover what works best for you.



B

**EFFECTIVE STRESS
MANAGEMENT AND
SELF-CARE**



Alfredo

Physical Education
teacher

DISCONNECTING TO RECONNECT:

MOVEMENT AS REFUGE

Alfredo

Physical Education teacher

Panamá

In a world so saturated with screens, I have learned that unplugging is also a way to take care of myself. As a teacher, I spend many hours in front of the computer: entering grades, organizing tournaments, uploading reports. And although it's part of the job, it's also a source of physical and mental stress. That's why I like to give myself breaks. I close the laptop, put down the cell phone and go out to move my body. Because by disconnecting from the digital world, I reconnect with myself.

Exercise has been there to accompany and sustain me. I enjoy running, calisthenics, functional exercises and paddle tennis. But beyond helping me to be physically fit, moving helps me to release stress, sleep better, focus and, above all, be emotionally balanced.

Every morning, before starting the day, I entrust myself to God and then give myself space to move my body. Whether in my personal routines or in my classes, I try to get the energy flowing, the body active and the emotions have space as well. I feel more encouraged, more focused, and that positive energy I try to share with my students and colleagues. I know that when a student or a teacher is emotionally well, everything else improves: coexistence, learning, the school environment.

That's why I tell my colleagues: yes, technology is useful, but don't let it consume us. Walking, breathing fresh air, moving your body even three times a week... is enough to make a difference. Because taking care of mental health also means moving, stretching, recharging the soul. And it all starts with a decision: to disconnect, to come back to ourselves.

"DISCONNECTING IS ALSO TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF. PUT THE CELL PHONE DOWN, CLOSE THE LAPTOP AND MOVE. THAT'S HOW I CONNECT WITH MYSELF."



B.1

**DIGITAL
DISCONNECTION**

Digital disconnection is nothing more than the act of limiting the use of electronic devices and communication technologies, especially outside working hours, to ensure adequate rest, well-being and balance between personal and professional life.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Reduces stress and mental fatigue

Moving away from screens allows our mind to relax and reduces the information overload that can generate anxiety.

Improves sleep quality

Avoiding the use of devices before going to sleep helps regulate melatonin production, improving the quality of rest.

Strengthens personal relationships

Dedicating time to activities without technology fosters connection with family and friends, strengthening social ties.

Promotes concentration and productivity

By disconnecting, we can better concentrate on important tasks without digital distractions.

Promotes emotional well-being

Disconnection gives us space to reflect, meditate and reconnect with ourselves.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DIGITAL DISCONNECTION ARE:

Establish a "no technology day"

Dedicate one day a week to completely disconnect from electronic devices and enjoy offline activities.

Create a screen-free morning routine

Start your day with activities such as meditating, reading or eating breakfast without checking your phone or computer.

Disable unnecessary notifications

Reduce interruptions by disabling alerts from non-essential applications.

Use a traditional clock

Substitute the use of the telephone as an alarm clock with a table clock to avoid distractions when waking up.

Define technology-free zones

Establish areas in your home, such as the dining room or bedroom, where the use of electronic devices is not allowed.

Practice offline hobbies

Spend time on activities such as painting, cooking, exercising or gardening to disconnect from screens.

Connect with nature

Go for a walk, hike or simply spend time outdoors to recharge away from technology.

Set time limits

Use applications that help you control the time you spend on social networks or surfing the Internet.

Encourage quality time

Prioritize activities with friends and family that do not involve technology, such as board games or chats.

Do a "digital detox"

Dedicate a specific period, such as a weekend, to completely disconnect and reflect on your relationship with technology.

**IN A HYPERCONNECTED WORLD,
DISCONNECTING IS NOT JUST A LUXURY,
BUT A NECESSITY TO PRESERVE OUR
PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.**

HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU? IT MIGHT BE TIME FOR A DIGITAL DETOX

FOMO

or the fear of missing out. This acronym was coined to **describe the feeling of anxiety that can arise when we feel that there is a more exciting prospect happening** on different social networks that - unfortunately - we are missing out on.



PHUBBING

Imagine the following, you are having lunch or coffee with your friends, but one of them, instead of chatting with you, spends all his time on his phone.

Phubbing is **the art of ignoring a person and one's surroundings by focusing on technology**. Although it may seem harmless, it is an annoying action that damages social relationships.



HOW TO DO A COMPLETE DIGITAL DETOX?

1

Admit the situation:

Recognize if you are affected by hyperconnectivity to technology.

