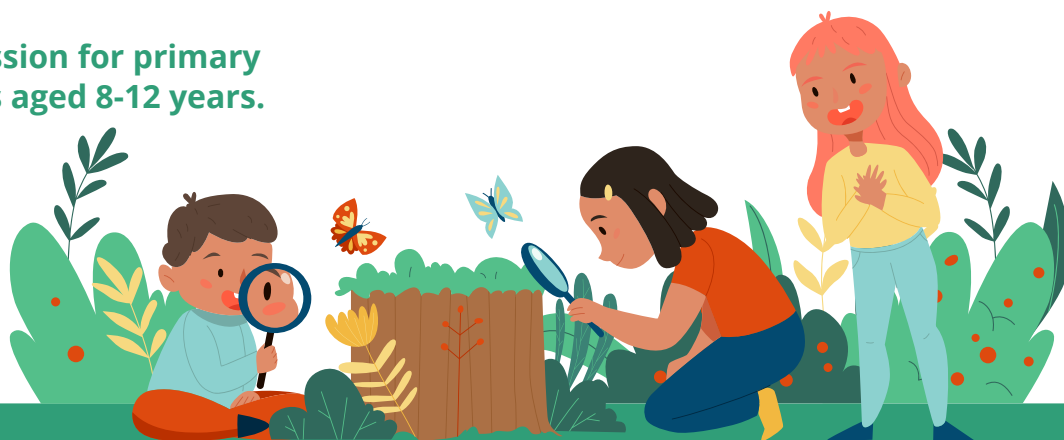


Being Mindful

A 45-minute session for primary school students aged 8-12 years.



Objectives

- Learning about what mindfulness is.
- Increasing the knowledge of different strategies (affirmations, mindfulness, grounding and soothing).
- Developing and practicing mindfulness to improve being able to be more mindful and present.

Resources

- **Activity 2 Instructions:** Chatterbox
- **Activity 2 Teachers Resource:** Mindfulness Cards
- **Activity 3 Worksheet (Optional):** Protective Factors
- **Activity 4 Worksheet:** Mindfulness Colouring
- Texta's or Colouring Pencils
- Scissors
- Coloured paper sheets

Session Times

Session Activity

Resources

5 minutes

Activity 1 - Explaining Mindfulness

Step 1: Ask the young carers if anyone can describe what mindfulness is.

Step 2: Mindfulness is paying attention and being present in the moment to our thoughts and feelings, and not making any judgement over them.

We are also less likely to be worried about the future or dwell on things from the past. Mindfulness can also be described as the opposite of doing too many things at once and slowing down and taking your time with only doing one thing at a time. People might often think of mindfulness as meditation or sitting in silence, but that's not the only way to be mindful.

You could be mindfully playing with your dog, giggling at how his ears are lopsided and noticing the smell of the grass as he runs to get the ball. It's all about paying attention to the small details and bringing your mind back to what you are doing. If you get distracted...which we all do - that is normal! Today we will look at a whole bunch of different ways to practice mindfulness- we will get to try a few now and hopefully more down the track!

