

## "Together We Educate Heart, Mind *and* Soul."

Now more than ever we need to take care of ourselves and each other. 2020 has been filled with ups and downs that can take its toll on even the most resilient of us. The Superior North Catholic District School Board Mental Health and Well-being Team want to wish you all well this December and holiday season.

Thank you to our caring, compassionate and dedicated staff, students and families. We wish you an opportunity to stay connected, nourish yourself, rest and relax, and have fun this holiday season.

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# "Together We Educate Heart, Mind *and* Soul."

## Stay Connected

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### Ideas from **Sunnybrook Health Science Centre:**

"It can be hard not to always pay attention to the news during a pandemic but having some time when you can connect with others instead of focusing on the news can help from a wellness perspective," explains Dr. Boyle. "Perhaps try spending at least one hour each day not checking news or emails, and instead, find a way to connect with friends and family. Social connections can be ways to help reduce stress – and that's a great health benefit in a time like this."

**Play an online game:** You can find apps to play board games, word games, or even work on jigsaw puzzles together virtually. Another way to utilize technology is to set-up video-conferencing where different households can see one another on their screens, and join in a visual game like Charades or Pictionary.

**Write a letter:** You don't need technology with a good old-fashioned hand-written letter or card. It may not be immediate interaction, but it can be a nice way to let people know that you're thinking about them. For those who don't have a computer or access to technology, it is a way to keep in touch. If you're on a short walk and the person lives nearby, you can drop the letter in their mailbox, or put a stamp on it and pop it into a nearby Canada Post box. Besides, who doesn't enjoy getting mail that's not a bill?

**Digital coffee club:** Grab a cup of java and make a virtual date with friends. While it's not the same as meeting at your favourite coffee shop, getting cozy at home with a cup of coffee and making a plan for a video chat or phone call with friends can be something to look forward to. In a time where staying home is key, it's a way to 'catch up over coffee' that can bring warmth and connection in more ways than one.

## Ways to *stay connected* from Sunnyside Health Science Centre *continued...*

**Hold a virtual social event:** Technology can help bring people together to learn new things. Friends and family can get creative and hold an event online or join in over the phone. Perhaps each person in the group has a skill they can teach or demonstrate each week. Or maybe, it's an opportunity for a group to join an online fitness group or e-learning class. "Our colleagues hold a weekly social event drop in that covers diverse topics such as yoga, karate lessons, mindfulness, sign language and beyond," says Dr. Boyle. There are many options and ways to meet up virtually to learn together or just be social.

Sunnyside has a wealth of resources within their website to help us all depending on what we may be struggling with. Check out Sunnyside's website at the link below.

<https://health.sunnybrook.ca/covid-19-coronavirus/ways-to-stay-social-despite-the-distance/>

Here are some links that were pulled from their website that may be of interest to you....



## Coping during COVID-19: Mental Health Resources

### *Information from Sunnybrook experts:*

- [COVID-19: Practical strategies to manage your mental health](#)
- [How to use your breath to calm feelings of stress or anxiety](#)
- [Ways to cope with pandemic fatigue](#)
- [COVID-19: Mental health and the elderly](#)
- [COVID-19: Youth mental health and addiction](#)
- [How to support young people during the pandemic](#)
- [COVID-19: Sleep problems, dreams and nightmares](#)
- [COVID-19: How to manage information overload](#)
- [Finding hope and resilience during the pandemic](#)
- [Simple ways of finding happiness in challenging times](#)
- [COVID-19: Ways to stay social despite the distance](#)
- [Talking to your child about COVID-19](#)



For more mental health resources, visit the Sunnybrook experts Department of Psychiatry's patient and family education section.

Source: [www.sunnybrook.ca](http://www.sunnybrook.ca)

# Nourish Yourself

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Nourishing yourself isn't just about eating healthy. It's about ensuring we practice self care in whatever ways make sense and work for our each individual personality and coping styles.

