

LIVE UNITED



United Way  
of Southwest Virginia

# Self Care Starters for the Early Childhood Educator

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Wordcatching

# What's a C.A.P.F.?



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR  
**POETRY THERAPY**  
*Promoting Growth and Healing through Language, Symbol, and Story*



**Speaking of Women's Health™**  
*Be Strong • Be Healthy • Be in Charge*



american greetings

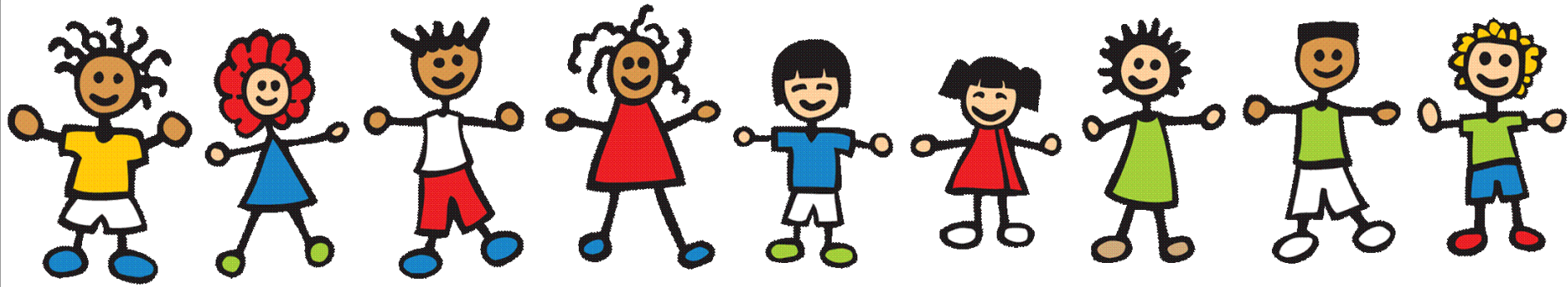
*Your Life Can Be Poetry!*



*Center for Journal Therapy*  
Life-based writing for healing, growth, and change.



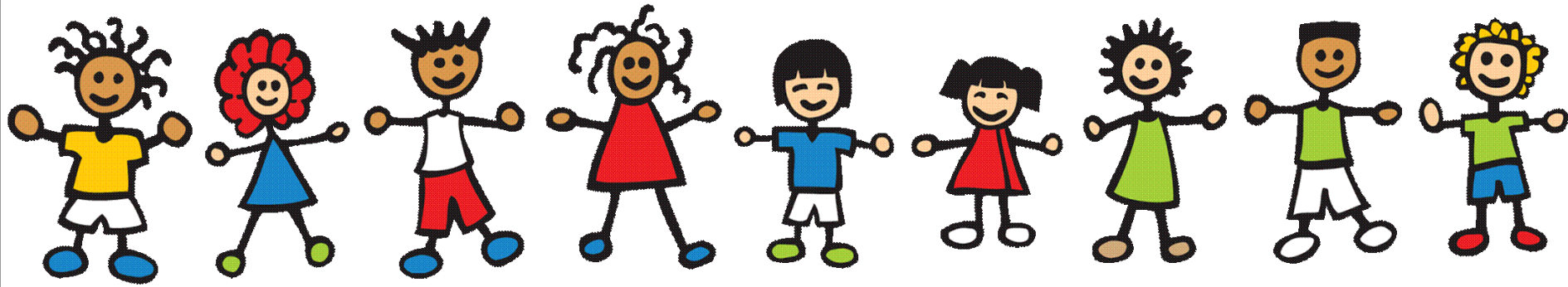
**Self-care** is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take **care** of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it's a simple concept in theory, it's something we very often overlook. Good **self-care** is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. [Raphailia Michael, MA](#)



## •Have you experienced...

- Low energy
- Less patience
- Increased headaches, stomach aches, and other physical symptoms of stress
- Difficulty falling and staying asleep
- Challenges in choosing healthy food and urges to eat “comfort” foods
- Feeling “burnout”
- Difficulty focusing
- Less motivation to engage in social activities
- What else?

(Please remember that you should talk to a Dr., counselor, or trusted friend if your emotions are feeling too overwhelming.)