Warning symptoms:

- You are spending more and more time on digital devices.
- You check your devices even when there are no notifications.
- You experience uneasiness and discomfort at not being able to access technology.
- You compulsively check your devices, even in inappropriate situations, for example: while driving or in a face-to-face conversation.
- You neglect personal relationships and responsibilities.
- You neglect your studies.
- You neglect your work productivity.
- You experience physical discomfort: visual fatigue, headaches, sleep disorders, musculoskeletal problems.
- You use technology as a strategy to avoid uncomfortable or challenging situations.
- You use technology as a strategy to regulate your uncomfortable or unpleasant emotions.
- Finally, you are not able to reduce the use of technology despite recognizing all of the above affectations.

HOW TO DO A COMPLETE DIGITAL DETOX?

2

Plan your connection:

A good technique used in cognitive-behavioral therapy is to set aside a time of the day (as a fixed and unique moment) to review all your social media accounts.

3

Disconnect:

Silence notifications, turn off your cell phone from time to time, change your routine, limit your network activity.

4

Avoid comparisons:

Remember that publications usually show only the best of each person, not their complete reality.

5

Accept that you can't be in everything:

It's impossible to participate in every experience, and that's okay. Learn to enjoy what you choose without regrets.

6

Practice mindfulness:

Techniques such as meditation or conscious breathing help you focus on the present and reduce anxiety.

HOW TO DO A COMPLETE DIGITAL DETOX?

7

Find satisfaction "off line":

Build meaningful and deep relationships, face to face, have a coffee with friends, connect with nature, volunteer, etc.

8


Activate your support networks:

Seek the support of friends, family and other key resources to increase your chances of success.

9

Evaluate your progress:

Recognize your achievements and activate small rewards that motivate you to continuous improvement.



B.2

**SPENDING AND
ENJOYING TIME
ALONE WITH ME**



Reyna
Teacher



Reyna
Teacher

TIME WITH ME

SPACE TO BLOOM

Reyna

Teacher

Honduras

Ever since I was a child I have looked for spaces to be alone. I remember my favorite place was under a mango tree, with a huge shadow that embraced me in silence. Sometimes I would contemplate nature, other times I would simply listen to the sounds of the wind or gaze at the stars. Over time, I understood that these moments were not simply a distraction: they were a way to find myself, to think, to process what I was feeling. It was, without knowing it, a way of seeking wellness.

Today, those moments are still fundamental for me. Being alone allows me to pause and listen to myself: to remember my dreams, to recognize my growth, to realize how I have learned to cope with difficulties. Getting away from external noise - and mental noise - helps me recharge my energy, see more clearly and reconnect with what really matters.

My creativity is also born there, in the calm. When I'm alone, ideas, projects and proposals come up, which I then share with my team. I always recommend to others to start small. Five minutes, then ten. Over time, these spaces become moments of discovery, where we learn to be with ourselves without needing to escape.

To be alone is not to be empty: it is to open myself to my own company, to discover strengths, skills and emotions that are often hidden in the midst of routine. I feel that, by sharing this practice with my students and mothers, many have found inspiration to give themselves that same time. Because taking care of ourselves also means giving ourselves space, turning down the volume of the world and listening more strongly to our own voice.

**"BEING ALONE HELPS ME
DISCOVER MYSELF AND
RECHARGE. IT'S THE SPACE WHERE
EVERYTHING COMES BACK INTO
PLACE."**

DEDICATE AND ENJOY TIME ALONE WITH ME



Spending time alone is a valuable practice for your mental health because it allows you to reconnect with yourself, reflect on your emotions and recharge your energy. **In a world full of stimuli and social demands, this personal space is essential to find balance and well-being.**

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Self-knowledge

Helps you explore your thoughts, emotions and values, strengthening your personal identity.

Stress reduction

By disconnecting from external pressures, you can relax and release accumulated tension.

Emotional recharge

it is a time to take care of yourself and recover energy.

Encouraging creativity

being alone stimulates your imagination and allows you to develop new ideas without distractions.

Improved decision making

reflecting in solitude gives you clarity to analyze situations and make more conscious decisions.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TIME ALONE:

- **Practice meditation:** dedicate a few minutes a day to focus on your breathing and calm your mind.
- **Write in a journal:** reflect on your thoughts and emotions to get to know yourself better.
- **Explore your hobbies:** spend time on activities you enjoy, such as reading, painting, cooking, exercising or having a coffee with yourself.
- **Connect with nature:** go for a walk, hike or just enjoy the outdoors.
- **Perform mindfulness exercises:** focus on the present and appreciate the small details of your environment: like the details of a flower or the aroma of a coffee.
- **Establish self-care routines:** take time to take care of your body and mind, such as taking a relaxing bath or practicing yoga.