| Session Times | Session Activity | Resources |
|---------------|---|---|
| 30 minutes | <p>Activity 2 - Mindfulness Chatterbox</p> <p>Step 1: Ask each person to choose a different coloured sheet to make their chatterbox.</p> <p>Step 2: Use google to search how to make a chatterbox and guide the group step by step. Its very easy to make and they may have already made one before.</p> <p>Step 3: Ask the students to use the following 4 categories for the top of their mindfulness chatterbox:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-love affirmations 2. Breathing 3. Mindfulness 4. Grounding <p>Step 4: Using the laminated copy of the Mindfulness Cards, ask the young carers to go through the pack and choose 2 of each category to put on the inside of their chatterbox. They may wish to choose things that they wish to try.</p> <p>If there is someone that does not wish to make the chatterbox, you can ask them to create a flip book writing down 2 of each category on their paper and decorate the page to pin up somewhere at home or keep with them. Remind the group that the actual act of making a chatterbox is a form of being mindful and present.</p> | <p>Activity 2 Instructions: Chatterbox</p> <p>Activity 2 Teachers Resource: Mindfulness Cards</p> <p>Texta's or colouring pencils.</p> <p>1x Coloured paper per person.</p> <p>Scissors.</p> |
| 10 minutes | <p>Activity 3 - What is resilience and how does it help us?</p> <p>Many schools explicitly teach resilience so the young people may or may not have a good understanding of the concept.</p> <p>Step 1: Ask the young people to brainstorm and contribute, if they are not sure you can provide the following explanation: The ability to keep going after difficult things. This doesn't mean that we ignore bad events or feelings or don't have times when we feel sad or badly. It does mean that we also after a period, look for the positives and continue having meaningful goals, connecting with others and looking after ourselves.</p> <p>There are a few things that determine how resilient someone is – some we can't control and some we can – many of the activities that we have covered in this group will increase a person's resilience over time – focusing on our strengths, setting goals or thinking about what is important to us, having good supports around us, having and using different strategies for managing worries and stress, understanding our own emotions and what we are thinking or feeling. Mindfulness is a great way to become better at all of these, in whatever way you feel works best for you.</p> <p>Step 2: Ask students to reflect on how they see that the skills or activities they have done can contribute to their resilience. Which did they enjoy the most? Are there more they would like to try or some to continue practicing?</p> | <p>Activity 3 Worksheet (Optional): Protective Factors</p> |

| Session Times | Session Activity | Resources |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|
|---------------|------------------|-----------|

Step 3: If deemed suitable you may wish to do the Protective Factors Activity Sheet, or even discuss it and do it on the board in a more informal way, depending on the nature of the group.

10 minutes

Activity 4 - Mindful Drawing

Step 1: Discuss with students the relevance of the activity to their caring role: When you're a carer it can be hard to get some time to yourself and to pay attention to how you are feeling. It's important to take care of yourself, especially if you're taking care of others. Paying attention to how you are feeling is a form of self-care.

Step 2: Students draw and colour-in their favourite place - any place that makes them feel happy, safe and calm. There are general colouring templates attached if young people are unable to think of anything in the time given. General mindful colouring can also be a way to have 'me time' and tune into thoughts and emotions. Hand out plain paper and pencils/textas or printed colour-in templates as per below options:

Option 1: Search for a colour-in sheet of a place they like. (Note: Images can be found by doing a quick google search for colour-in sheets on places such as parks, gardens, beach).

Option 2: Students draw their own specific happy place and colour it in. Examples: Adventure World, the beach, the Zoo, the park, shopping, sitting under a tree, having a bath.

Step 3: Encourage discussion throughout the activity. Remind students they can draw people or pets, but to make sure they don't include anything that is stressful or makes them feel worried. Make sure it makes them feel totally at ease, happy and safe.

Explain to students that we are not judging the drawings of other people's happy places. We would love it if the students would share it at the end, however they don't have to. You may wish to end the session using the Mindfulness Cards pack to pick and practice one of the short breathing exercises like the balloon breath or hot chocolate activity. If there are more active young people in the group, you may wish to include an origami option or something similar to kinetic lego where young people involved in the activity are periodically asked to bring their full attention to what they are doing, how it feels, smells, are there any sounds and so on.

Activity 4

Worksheet:

Mindfulness
Colouring

Texta's and
coloured pencils.

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- 2023 **10 Breathing exercises for kids with anxiety or anger** <https://www.mindfulmazing.com/10-breathing-exercises-for-kids-with-anxiety-or-anger/>. Accessed 12 May 2023
- July 18 2018 **101 Positive Affirmations for kids.** <https://www.thepathway2success.com/101-positive-affirmations-for-kids/>. Accessed 12 May 2023



POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

I can do tough things.

I have courage and confidence.

I have people who love and respect me.

I believe in my goals and dreams.

I am an amazing person.

I have courage and confidence.

I have people who love and respect me.

I believe in my goals and dreams.

MINDFULNESS

Stretching: Ease muscle tension by reaching up to the sky with both hands before tilting to the right and then the left.

Spot the colour: Find 10 objects in the room of a particular colour, for example, orange.

Safari: Going around the yard, your goal is to notice as many birds, bugs, creepy-crawlies, and any other animals as you can. Anything that walks, crawls, swims, or flies is of interest, and you'll need to focus all of your senses to find them, especially the little ones!

