

EMPOWERED YOUTH

Finding Your Place

An interactive guide to wellbeing, self-expression, and belonging

Name: _____

Date started: _____

Free for youth, schools, and community partners | empoweredyouthcontact@gmail.com

Welcome

This workbook is yours. There are no grades, no right answers, and nothing here that anyone else has to read. It is a place to think honestly about how you are doing, what you care about, and where you belong.

Wellness is not one thing. It is how you eat, move, think, learn, lead, and connect. Those six parts hold each other up. When one is struggling, the others feel it, and when one gets stronger, the others do too.

Finding your place does not mean fitting in. It means understanding who you are clearly enough that you can build a life, a friend group, and a future that actually fits you.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Go in order, or jump to the section you need today.

Write in it. Underline things. Cross things out.

One page at a time is enough. This is not a race.

Come back in a few months and see what changed.

IF TODAY IS HEAVY

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, free and confidential, 24/7.

Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741.

Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ youth): call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678.

You do not have to be in crisis to deserve help. You just have to be human.

Part One: Start Where You Are

Your wellness check-in

Rate each area from 1 (running on empty) to 5 (feels solid right now). Be honest, not impressive.

Area of wellness	Today's rating (1-5)
Nutrition: how I fuel my body	_____
Fitness: how I move	_____
Mental health: how I feel and cope	_____
Academics: how school is going	_____
Leadership: how I use my voice	_____
Social: my friendships and community	_____

Which area got your lowest score, and what is one small thing that would raise it by one point?

Which area got your highest score? What are you already doing well that you want to protect?

Your energy map

Everything you spend time on either gives you energy or takes it. Sorting this out is one of the fastest ways to understand your own wellbeing.

Gives me energy	Drains my energy

What is one draining thing you could do less of this month, and one energizing thing you could do more of?

Part Two: The Six Pillars

Each pillar has a short read, a few things to try, and space to reflect. Take one per week if that feels right.

01. Nutrition

Food is fuel, culture, comfort, and connection. Eating well is not about perfect meals or expensive food. It is about getting enough of what your growing body and brain need, most days, in a way that fits your budget and your family's table. Skipping meals to save time or money makes focus, mood, and energy harder, not easier.

Try this

- Build a balanced plate: half fruits and vegetables, a quarter protein, a quarter whole grains.
- Eat something with protein within an hour of waking up.
- Carry water. Mild dehydration shows up as tiredness and headaches.
- Frozen and canned produce counts, and it is cheaper and lasts longer.
- Eat slowly enough to notice when you are full. That is mindful eating.

Reflect

What did you eat yesterday, and how did your energy feel afterward? What is one swap you could actually keep?

02. Fitness

Fitness is any movement that makes your body stronger, calmer, or happier. It is not a body type and it is not the gym. Walking, dancing, biking, soccer, stretching, carrying your siblings around the house, all of it counts. Movement improves sleep, mood, focus, and confidence, usually faster than it changes how you look.

Try this

- Aim for 60 minutes of movement a day, broken into any size pieces.
- Pick something you would do even if nobody was watching.
- Stretch for five minutes before bed.
- Pair movement with a friend so it becomes social too.
- Rest days are part of training, not a failure.

Reflect

What kind of movement have you actually enjoyed in your life? How could you get ten minutes of it this week?

03. Mental Health

Mental health is how you think, feel, and handle life. One in five young people lives with a mental health condition each year, and about half of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14. Mental health is not the absence of problems. It is the ability to feel hard things, ask for help, and keep showing up for the life you are building.

Try this

- Box breathing: in for 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4. Repeat four times.
- Name it to tame it: 'I feel ____ because ____.'
- Protect sleep. Teens need 8 to 10 hours.
- Get 10 minutes of morning sunlight.
- Take a 30-minute phone break before bed and notice your mood.
- Talk to someone if the heaviness has lasted more than two weeks.

Reflect

What does stress feel like in your body, and who is one person you could tell when it gets loud?

04. Academics

School is not a measure of your worth, but it is a door. Study skills are learnable, and most people were never taught them. The students who do well are usually not the ones who study longest, they are the ones who study in short, focused, repeated bursts and who ask for help early.

Try this

- Pomodoro: 25 minutes of focused work, 5 minute break, repeat.
- Put your phone in another room while you study.
- Test yourself instead of rereading. Recall beats recognition.
- Break big assignments into the smallest possible next step.
- Ask one question in class or office hours each week.

Reflect

What is one subject or assignment you have been avoiding, and what is the smallest first step you could take on it today?

