# COPING MENU

## WORKBOOK

By They Are The Future

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# What is a Coping Menu?

Everyone gets worried, stressed, frustrated or overwhelmed sometimes. A coping menu is like a toolbox. It's filled with things to make you feel better, calmer, or more in control.

## Why Do I Need a Coping Menu?

Different strategies work for different situations. For example, at home, stroking your pet might help you feel calm, but at school you will need to choose a different strategy from your coping menu.
Some strategies will make you feel calm. Others may make you feel energised and happy!



Your menu is divided into **5 sections**:

- Physical
- Creative
- Social
- Sensory
- Mental

These are the different categories for your coping strategies. You might prefer some sections over others. That's okay!

## Getting Help and Support

You will find ideas for each section in this workbook, but hopefully you will come up with new ideas too!

You may need some help creating and using your coping menu. For example, your parent or teacher could prompt you to pick a strategy from your coping menu. Or you may need someone to do the strategy with you.



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# 3 Steps

## Step 1



For each section, start by adding things that you already do. You can draw a picture or write the word.
Does bouncing on a trampoline make you feel calm and happy? If so, put it in the "physical" section.
Do you enjoy colouring to feel relaxed? Put it in the "creative" section!

## Step 2



Next, have a look at the lists of ideas for each section.
Tick the ones you would like to try, then add them to your coping menu.
When you have finished, put your menu somewhere you will see it, like on your wall.
You can add or remove things at any time. The menu is flexible!

## Step 3



Now it's time to try out your coping menu.
If you notice that you are starting to feel worried, stressed, frustrated or overwhelmed, pick something from your menu.
How did it go?!
Try to pick a variety of strategies over time, so you can find out which ones work best for you.

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# Coping Menu

## PHYSICAL STRATEGIES

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## CREATIVE STRATEGIES

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## SOCIAL STRATEGIES

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## SENSORY STRATEGIES (USING YOUR SENSES)

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# Coping Menu

## MENTAL (BRAIN) STRATEGIES

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# COPING MENU IDEAS

## PHYSICAL STRATEGIES

- [ ] Relax each muscle from head to toes
- [ ] Do some handstands against a wall
- [ ] Declutter your bedroom or desk, or a drawer
- [ ] Stretch
- [ ] Dance around your room or your house
- [ ] Bounce on a trampoline or trampette
- [ ] Hug or climb a tree
- [ ] Take slow, deep breaths
- [ ] Plant some seeds or water some plants
- [ ] Kick a football or throw a ball against a wall



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# COPING MENU IDEAS

## CREATIVE STRATEGIES

- [ ] Go outside and draw or paint what you see
- [ ] Draw your feelings
- [ ] Do some mindful colouring (see back page!)
- [ ] Put on some noise-cancelling headphones
- [ ] Journal or write a letter
- [ ] Listen to your favourite music
- [ ] Do some knitting, crochet or beading
- [ ] Sing
- [ ] Play a creative video game e.g. Minecraft
- [ ] Bake cupcakes



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# COPING MENU IDEAS

## SOCIAL STRATEGIES

- [ ] Go for a walk with a friend/family member
- [ ] Meet up with your friend
- [ ] Message a friend and arrange something fun
- [ ] Share something funny with a friend
- [ ] Ask someone to do slow breathing with you
- [ ] Sit quietly next to someone you trust
- [ ] Ask someone to read to you
- [ ] Get a hug (always check it's okay first)
- [ ] Cuddle or play with your pet
- [ ] Talk things through with your mum, dad or another adult



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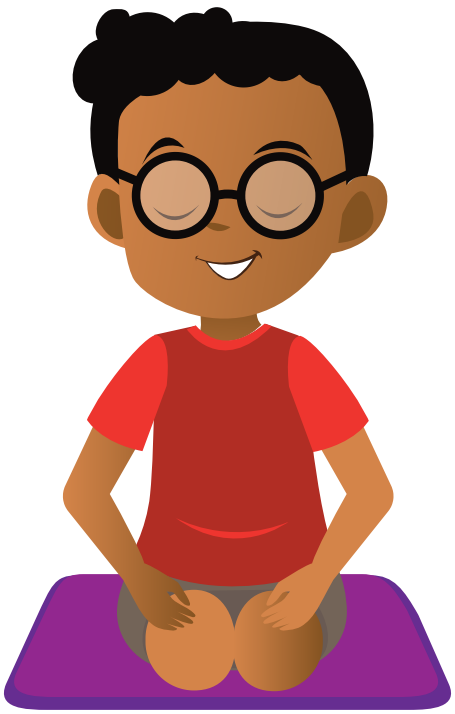
# COPING MENU IDEAS

## SENSORY STRATEGIES (USING YOUR SENSES)

- [ ] Take a shower or bath
- [ ] Drink a cool cup of water
- [ ] Go outside and notice smells, sounds and sights
- [ ] Do ten minutes of “cloud watching”
- [ ] Blow bubbles
- [ ] Use a stress ball
- [ ] Slowly enjoy your favourite snack
- [ ] Play with some playdough, plasticine or clay
- [ ] Put your wrists under very cold tap water or ice
- [ ] Swing on a swing or rock on a rocking chair



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# COPING MENU IDEAS

## MENTAL (BRAIN) STRATEGIES

- [ ] Read a chapter of a book
- [ ] Do a sudoku, crossword or quiz
- [ ] Imagine your “happy place” to calm your brain
- [ ] Do a jigsaw puzzle
- [ ] Learn something new e.g. from YouTube
- [ ] Sort items (e.g. toys, pencils) by size or colour
- [ ] Plan your “dream day”
- [ ] Write down 5 things you’re grateful for
- [ ] Remember that all feelings pass eventually
- [ ] Repeat positive phrases that help you, like “I am okay!”