The little things: Think of, and name, three good things that have happened or will happen today. It can be as simple as someone smiling at you, spotting a ladybug in the yard, or spending time with a pet.

Leaf rubbing: Find a leaf that has fallen from its tree and is mostly flat. Choose one or more colours of that you like in crayons. Place a piece of paper over the leaf and rub the crayon over the leaf to get the pattern and imprint on your paper. Think about the colours you are using and the feel of the leaf and paper as you create your art.

The little things: Think of, and name, three good things that have happened or will happen today. It can be as simple as someone smiling at you, spotting a ladybug in the yard, or spending time with a pet.

Stretching: Ease muscle tension by reaching up to the sky with both hands before tilting to the right and then the left.

Spot the colour: Find 10 objects in the room of a particular colour, for example, orange.

BREATHING

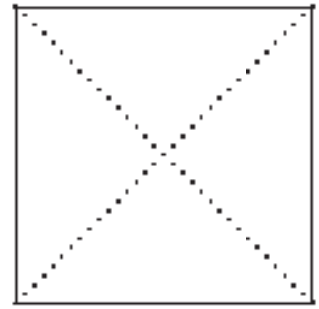
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| <p>Counted breaths: Sitting or standing straight, breathe in while counting to 4. Then breathe out to the count of 6. Repeat 5 times.</p> | <p>Star breathing: Draw a 5-pointed star or use one that staff have printed for you; colour or pattern it how you like. Using your finger, slowly trace the outline of the star, breathing in as you move towards a point and breathing out as you move away from the point. Trace the star 2 times this way.</p> |
| <p>Fly like an eagle: Walk slowly around the classroom, breathing in as your wings go up and breathing out as your wings go down.</p> | <p>Snake breath: Pretend you are a snake and hiss, and inhale deeply through the nose and blowing out through the mouth with a soft and low hissing sound.</p> |
| <p>Shoulder roll/Yoga breath: Take a deep breath in through your nose and relax your entire body. Now roll your shoulders up to your ears as you inhale deeply for a count of 3. Breathe out through your mouth and roll your shoulders down and back (as far away from your ears as you can get) as you exhale for a count of 4.</p> | <p>Fly like an eagle: Walk slowly around the classroom, breathing in as your wings go up and breathing out as your wings go down.</p> |
| <p>Counted breaths: Sitting or standing straight, breath in while counting to 4. Then breath out to the count of 6. Repeat 5 times.</p> | <p>Star breathing: Draw a 5-pointed star or use one that staff have printed for you; colour or pattern it how you like. Using your finger, slowly trace the outline of the star, breathing in as you move towards a point and breathing out as you move away from the point. Trace the star 2 times this way.</p> |

GROUNDING

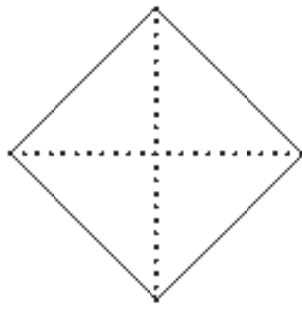
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| <p>Hand trace: Lay a paper flat on a surface and have your child put your hand on the paper. Using a writing tool, trace your hand. Once you're done, add patterns or colour the inside of the hand.</p> | <p>Stomp stomp blow: Stomp your left foot, then stomp your right foot, and then exhale quickly but deeply. Focus on the feeling of your feet on the floor as you continue the pattern of stomp, stomp, blow. Imagine kicking out and blowing away unpleasant thoughts or feelings.</p> |
| <p>5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Spot five things you can see, four things you can hear, three things you can smell, two things you can touch, and one thing you can taste.</p> | <p>Roots: Imagine that you are a tree with roots extending from your feet and into the ground. Continue imagining how the roots reach deep down into the earth, all the way to the center of the planet, where it anchors you.</p> |
| <p>Alphabet names: Name something in the environment according to the letters of the alphabet. Start by finding something that starts with A, then B, then C, and so forth. Go through as many letters as you can and do not worry if you have to skip some.</p> | <p>5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Spot five things you can see, four things you can hear, three things you can smell, two things you can touch, and one thing you can taste.</p> |
| <p>Hand trace: Lay a paper flat on a surface and have your child put your hand on the paper. Using a writing tool, let trace your hand. Once you're done, add patterns or colour the inside of the hand.</p> | <p>Stomp stomp blow: Stomp your left foot, then stomp your right foot, and then exhale quickly but deeply. Focus on the feeling of your feet on the floor as you continue the pattern of stomp, stomp, blow. Imagine kicking out and blowing away unpleasant thoughts or feelings.</p> |

