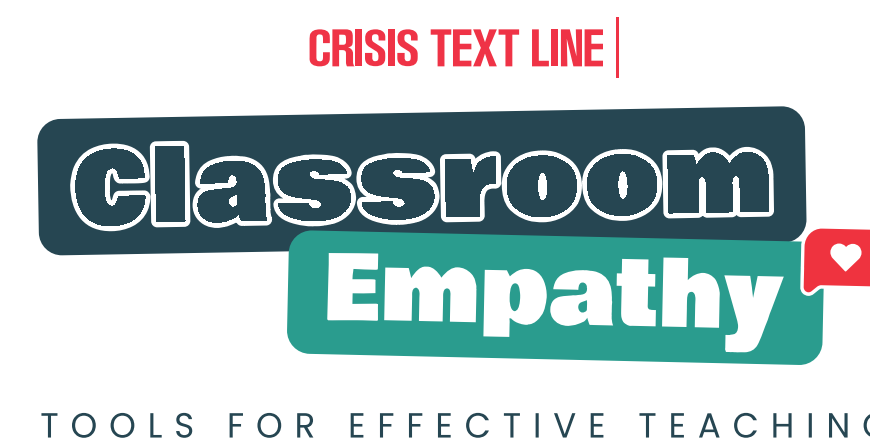




Student Mental Health Toolkit for Elementary School Classrooms



FOR MORE RESOURCES, VISIT [CRISISTEXTLINE.ORG/CLASSROOM-EMPATHY](https://crisistextline.org/classroom-empathy)

Introduction

This year’s collection of resources is designed to help young students develop self-care habits, emotional resilience, and normalize mental health conversations in the classroom. It’s a simple, effective way for educators like you to make a lasting impact on student well-being from an early age.

Inside, you’ll find **ready-to-use activities** that fit seamlessly into your lesson plans—helping students build emotional resilience during three key moments:

1

Right now

Bring mental health awareness into your classroom today.

2

Mental Health Awareness Month

Engage students in meaningful discussions and activities during the month of May.

3

All year long

Help students build lasting self-care habits and emotional resilience they can use every day, inside and outside of the classroom.

Let’s empower students with the tools they need to understand and care for their mental health—**in the classroom and beyond.**

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How to Manage Stress and Teacher Burnout

Navigating your mental health as a teacher is crucial, given the emotional, mental, and physical demands of the profession. Here are some practical tips to help you maintain balance and well-being.

1

Set Boundaries

- Avoid taking work home every day—set a specific time to stop working.
- Learn to say no to extra responsibilities that overload your schedule.
- Protect your weekends and personal time for rest and self-care.

2

Prioritize Self-Care

- Get enough sleep, eat well, and engage in activities that recharge you.
- Exercise regularly, even if it's just a short walk between classes.
- Practice mindfulness, meditation, or deep breathing exercises to manage stress.

3

Build a Support System

- Connect with other teachers who understand the unique challenges of the job.
- Don't hesitate to seek support from a mentor, supervisor, or school counselor.
- Join online or local teacher communities for shared experiences and encouragement.

4

Manage Classroom Stress

- Establish a structured, predictable environment to reduce chaos and stress.
- Use positive reinforcement and classroom management strategies to prevent burnout.
- Take short breaks when possible, even if it's just a deep breath between lessons.

5

Celebrate Small Wins

- Acknowledge the impact you're making, even in small ways.
- Keep notes or reminders of positive student interactions to boost morale.
- Reflect on the reason you became a teacher and hold onto that passion.

6

Use Available Resources

- Take advantage of mental health days if your school offers them.
- Seek out professional development on teacher wellness and stress management.
- Consider therapy or crisis hotlines to process emotions and develop coping strategies. If you ever need support, Crisis Text Line is here for you, 24/7. Simply text **SCHOOL** to **741741**.





Mind and Mood Worksheets

These fun and accessible activities are designed to create a supportive classroom environment where students can explore their emotions, build self-awareness, and develop practical strategies to navigate life’s challenges with confidence.