Alone time is not isolation, but an opportunity to strengthen your relationship with yourself and improve your well-being. ***How do I know if I am having a healthy balance?***

Reflect on your motives

Ask yourself, "Am I seeking alone time to recharge or to avoid something?"

Set boundaries

Spend time alone, but also be sure to maintain contact with loved ones and face your responsibilities.

Seek support

If you feel you are avoiding difficult situations, consider talking to someone you trust or a professional to process those emotions.

**HERE'S A FRIENDLY AND
BEAUTIFUL ROUTINE TO ENJOY
YOUR ALONE TIME AND
RECONNECT WITH YOU:**



MY APPOINTMENT WITH MYSELF

This type of routine helps you reconnect with yourself, cultivate peace of mind and remind you how valuable your well-being is. **Your own company can be wonderful!**

Preparation

Before you begin, create a welcoming environment. Tidy up your space, light a candle or incense and wear comfortable clothes. The idea is to make you feel special.

Soft Start - Digital Disconnect

Turn off notifications and put away your cell phone. Take a few minutes to take a deep breath and start your appointment in calm.

Specialty Drink

Brew your favorite coffee, tea or beverage. Savor each sip as you reflect on your day or simply enjoy the unhurried moment.

Creative or relaxing activity

- Write in a journal about how you feel or things that have made you happy lately.
- Draw, paint, do origami or whatever activity you enjoy without expectations of perfection.
- If you prefer, listen to your favorite music and let it inspire you.

Mindful walk or movement

Go for a walk in a park or just take an aimless stroll. Notice the colors, sounds and how you feel in the present. If you prefer to move at home, you can do a yoga or stretching session.

Gastronomic pleasure

Cook or order your favorite food and enjoy it fully, without distractions. If you like the idea, have a picnic at home or outdoors.

Moment of reconnection

Reflect on how you felt during the appointment. You can write a short note to yourself with a gentle reminder, something like, "You are enough just the way you are. Keep taking care of yourself."

Relaxing closure - Self-care

- Take a warm bath with salts or essential oils.
- Read a few pages of a book you like.
- Do a guided meditation or deep breathing session before bedtime.



C.

**STRENGTHENING
SUPPORT
NETWORKS**



María

Directorate of Medical
Services

ATREVERME A PEDIR AYUDA

TAMBIÉN ES CUIDAR DE MÍ

María

Directorate of Medical Services

México

Talking about mental health within the police environment remains a huge challenge. For a long time it has been thought that showing emotions is synonymous with weakness, and that makes asking for help a taboo. After 33 years working in the Secretariat of Citizen Security, I have seen how many colleagues seek support only when the emotional burden becomes unbearable, after years of many silences.

I think that asking for help should not be a last resort, it should be part of our self-care, just like visiting the doctor or the dentist. It's not about giving quick advice or catch phrases like "give it your best shot," but about accompanying with empathy and validating what the other person is feeling. Sometimes all someone needs is to be listened to.

Attending from the first moment someone asks for support can change an entire story. It is an act of courage to recognize that we need help, and also an act of self-love. Every conversation we open, every listening space we create, is an opportunity to heal from within.

Today more than ever we need to understand that taking care of our mental health is not about failing, it is about strengthening ourselves. Asking for help does not make us less strong, it makes us more human, more resilient, and more capable of accompanying others as well.

**"ASKING FOR HELP IS NOT FAILING:
IT IS THE BRAVEST WAY TO TAKE
CARE OF OURSELVES."**



C.1

ASKING FOR HELP

Learning basic social skills, such as daring to ask for help, is essential because it allows us to build stronger relationships, improve our communication and face challenges more effectively. Asking for help not only connects us with others, but also fosters collaboration and mutual support, which can be key to overcoming difficult times.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Encourages learning

By seeking support, we learn from the experiences and knowledge of others.

Strengthens relationships

Asking for help creates bonds of trust and demonstrates that we value collaboration.

Reduces stress

Sharing our worries with others relieves us and allows us to find solutions faster.

Promotes empathy

Recognizing that we need help makes us more sympathetic to the needs of others.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEARNING HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

Recognize your needs: Reflect on areas where you might need support and accept that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.

Assertive communication: Use clear and respectful phrases such as, "Could you help me with this?" or "I need guidance on this issue."