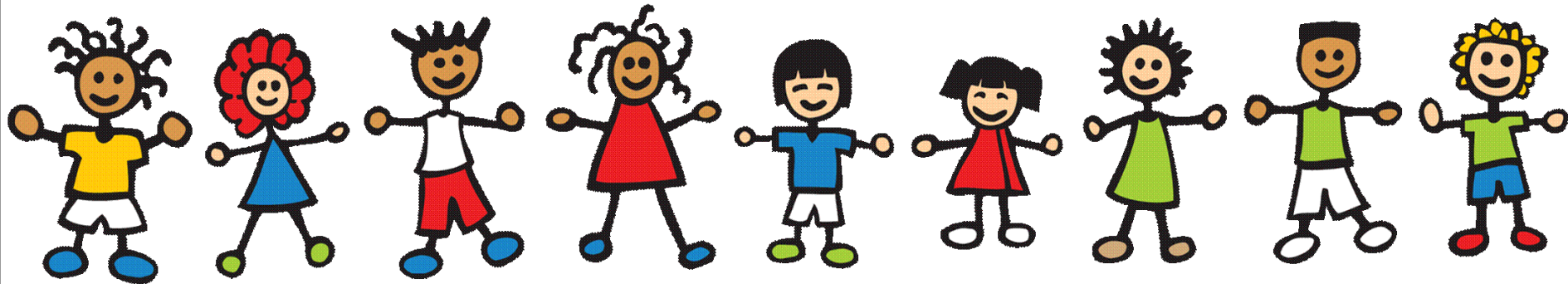
## Have you tried...

- Make a gratitude list
- Listen to upbeat or relaxing music
- Take five minutes to sit down and put your feet up
- Stand in the shower with the hot water pouring over your back
- Ask your spouse or partner for a foot rub or back massage
- Go for a walk over your lunch break
- Listen to a meditation (“Insight Timer” is a free app for meditations)
- Take an Epsom salt bath
- Schedule a date night with your spouse, partner, or friends to connect without distractions
- Enjoy a hot cup of tea
- Spend five minutes taking deep breaths
- Turn your phone off for 30 minutes
- Participate in a (virtual) yoga class
- Light a yummy smelling candle
- Write in a journal for five minutes
- Read a book for 20 minutes
- Go to bed 15 minutes early
- Unfollow someone on social media who is negative or makes you feel badly

(Shared for educational purposes only from psychcentral.com)



You are **SO AWESOME** at taking care of others!

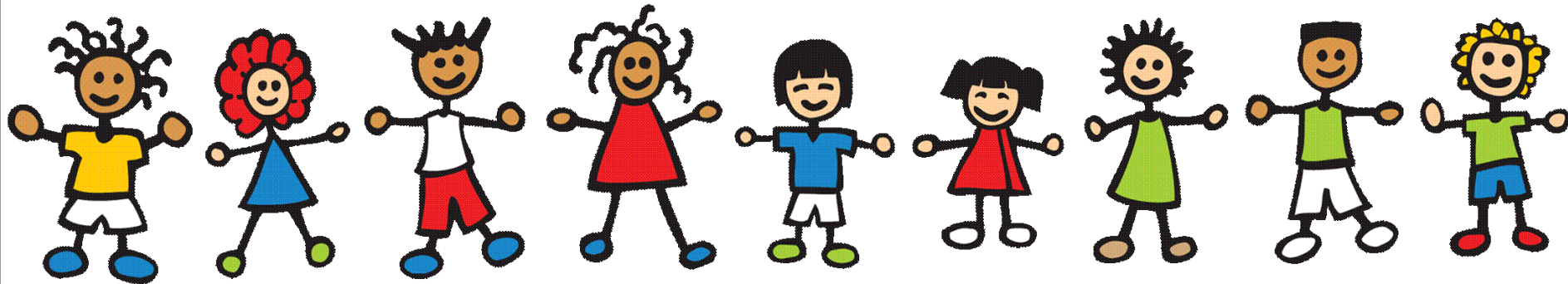


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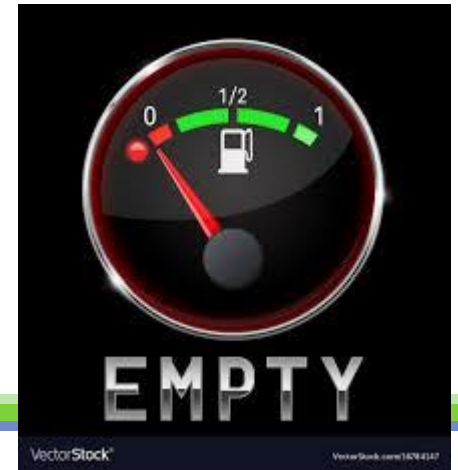
What makes it hard for you to take care of yourself?