How to fold your chatterbox

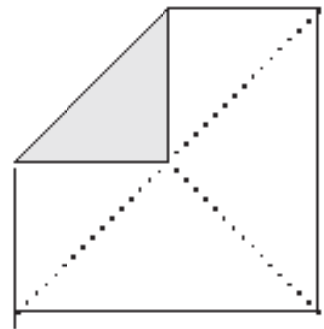
Fold each corner to the opposite corner



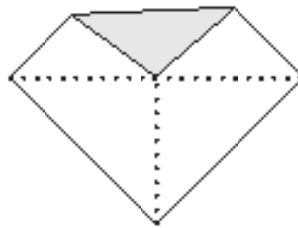
Now turn your paper over so the folds you just made are face down



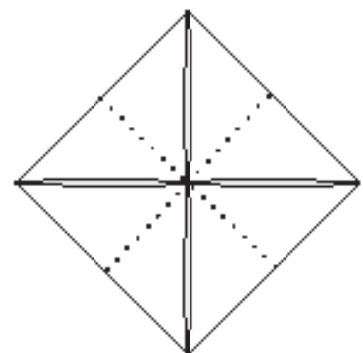
Fold all corners to the centre of the paper



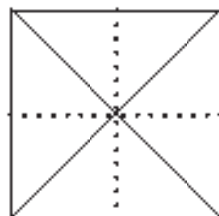
Now turn your paper over so the folds you just made are face down



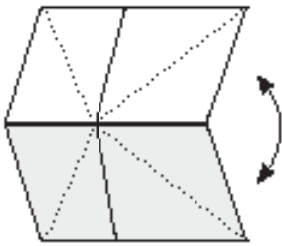
Now your paper should look like this



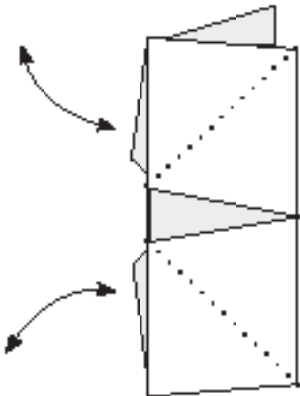
Your paper should now look something like this.



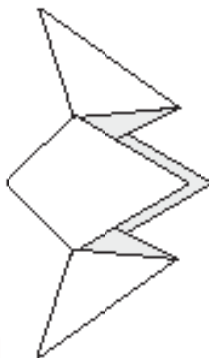
Now fold your paper in half vertically and horizontally



Now fold your paper in half vertically and horizontally



Finished!



Protective Factors



Protective factors are things that contribute to mental health, and allow a person to be resilient in the face of challenges. Someone with a lot of protective factors—such as strong relationships and healthy coping skills—will be better equipped to overcome life’s obstacles.

Many protective factors are out of your control. For example, genetics, the neighborhood where you grew up, and family cannot be changed. However, plenty of factors *can* be controlled. You choose the people in your life, how to cope with problems, and how you’ll spend each day.

By focusing on what you can control, and building upon those protective factors, you will improve your ability to cope with many of life’s challenges.



My Protective Factors

Instructions: Review each of the following protective factors, and mark the scales to indicate how well you are performing in each area.

Social Support

- ability to talk about problems
- people to ask for practical help (e.g. a ride if car breaks down)
- feelings of love, intimacy, or friendship

Weak Moderate Strong

Coping Skills

- ability to manage uncomfortable emotions in a healthy way
- awareness of one’s own emotions, and recognition of how they influence behavior

Weak Moderate Strong

Physical Health

- adequate exercise or physical activity
- a balanced and healthy diet
- medical compliance (e.g. taking medications as prescribed)

Weak Moderate Strong

Sense of Purpose

- meaningful involvement in work, education, or other roles (e.g. parenting)
- understanding of personal values, and living in accordance with those values

Weak Moderate Strong

Self-Esteem

- belief that one’s self has value
- acceptance of personal flaws, weaknesses, and mistakes
- belief in ability to overcome challenges

Weak Moderate Strong

Healthy Thinking

- does *not* ruminate on mistakes, personal flaws, or problems
- ability to consider personal strengths and weaknesses rationally

Weak Moderate Strong

Protective Factors

Instructions: Refer to the protective factors on the previous page to answer the following questions.