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EXAMPLE

Jordan's

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# Coping Menu

## PHYSICAL STRATEGIES



football



flop on my beanbag



run around the block



stretch



sleep



go to tae kwon do

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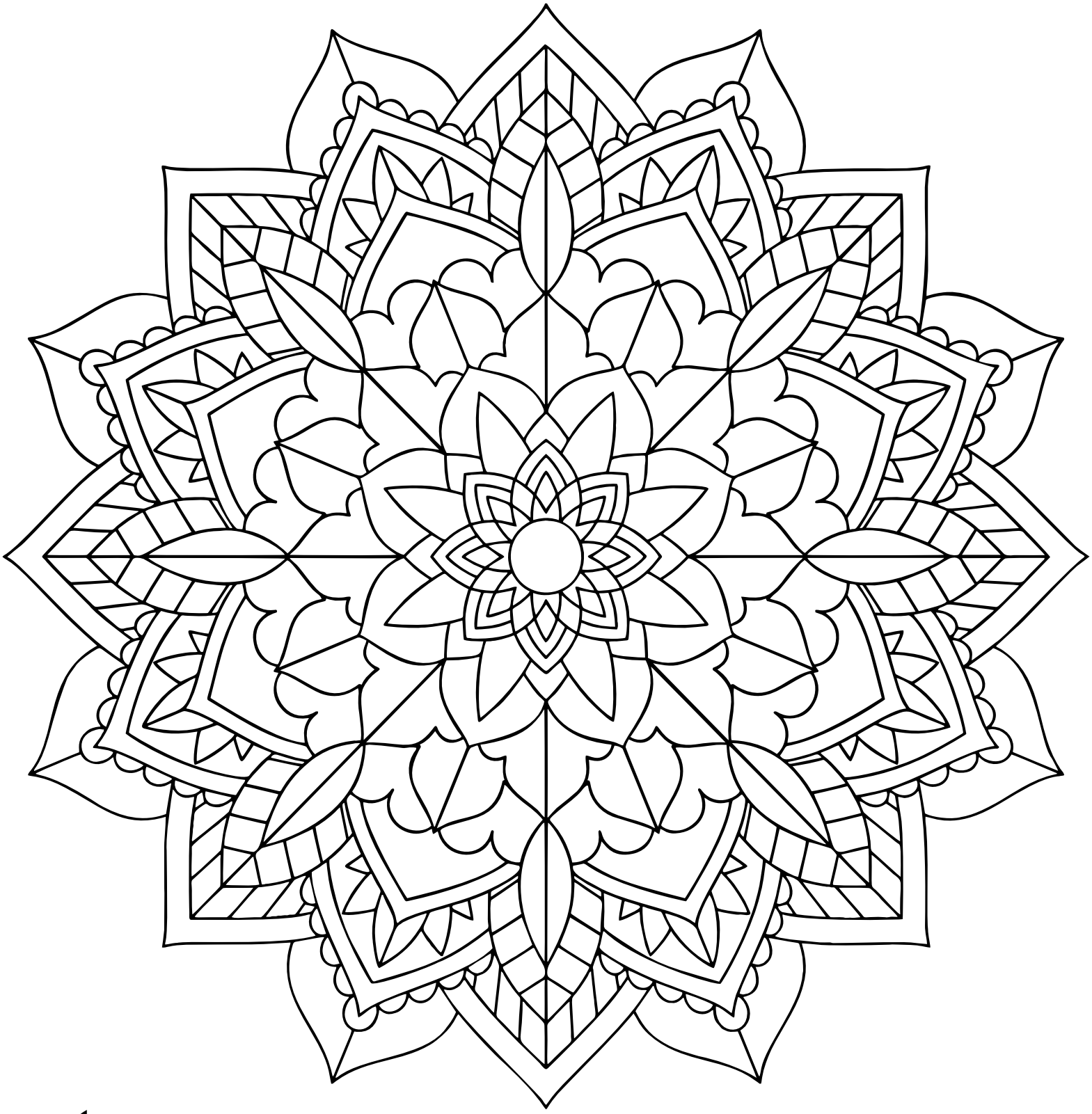
# BONUS!

Here's a mandala for you to colour. Notice how this activity makes you feel!



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They Are The Future is a website run by me, child clinical psychologist Dr Lucy Russell, and my fantastic team of mental health professionals.

We help families with 5-17 year-olds to have the best possible wellbeing and mental health.



Have a look at our support articles, courses and other resources at TheyAreTheFuture.Co.Uk!

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