Or...

How have you successfully taken care of your self recently?



# Make a list!



What 5 things would you want to really want to take time to do for yourself?

How do you know when you need some self-care? Make sure to take some time for self-care **before** your tank is empty!



# Coloring-it's not just for kids!



A screenshot of the Adult Coloring Book iPhone app. Courtesy of Adult Coloring Book Apps.

So many options!

Which do you prefer? Soft colors, light pressure? Or bold with quick results?





# Focus on the present



- Psychologist [Gloria Martínez Ayala](#) says, “The action involves both logic, by which we color forms, and creativity, when mixing and matching colors. This incorporates the areas of the cerebral cortex involved in vision and fine motor skills. The relaxation that it provides lowers the activity of the amygdala, a basic part of our brain involved in controlling emotion that is affected by stress.”
- Anyone can color
- De-screen and de-stress
- Can be a shared activity!

# Doodling

[Sunni Brown's TEDx Talk: Doodlers, Unite!](#)

**TO DOODLE:**  
*(the real definition)*

*to make  
spontaneous marks  
to help yourself think*

# What kind of doodler are you?

- Words/lettering
- “scribbles”
- Repetitive
- Abstract
- Objects

**ACTION:** Take a moment to start to doodle.

Do you have a favorite doodle?



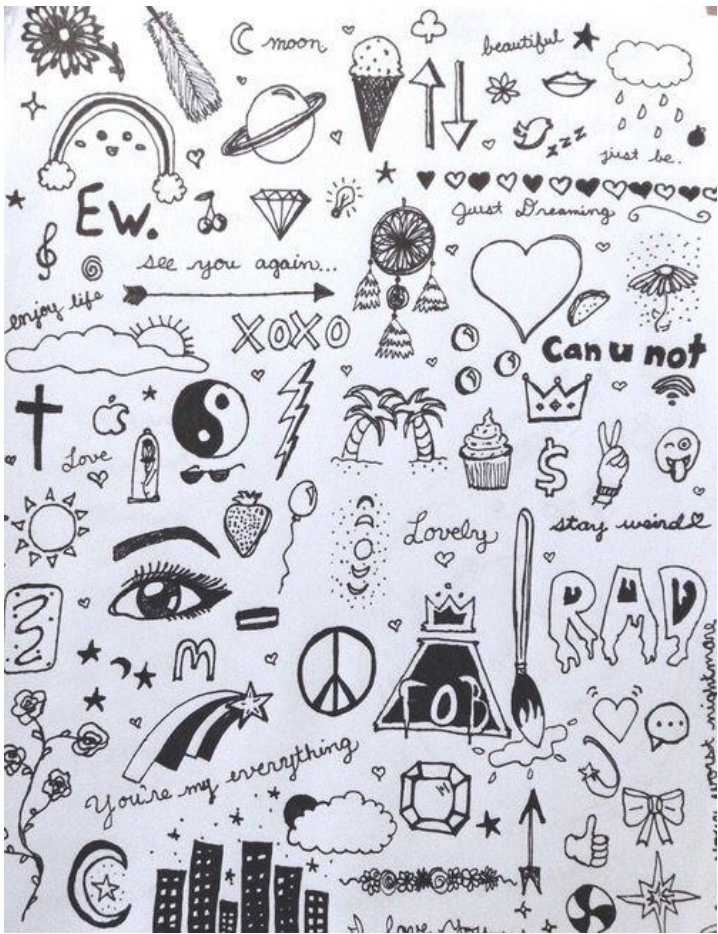
## Benefits:

- Self-regulating, simple, travels well, satisfying, aids concentration and elevating information retention