Start with people you trust: Practice asking friends, family or close colleagues for help to feel more comfortable.

Be specific: Explain clearly what you need and why, so that the other person can help you effectively.

Acknowledge support: Recognize the efforts of those who help you, which strengthens the relationship and encourages future collaborations.

TOOLS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR SUPPORT NETWORKS

Make time for your current relationships

Make an effort to maintain regular contact with friends, family and colleagues. A phone call, a text or a casual meeting can strengthen ties.

Participate in group activities

Join clubs, workshops or community groups related to your interests. This will help you meet people with similar values and passions.

Be a good listener

Provide support to people in your network by listening to them with empathy and attention. This builds trust and strengthens connections.

Practice reciprocity

Offer your help when others need it. Mutual support is key to building strong relationships.

Open space for new relationships

Be open to meeting new people and allowing them to become part of your support network.

Take care of the quality of your connections

Prioritize relationships that bring you happiness and well-being, and avoid those that are not constructive.

Cultivate gratitude

Thank those who have supported you in important moments. Expressing gratitude strengthens relationships.





José Luis

Directorate of School
Safety

LISTENING FOR

PREVENTION AND HEALING

José Luis

Directorate of School Safety

México

It is often difficult for us to recognize that we need support because it is perceived as weakness, and that makes the road to emotional well-being more difficult. The first thing to change this is to learn to listen: not with empty phrases, but with real empathy.

In my work at the School Safety Directorate, I have learned that listening is a prevention tool. We accompany students and communities not only by resolving conflicts, but also by opening spaces where it is safe to talk about what we feel. Much of what I practice at work I also apply in my personal life: detecting in time what could escalate, accompanying from empathy, and remembering that prevention is not only to avoid external conflicts, but also to take care of the internal welfare of the people around us.

Today I know that real listening can be as powerful as any intervention. And that sometimes, the greatest act of prevention we can do for someone is simply to be there, willing to understand, to support, to accompany.

**"EMPATHETIC LISTENING IS ALSO
A FORM OF PREVENTION AND
HEALING."**



C.2

**ASSERTIVE
COMMUNICATION AND
EMPATHETIC LISTENING**

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUE: ME MESSAGES

Identify what you are feeling

Before you speak, reflect on how you feel and what has been bothering you. **Example:** "I feel frustrated when..."

Describe the situation without blaming

Explain what happened objectively, without accusing.

Example: "When we are late for meetings..." instead of "You are always late and it bothers me".

Express your emotion

Use first person sentences to communicate how the situation affects you. **Example:** "I feel ignored when I am not being heard in conversation".

Explain why it affects you

Give context about the impact it has on you.

Example: "It makes me feel like my opinion is not important."

Propose a solution

Suggest an alternative to improve the situation.

Example: "I would like us to agree on a fixed schedule to avoid delays".

Listen to the response

Give the other person space to respond and seek an open dialogue.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE



Message You

"You never help me at home, you are very inconsiderate".



Message Me

"I feel exhausted when I have to do all the chores alone. I wish we could split them up to make it more equitable."

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOL TO LEARN TO SAY NO:



- **Recognize your right to set limits:** Understand that saying "no" is not selfish, but a way to take care of your well-being. Reflect on what situations make you feel uncomfortable or overburdened.
- **Identify your priorities:** Before responding, ask yourself if accepting something will affect your time, energy or well-being. If it is not aligned with your needs, it is valid to reject it.
- **Use clear and assertive communication:** Express your refusal in a direct and respectful manner. Example: "Thank you for thinking of me, but I can't do it right now".
- **Avoid justifying yourself too much:** It is not necessary to give long explanations or feel guilty for saying "no". A simple "I can't right now" is enough.
- **Offer alternatives (if you wish):** If you want to help in another way, you can suggest options. Example: "I can't attend, but I can support you with another task".
- **Practice self-care:** Setting boundaries helps you avoid burnout and prioritize your well-being. Remember that saying "no" allows you to focus on what really matters.
- **Stand by your decision without guilt:** If someone insists, reassert your limit calmly. Example: "I understand, but my answer is still no."



María José

Volunteer
Costa Rica

María José

Volunteer
Costa Rica

Volunteering has become something truly important in my life. It hasn't only allowed me to contribute to others - it also gives me energy, and I use it as a way to feel better about myself. I became a volunteer because of an academic requirement, but little by little I discovered how meaningful it really is, especially when sharing day-to-day moments with children.