How to Use:

- 1

Explain the purpose
of the activity. Writing and drawing can help students express their emotions and communication skills, develop and strengthen coping strategies, and participate in self-reflection.
- 2

Encourage students
to think about the emotions or ideas they want to convey through these exercises. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers in art, fostering a supportive and nonjudgmental atmosphere.
- 3

Provide inspiration
to spark creativity and imagination.
Eg: Artwork that depicts various emotions, gratitude journals, stories or a self-portrait collage that centers on navigating challenges.
- 4

Set up the workspace
ensuring each student has access to the necessary materials and organize the classroom to allow for individual or group work.
- 5

Prompt students to discuss
their artwork, sharing thoughts and feelings behind their creations.
- 6

Celebrate and showcase opportunities
for your students to display their artwork, whether through a gallery wall in the classroom or a school-wide exhibition. Celebrate the diversity of creativity and encourage students to appreciate each other’s work.

**Write three things you like
about yourself.**

**Write down what you want to
be when you grow up and why.**

**How do you feel today?
Draw it!**

**Write down three ways you would help
a friend when they have a bad day.**

**Think about a place that makes
you happy. Draw it!**

**Doodle one thing that
brings you joy.**

Ways to Cope With Tough Situations

These easy-to-use tips provide simple, practical strategies to support your students in building resilience, managing emotions, and coping with tough situations. You can now confidently create a positive classroom environment where every child feels supported and ready to thrive.

How to Use:

1 Explain the purpose
of this resource, emphasizing the importance of understanding and developing coping skills for difficult situations.

2 Provide relatable examples
on when and how to use these techniques, such as "ways to help us feel better when we're upset or facing something stressful."

3 Start a brief discussion
about different emotions and situations that may require the students using some of the ways exemplified on this resource.

5 Highlight
that there are no right or wrong answers, and that the goal is to explore and discover what works best for each student.

6 Address support and resources
by reassuring your students that they can talk to a teacher or a trusted adult if they have any concerns or need support. They can also reach out to Crisis Text Line by texting **SCHOOL** to **741741** for free, 24/7, and confidential emotional support or through our [webchat service](#).

Pro tip:

Remind the students that it's okay to seek help and that learning about this is an important part of growing up. Emphasize the value of kindness, self-reflection, and the diversity of emotional experiences.

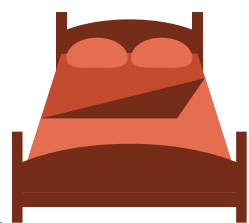


Ways to Cope With Tough Situations



Take time to rest

Resting your body and mind will help you reset and feel better.



Seek mental health support

Need more help? Reach out to Crisis Text Line by texting **SCHOOL** to **741741** or using our web chat service to start a conversation with a volunteer counselor.

Create art

Practice a hobby or try something new. Art and creative activities can help with difficult emotions and allow you to be present in the moment.

Listen to music

Play your favorite songs and feel the music as you sing or dance. Music can help you brighten your day.

Play with pets

Pets are fun and cute. If you don't have pets, you can ask to play with your friends' or family's pets and show them some love.

Physical activities

Exercise can help boost your mood and make you feel and sleep better. Choose any activity you like!



Reading time

If you like reading, pick any book you want and spend some time enjoying the story.

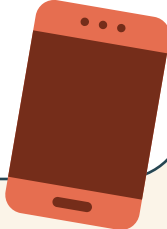
Quiet time



Find a quiet place to connect with yourself. Doing this can provide a sense of calm, balance and relaxation.

Connect with loved ones

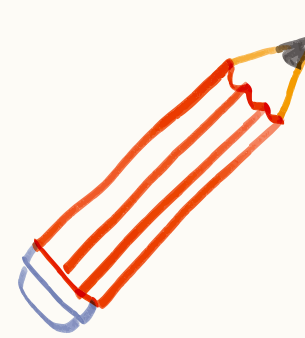
Spending time with your family and friends is key. Find a moment to meet with them, play, talk, or joke together. Your support system is a game changer.



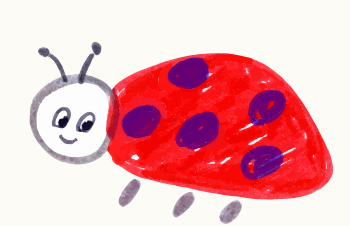
oud of how
lp others



I try my best
in math



I am a great friend



Power Up Cards

This engaging activity helps students **recognize and celebrate their unique strengths**, fostering self-esteem and a positive mindset through self-reflection and positive reinforcement.

How does it work:

Teachers distribute a blank Power Up Card to each student, encouraging them to write or draw their personal strengths, positive traits, or something they're proud of. This could be anything from **"I am a great friend"** to **"I try my best in math"** or **"I'm proud of how I help others."**

By reflecting on their unique abilities and accomplishments, students develop self-awareness, resilience, and confidence. This activity also creates an uplifting classroom environment, reinforcing that everyone has something special to offer.