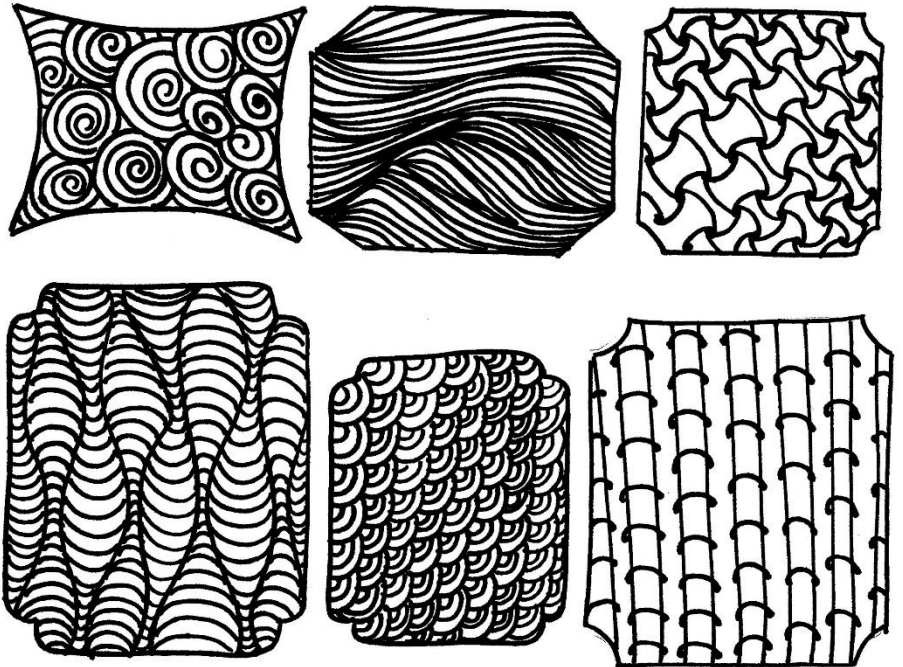
**TRY THIS:**

Slow your speed. Match the speed and size to your breath.

- Fit your doodle inside a box or a circle
- Try dots. Circles. Lines. Swoops.