Which protective factor has been the most valuable to you during difficult times?

| |
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Specifically, how have you used this protective factor to your advantage in the past?

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What are two protective factors that you would like to improve?

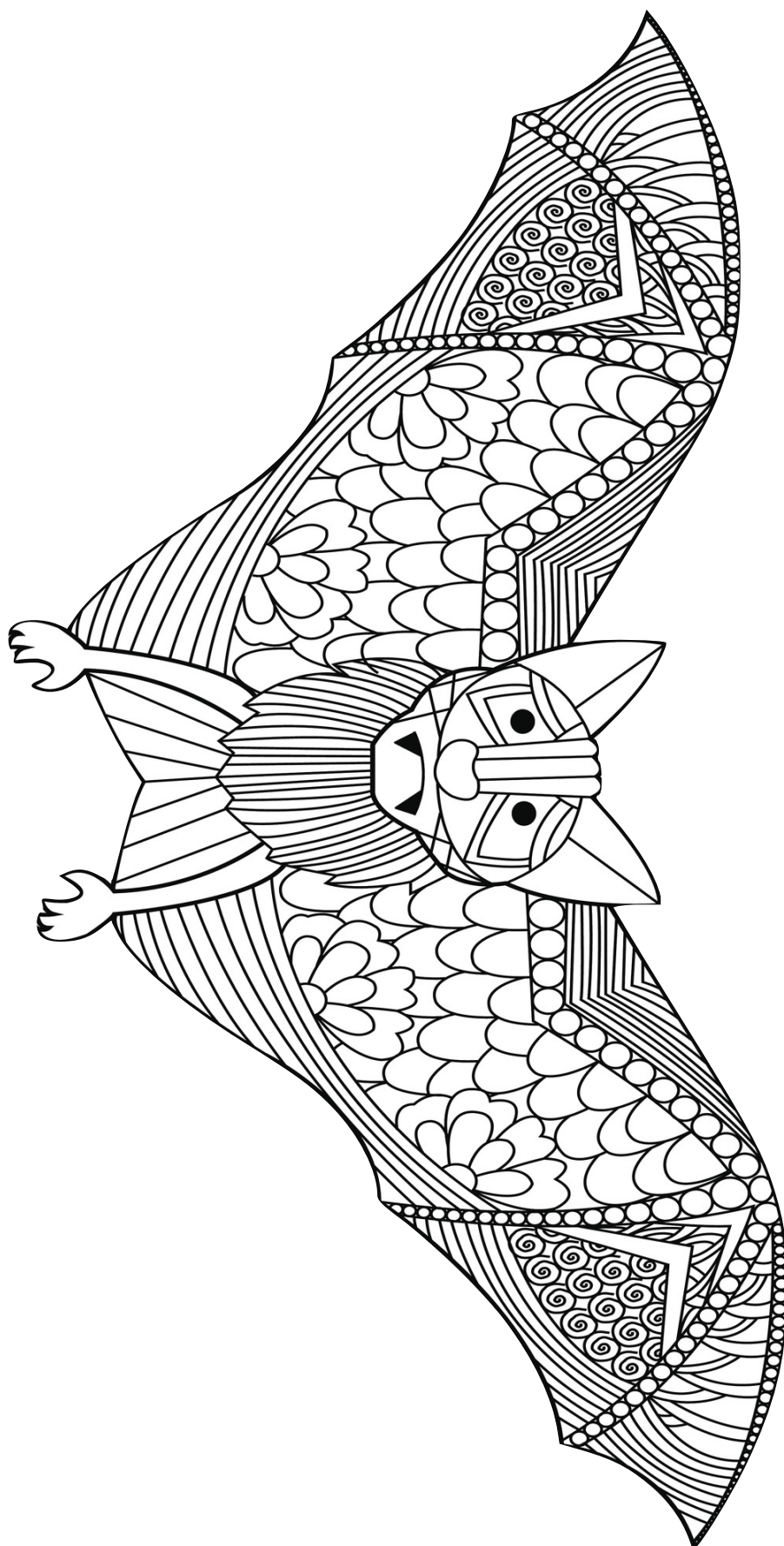
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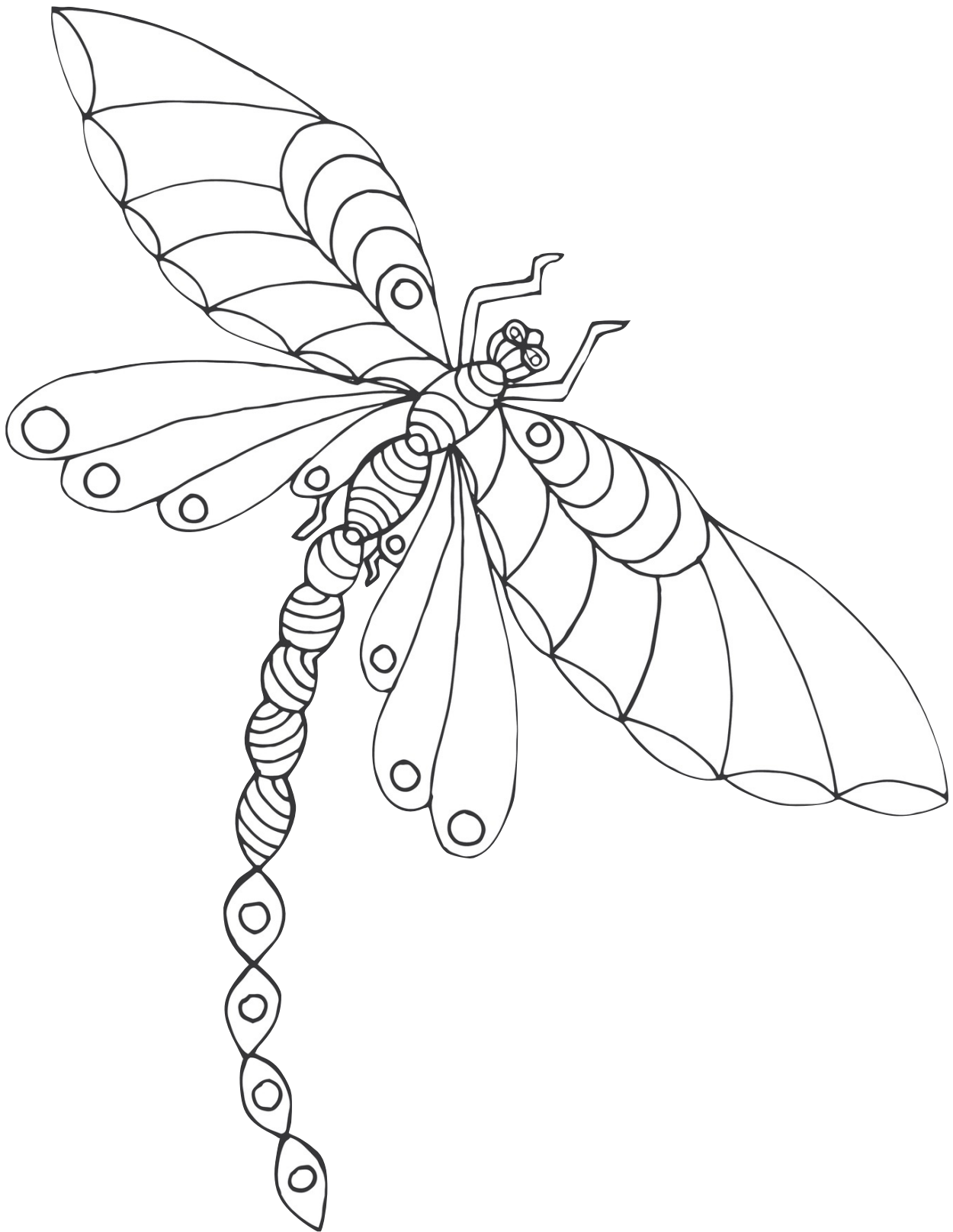
Describe how things might be different if you were able to improve these protective factors.