To extend the activity, teachers can invite students to share their cards with the class, display them on a "Power Up Wall," or revisit them whenever they need a confidence boost.

What you need:

- A printer and paper
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils

Coloring Sheets

Coloring is a fun and easy activity that promotes mindfulness for students. [Over 1 in 10 texters](#) from our own research mentioned arts and crafts as helpful ways to feel better. [Young people](#) in crisis also identified that engaging in visual arts is a resource needed to help them cope.

How does it work:

As children concentrate on selecting colors and maintaining precision, their attention is solely absorbed in that specific moment. This allows them to tune out the distractions and dedicate their mind to experiencing the movements, sensations, and emotions of the present moment.

How to use this page?

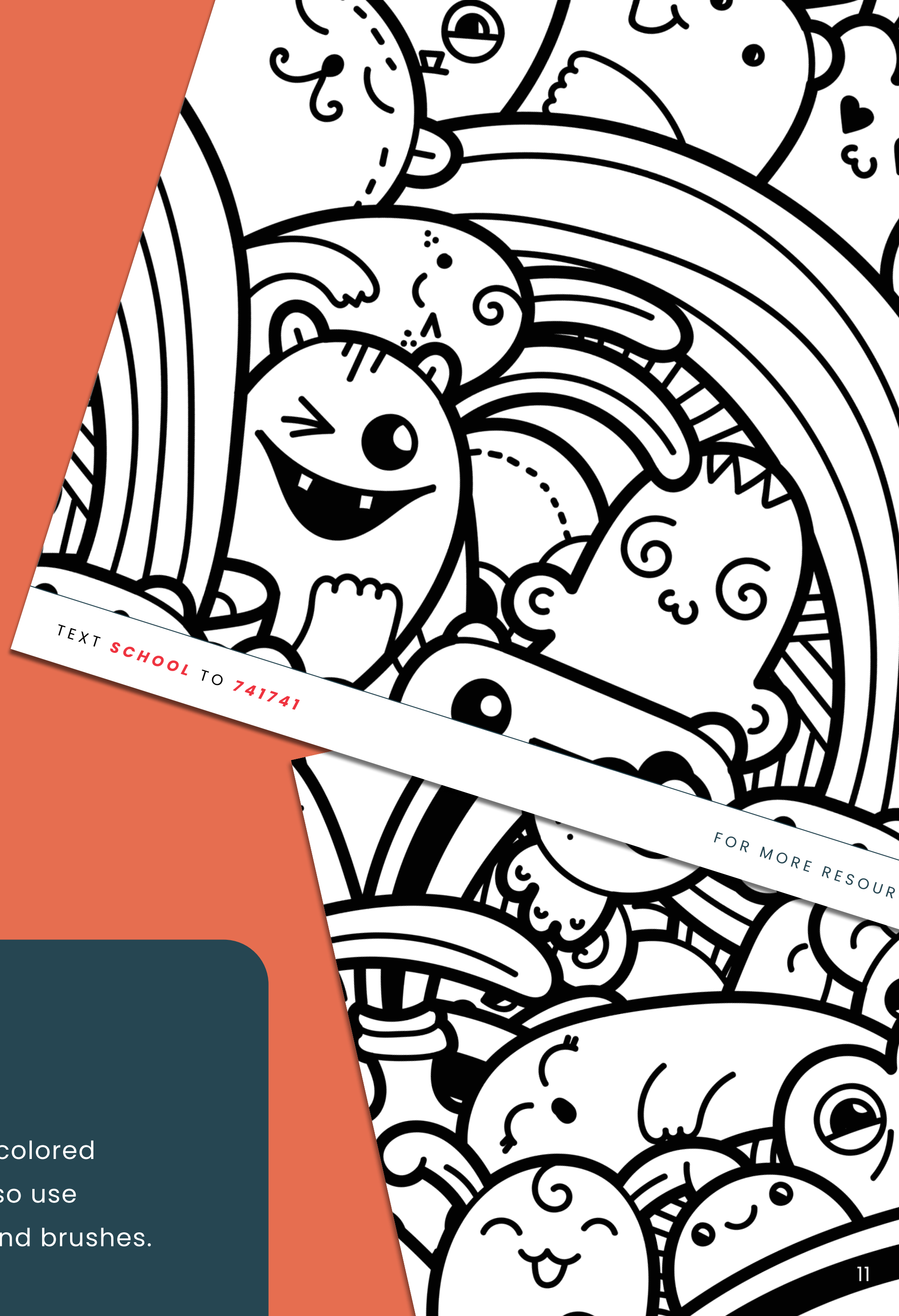
You could dedicate a special time during your class for this activity. Explain to your students how this relates to their mental health and remind them that it's ok if their minds wander. All they have to do is refocus on the activity.