a alamy stock

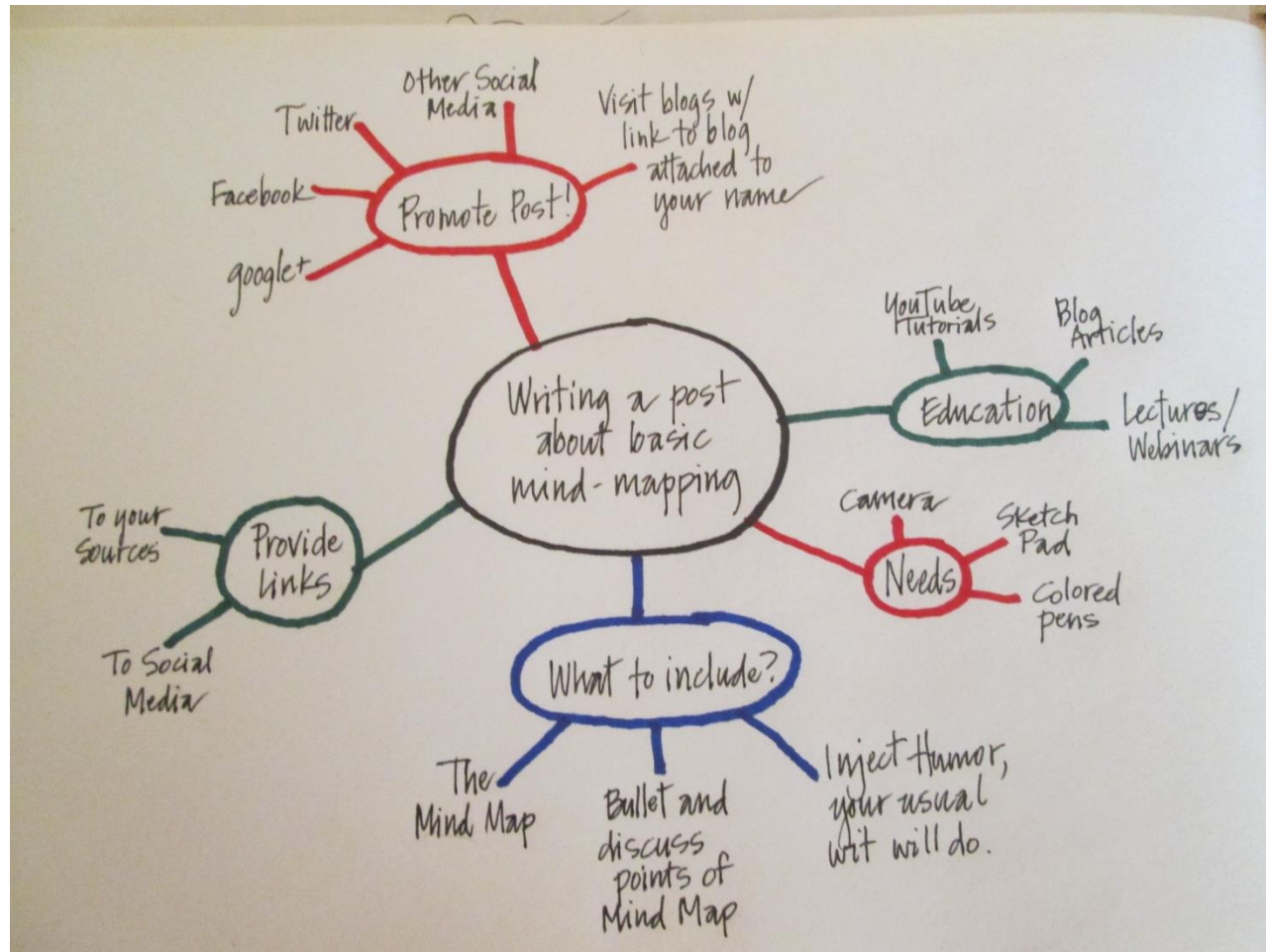




# Mindmapping/Cluster



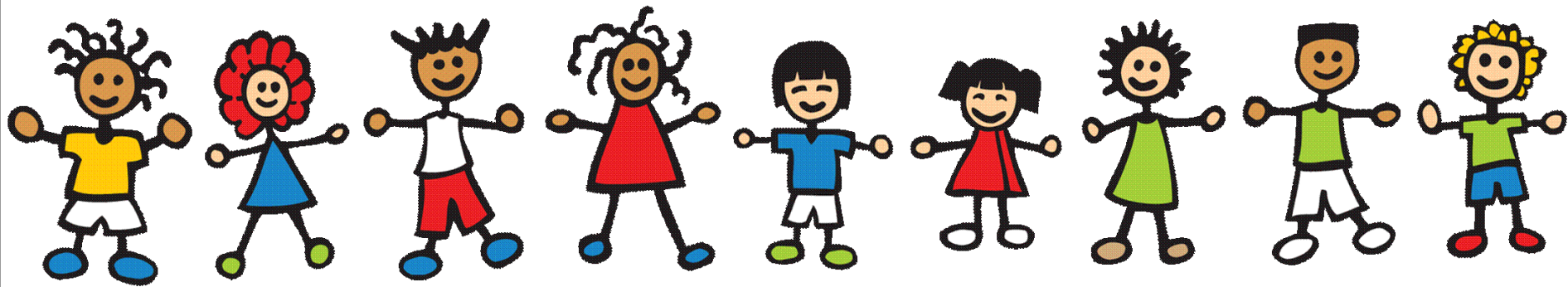
# Start in the middle and map it out



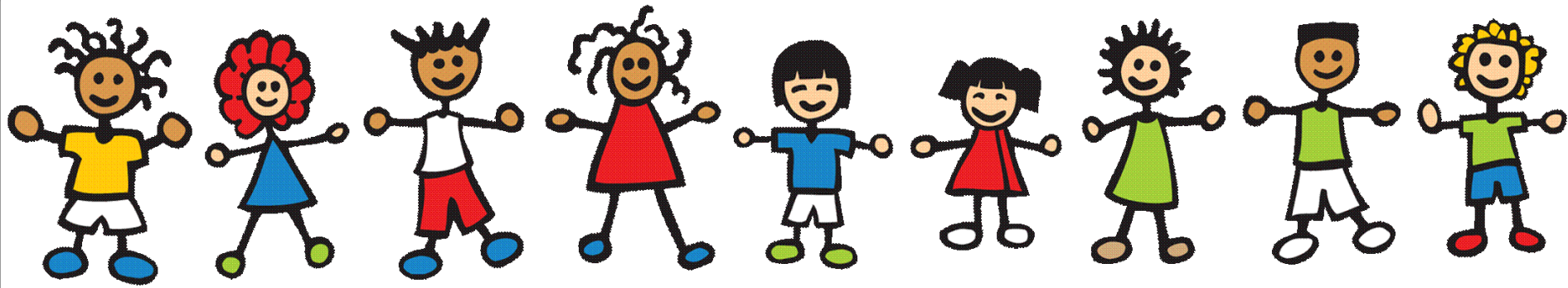
# Mindmapping (advanced!)