“The spread of COVID-19 has caused many Canadians to change their everyday lives to help “flatten the curve” to avoid a spike in cases that would overwhelm our health services.” For some of you, that will mean that you have to self-isolate for two weeks, for others, it will mean that you are now working from home for the foreseeable future. Still others continue to have to go to your workplaces because of the essential nature of your work. Still others may face the prospect of job loss” (The Working Mind, website). These are all difficult situations and everyone has their own response to stress. This is a good time to remember, however, that you have resiliency skills and you can cope.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada developed, “The Working Mind Covid-19 Self Care and Resilience Guide which can be found and downloaded at:

<https://theworkingmind.ca/blog/working-mind-covid-19-self-care-resilience-guide>

Or can be found on our board Hub under the mental health tab by following this link: [Staff self-care and resilience](#)



# Reflect and Rest

Finding time for reflection and resting our minds and bodies is difficult on our best days, nevermind during a world pandemic. Have you tried meditation yet? Anxiety Canada is offering the MindShift App free. To learn more about what Mindshift can offer visit:

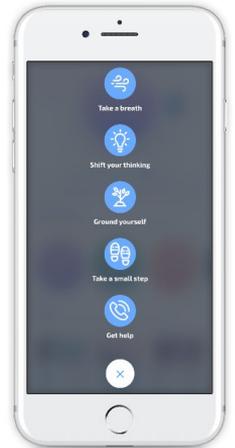
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>

Is anxiety getting in the way of your life? MindShift™ CBT uses scientifically proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.

Get the tools to *tackle*:

- Worry
- Panic
- Perfectionism
- Social Anxiety
- Phobias

**MindShift CBT**  
Free Evidence-Based Anxiety Relief



# Have Fun

## “Coping with the Holidays” *Christmas Bulbs*



The holiday season is usually a time for happiness and joy. Sometimes, there are other feelings that might come up that are not as pleasant. Write down how you're feeling about the holidays and why! These feelings can be positive or negative but make sure to try and come up with ideas on how to cope in times of need! [Click here](https://www.mylemarks.com) for this resource. (Source <https://www.mylemarks.com>)

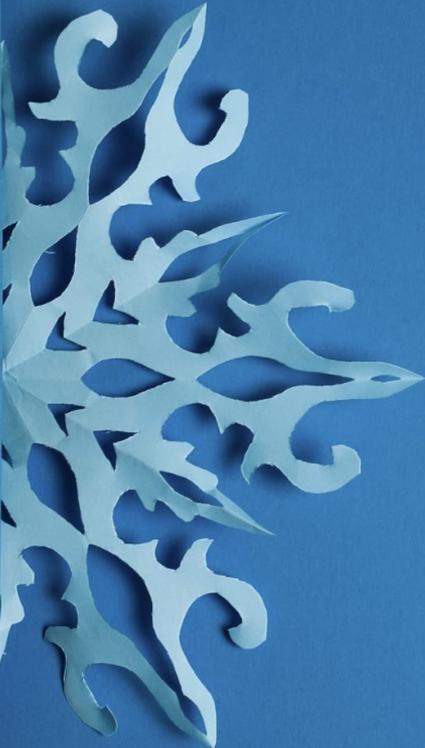
This ***Gingerbread Man*** [Coloring Page](http://www.supercoloring.com) can be used in multiple ways. Let your students test out their coloring skills in Christmas Style and/or ask them to label it with Festive Coping Skills that can be used during the Christmas Holidays. (Source: <http://www.supercoloring.com>)

[Picture quiz slide show](#) This slideshow contains hidden pictures that must be uncovered. Challenge your class to guess the picture before the timer runs out! Note: You will need to “present” the slide show and click on the timer for it to begin.

[Christmas resource pack misc.](#) This pack of resources contains simple Christmas activities for different ages as some involve literacy and numeracy! Note you will have to download the file to access the links.

[Mindfulness Paper Chain Links](https://www.twinkl.ca/) This is a simple activity for all ages. Simply fill in and/or decorate the different mindfulness quotes and combine each students' chain link! (Source: <https://www.twinkl.ca/>)

[Christmas BINGO](https://myfreebingocards.com/) This website will print up to thirty copies of a Bingo card for free! There is even a virtual option where thirty participants can play Bingo on their laptops! (Source: <https://myfreebingocards.com/>)



The winter weather can sometimes have us feeling the **blues**. Try this activity with your students to remind them what truly makes them **happy** during the winter months. Click here [Happiness Winter Worksheet](#)

During the **holidays** we take time to think about what we truly love and value. Spending time with family makes the holidays special. Try this fun family **snowflake** activity with your students. Click here [Family snowflake activity](#)