I remember the first day I led a workshop - I was very nervous. I didn't know if I'd do it right, but slowly I started to feel more confident. I stopped seeing it as an obligation and began to see it as an opportunity to leave a mark on someone else. Those moments recharge me, pull me out of my worries, and remind me that I have something to offer just by being myself.

After several months as a volunteer, I realized that for me, it's also a way to heal. Volunteering has helped me see life from a different perspective. It helps me relieve stress and find time for myself, it's how I prioritize my well-being and feel good.

What motivates me is to make a positive impact on the lives of every child I work with in these workshops. I've come to understand that I can make a difference. My greatest lesson has been just that: to have an impact on others' lives while also feeling fulfilled and joyful through what I do.

Volunteering isn't just another task, it's an experience I live and truly enjoy. I have a phrase that motivates me when I'm tired: "Yes, I can." I repeat it to myself because I believe it. Just like I believe I can help transform the reality of others because when I give the best of myself, the result will always be something positive.

**AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS AS A
VOLUNTEER, I REALIZED THAT FOR ME,
IT'S A WAY TO HEAL. VOLUNTEERING
HELPED ME RECONNECT WITH MY INNER
CHILD AND SEE LIFE FROM A NEW
PERSPECTIVE.**



C.3

**BUILDING POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS
(SUPPORTING MY
COMMUNITY)**

Giving back to the community has a positive impact on both those who receive the support and those who give it. Here's why it's valuable for your mental health and well-being, and how you can encourage volunteering:

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Sense of purpose

Helping others connects you to a greater purpose, which can increase your personal satisfaction.

Stress reduction

Participating in altruistic activities releases endorphins, known as the "happiness hormones," which help reduce stress and improve mood.

Strengthening self-esteem

Knowing that your actions have a positive impact on the lives of others boosts your confidence and self-efficacy.

Social connection

Volunteering fosters meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging, which is key to combating loneliness and isolation.

Personal development

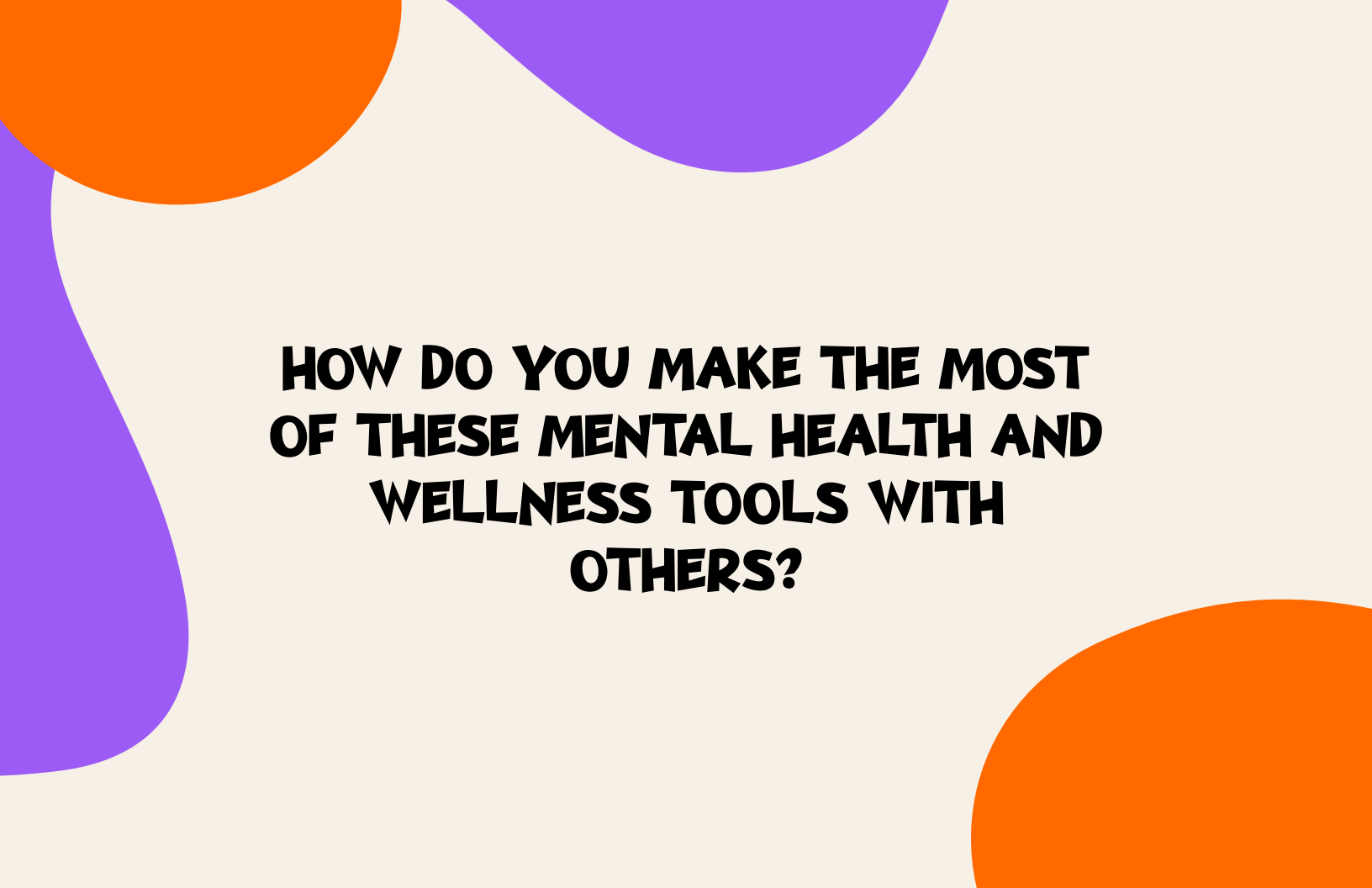
Allows you to acquire new skills, broaden your perspective and grow as a person.