# Journaling for the Caregiver...



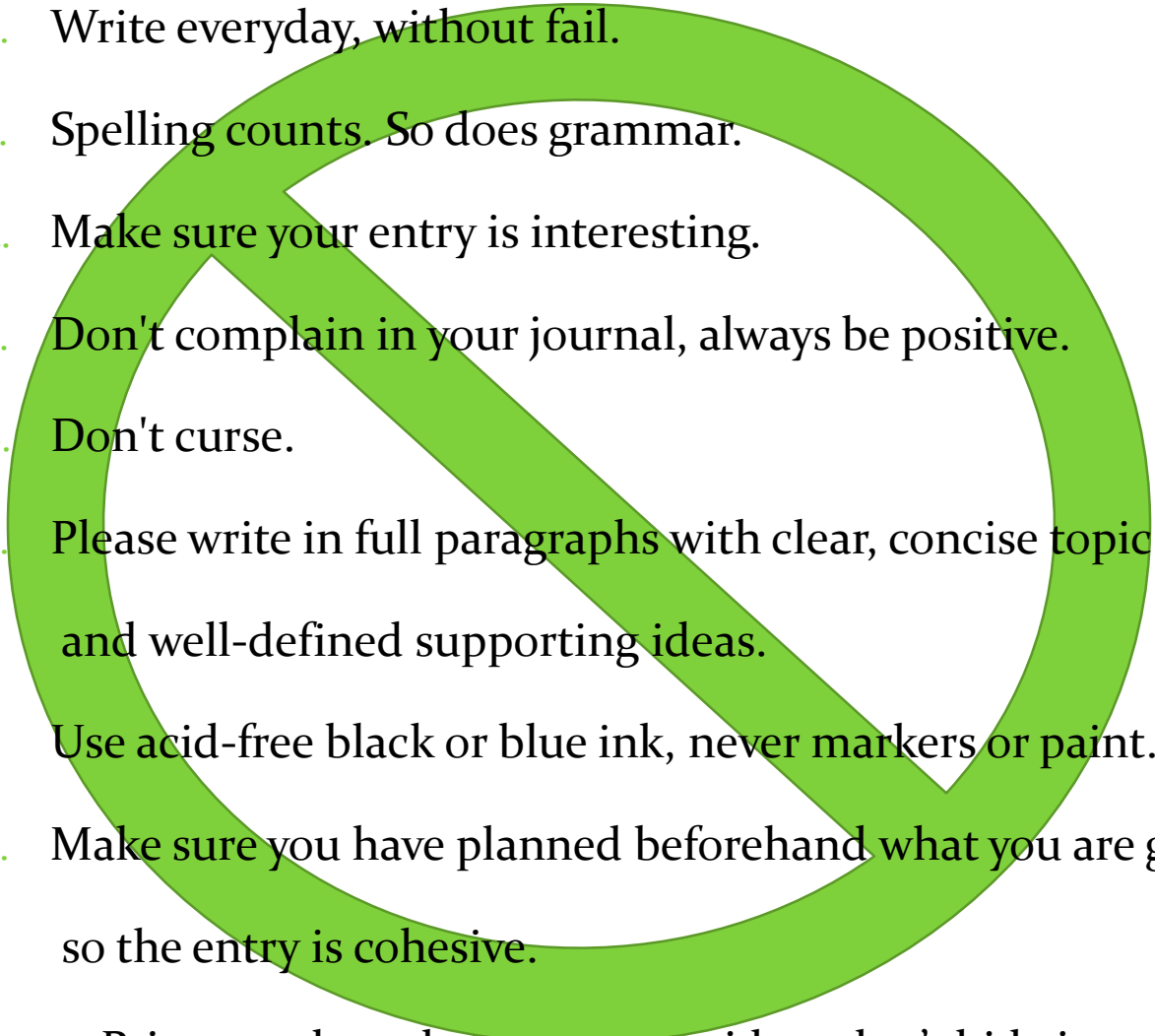
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- **Expression**
- Communication
- Health benefits
- Documentation
- Goal-setting
- Brainstorming