05. Leadership

Leadership is not a title. It is noticing something that needs to change and doing something about it. Young people have organized, translated, tutored, fundraised, and spoken up long before anyone gave them permission. Your experience, including the hard parts, is exactly what makes you useful to your community.

Try this

- Speak up once when it would be easier to stay quiet.
- Learn one skill you can teach someone else.
- Ask an adult you respect how they got where they are.
- Start small: one event, one petition, one study group.
- Share credit loudly and take blame quietly.

Reflect

What is something in your school or community that you wish were different? What is one step you could take toward it?

06. Social Wellness

Humans are built for connection. Loneliness affects the brain a lot like physical pain. Social wellness means having people you can be honest with, knowing how to set boundaries, and being able to repair things after conflict. Quality matters far more than quantity, two real friends beat two hundred followers.

Try this

- Reach out first. Most people are waiting for someone else to.
- Practice a boundary: 'I can't do that, but I can ____.'
- Repair after conflict: name your part before you name theirs.
- Notice which friendships leave you drained and which leave you full.
- Join one thing where showing up regularly puts you around the same people.

Reflect

Who are the people you feel most yourself around, and what makes that possible?

Part Three: Self-Expression

Self-expression is how the inside of you becomes visible: what you say, make, wear, write, play, cook, post, and stand for. It is not a performance. It is practice at being known.

Identity map

Fill in what feels true. Leave blanks where you are still figuring it out, blanks are honest too.

Prompt	Your answer
Words people who love me would use	
Languages, foods, and traditions I carry	
Something I am good at	
Something I am learning	
A thing I make or want to make	
A part of me I keep hidden	

Where do you feel most free to be yourself? What is different about that place or those people?

Your values

Circle the five that matter most to you right now.

Family | Honesty | Faith | Creativity | Justice | Loyalty | Learning |
Independence | Kindness | Humor | Courage | Community | Discipline | Peace |
Curiosity | Respect | Ambition | Generosity | Health | Tradition

Pick one value you circled. When was the last time you lived it out loud?

Is there a value here that the people around you expect from you but that is not really yours?

Find your voice

Try one of these this week. You do not have to show anyone.

- Write a letter to yourself two years from now.
- Make a playlist that sounds like your week and write why each song is on it.
- Cook or describe a dish from your family and write what it reminds you of.
- Take five photos of small things you would miss if you moved away.
- Write six lines about the place you are from, without naming it.
- Teach someone something you know well, then write about how it felt.

Which one did you pick, and what surprised you?

Part Four: Belonging

Belonging is not the same as fitting in. Fitting in asks you to shrink until you match. Belonging lets you be fully yourself and still be wanted. If you have moved countries, schools, homes, or languages, you may have had to rebuild belonging more than once. That is hard, and it is a skill most people never have to develop.

Your belonging map

List the places, people, and spaces where you feel some version of at home. They can be small: a bus stop, a cousin, a game, a mosque, a church, a classroom, a chat.

Where or who	What it gives me

Where do you feel least like you belong, and what would need to change, in the room or in you, for that to shift?

Two homes, one you

Many young people move between cultures every day: one language at home, another at school; one set of expectations from family, another from friends. That can feel like being split in two. It can also become a strength: you can read rooms, translate, and connect people who could not connect without you.

What I carry from home	What I have picked up here

What is one thing from your family or culture you never want to lose?

What is one thing you want to do differently from the generation before you?

Building your circle

Belonging is built, not found. Use this checklist over the next month.

- ☐ Say yes to one invitation I would normally skip.
- ☐ Start a conversation with someone I sit near but never talk to.
- ☐ Join or attend one club, team, class, or group twice.
- ☐ Text one person I have lost touch with.
- ☐ Ask one trusted adult for advice about something real.
- ☐ Offer help to someone without being asked.

Who made you feel welcome recently, and how could you do that for someone else?

Part Five: Your Plan

One month, three goals

Make them small enough to actually finish. Specific beats ambitious.

Goal	First step and when
1.	
2.	
3.	

My support team

Role	Who
An adult I trust	
A friend I can be honest with	
Someone who believes in my future	
A place I can go when I need quiet	

Write one sentence you want to remember on a hard day.

Resources

Crisis and mental health

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988.
- Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741.
- Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ youth): 1-866-488-7386, or text START to 678-678.
- RAINN (sexual assault): 1-800-656-4673.
- NAMI Teen & Young Adult HelpLine: nami.org/help

Learning and everyday support

- EmpowerEd Youth wellness guides and free English lessons in Spanish, Arabic, Dari, and Pashto.
- School counselors, librarians, and community centers: free, local, and often overlooked.
- Food assistance: ask your school about free meals and local pantries, no shame in it.

You already belong here.

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