HOW TO PROMOTE VOLUNTEER ACTIONS

- **Start with your close circle:** invite friends, family or colleagues to participate in community activities with you.
- **Organize local events:** you can propose activities such as food drives, cleaning of public spaces or educational workshops.
- **Collaborate with organizations:** join groups that are already volunteering and help spread the word about their initiatives.
- **Use social media:** share inspiring stories and volunteer opportunities to motivate others to join.
- **Facilitates access:** provides clear information on how to participate, schedules and benefits of activities.
- **Be a role model:** your enthusiasm and commitment can inspire those around you to get involved.

Volunteering not only transforms communities, but also enriches your life in profound ways.



**HOW DO YOU MAKE THE MOST
OF THESE MENTAL HEALTH AND
WELLNESS TOOLS WITH
OTHERS?**

As a couple

- Conduct a shared reading.
- Plan moments of emotional connection, such as gratitude spaces or shared activities.
- Establish a couple's wellness and mental health plan, using the resources of this tool.
- Strengthening assertive communication, using the recommendations or exercises shared in this tool.
- Use conflict management resources to strengthen the relationship.

In family

- Read the tools as a family.
- Put into practice the various exercises in this tool, especially those that strengthen the family connection.
- Use this tool as a motivation to implement other wellness dynamics, such as emotional expression games or meetings to share experiences.
- Encourage active listening and mutual support in the family, through shared tools.
- Create family rituals that strengthen cohesion, such as device-free dinners or outdoor activities.

At school

- Promote the reading, analysis and implementation of the tools in the classroom.
- Introduce wellness practices in the classroom, such as active breaks, breathing exercises, relaxation or mindfulness.
- Use resources and tools to promote empathy and emotional management among the student community.
- Share these wellness tools with the teaching staff to strengthen the implementation of mental health strategies to improve the school environment.
- Share the tools with the families of the student community.
- Practice wellness exercises among the members of the educational community.
- Conducts special events, such as mental health fairs.
- Establish a "school mental health day" and promote the dissemination of the tools included in this tool.
- Establish a mental health book club that promotes discussion and reading of this document and other similar tools to address emotional well-being and personal growth for the entire student community.

At work

- Encourage wellness spaces, such as relaxation sessions or integration activities.
- Promote active breaks, through activation exercises, body movement, relaxation, deep breathing or mindfulness, included and suggested in this document.
- Use tools to improve communication and work stress management.
- Promote an organizational culture that values emotional well-being.
- Create a "wall newspaper" or information board where mental health information is periodically shared.

In the community

- Organize workshops on mental health and wellbeing with resources and tools. For example: Community Mental Health Day with talks, recreational activities and spaces for reflection on emotional wellbeing.
- Organize community wellness fairs: booths with information on mental health, nutrition and recreational activities.
- Create spaces for emotional support such as conversation circles or group activities.
- Establish regular community self-care activities: sports activities, group yoga or meditation sessions, hiking, etc.
- Disseminate wellness information to raise awareness and strengthen the community.



**REAL
TALK**


Glasswing
INTERNATIONAL