# *There are NO rules for journaling.*

- 
1. Write neatly.
  2. Write everyday, without fail.
  3. Spelling counts. So does grammar.
  4. Make sure your entry is interesting.
  5. Don't complain in your journal, always be positive.
  6. Don't curse.
  7. Please write in full paragraphs with clear, concise topic sentences and well-defined supporting ideas.
1. Use acid-free black or blue ink, never markers or paint.
  2. Make sure you have planned beforehand what you are going to write, so the entry is cohesive.
- 10. Privacy only makes you paranoid, so don't hide it.



# Freewriting

- The point is just to keep your pen moving, no matter what.
- Set a time limit or a page limit.
- It doesn't matter what you write, as long as you are writing for the whole time.
- Stuck? Try “I don't know what to write” until something comes to you.
- It may help to start with a prompt such as “I remember..”
- Important: Add a reflection sentence at the end.



# A few things to keep in mind as you begin...



- There are no rules to journaling, so you can't do it wrong.
- Beware of... *redpenophobia!*
- Handwriting/typing- just the act of releasing it triggers some health benefits.
- You may have to try several times!
- Take some time to review what you write from time to time.
- Your privacy is important!
- Focus on *your* process, and what you can control.

# Wordcatching for Wellness

- **Sentence stems:**

- I am...
- Here's what I know...
- I want to remember...
- Once upon a time...
- I am not in control of:
- I am in control of:
- One thing I can do right now...
- I'm proud because...
- Next time I want to:

- **Techniques:**

- 3 feeling words before/after
  - Mindmap
  - Poemdrop
  - Timeline
  - Make a list
  - Unsent letter
  - Gratitude
- You. Are. Here.



Wordcatching

# Gratitude

- What can gratitude do for you: 26 studies and counting!
- Attention to the present: specificity
- Thnx4.org: register for an online gratitude prompt and journal, and a gratitude profile.



## Evidence That It Works:

- Participants who kept a gratitude journal weekly for 10 weeks or daily for two weeks experienced more gratitude, positive moods, optimism about the future, and better sleep.
- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). [Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life](#). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(2), 377-389.

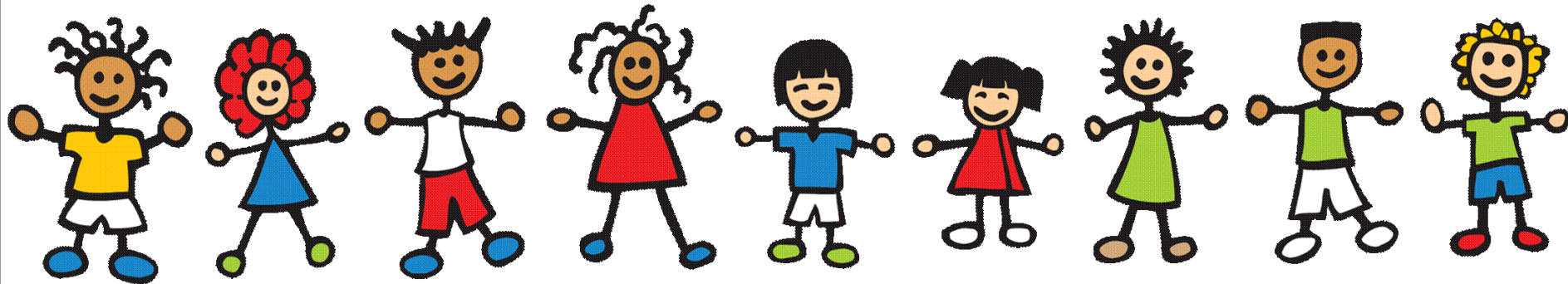
# Gratitude

- How to start a Gratitude Journal



- Keep a running list, as often as you can...
- 2-3 items at a time
- Be specific!
- Be creative- a jar of notecards, popsicle sticks, index cards,
- Date each one

How will you practice self-care in the next 30 days? How will you measure your success?





TAKE CARE HOW YOU  
**SPEAK TO  
YOURSELF**

--- BECAUSE ---

*you are listening*