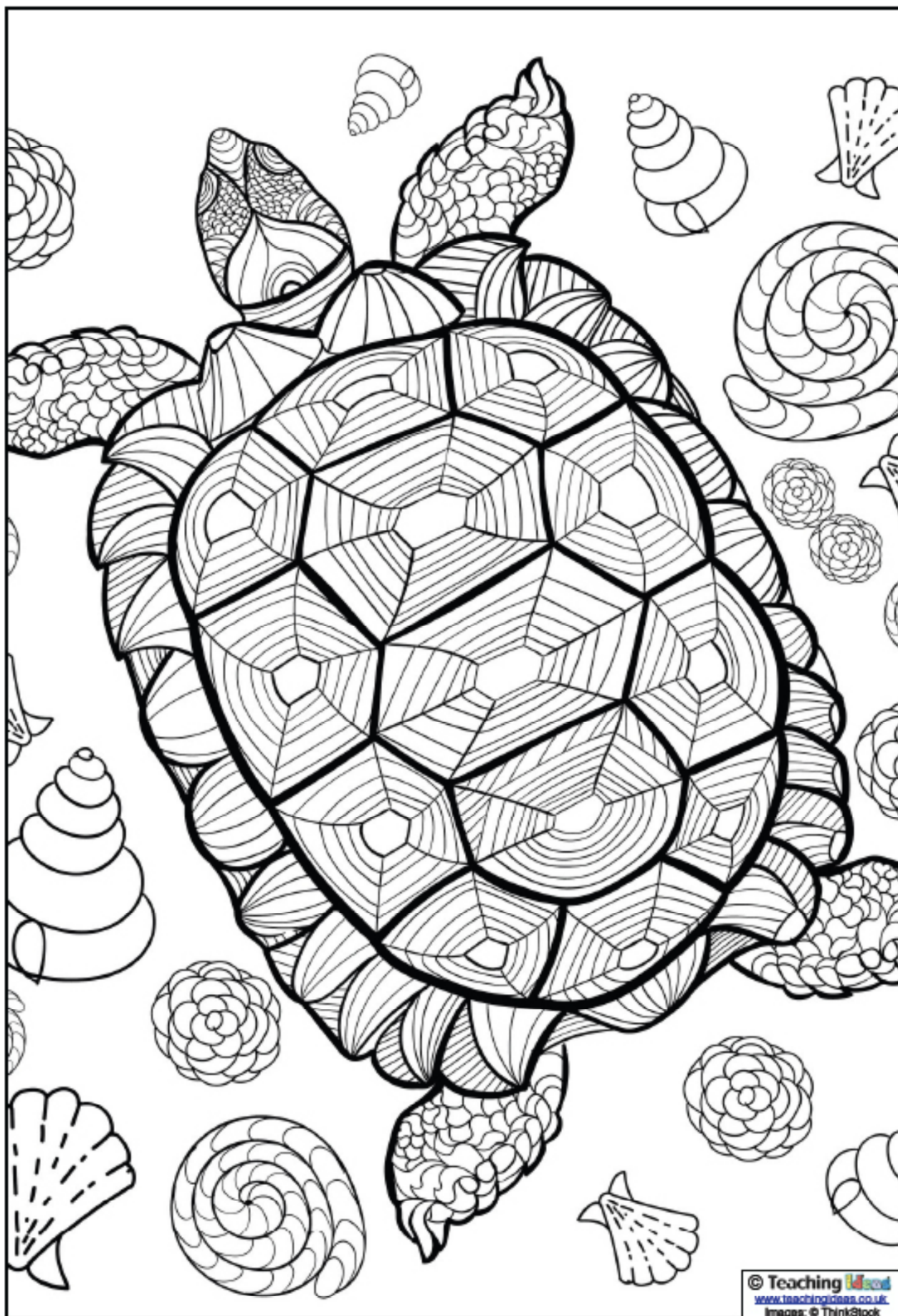
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List *specific steps or actions* that might help to make these goals a reality.

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