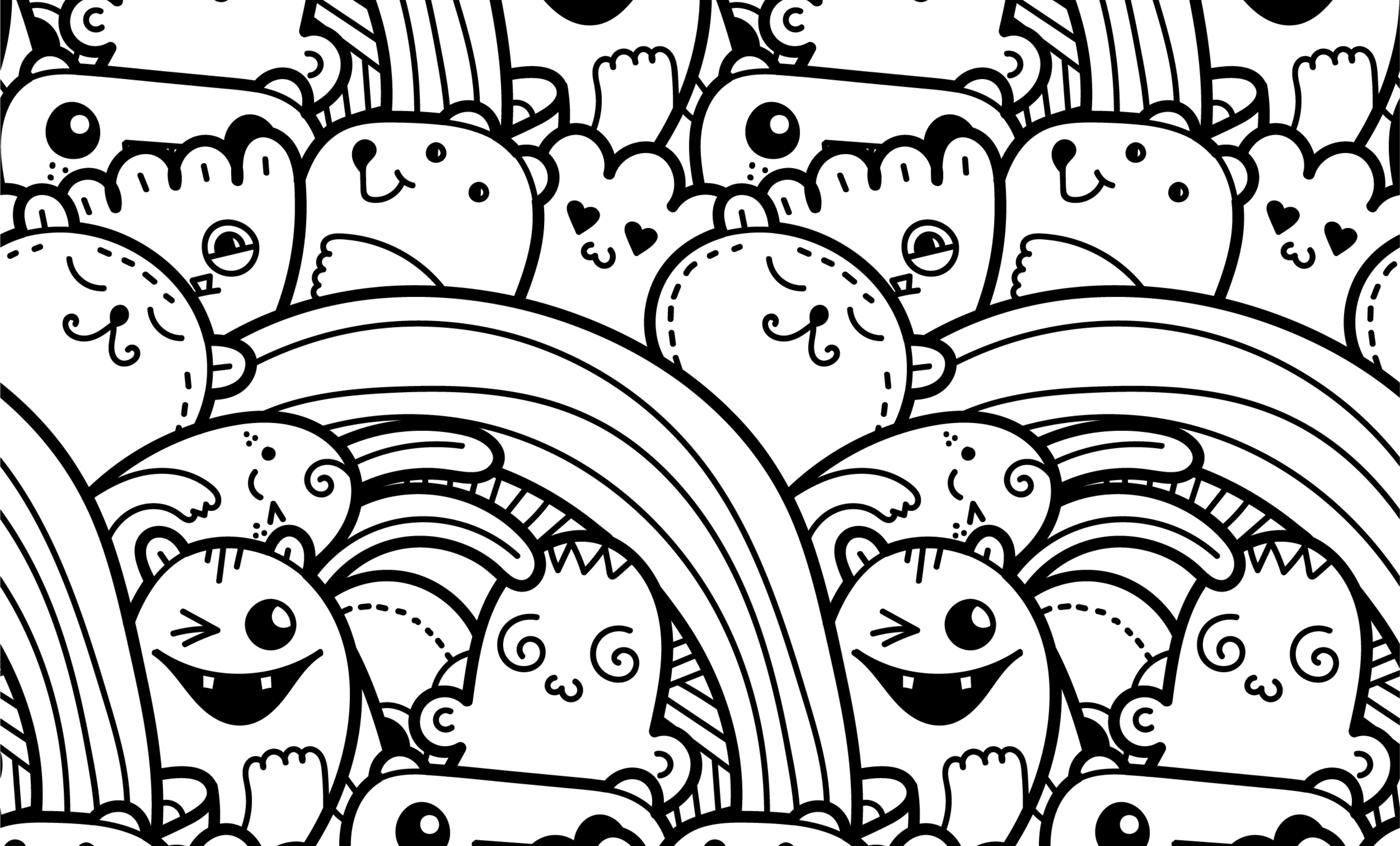
Other ways:

- A quick activity in between lessons or breaks.
- Fast finishers? Students who finish their work early can relax with this in the meantime.
- If a sub is teaching your class, your students can incorporate the coloring sheets that day.

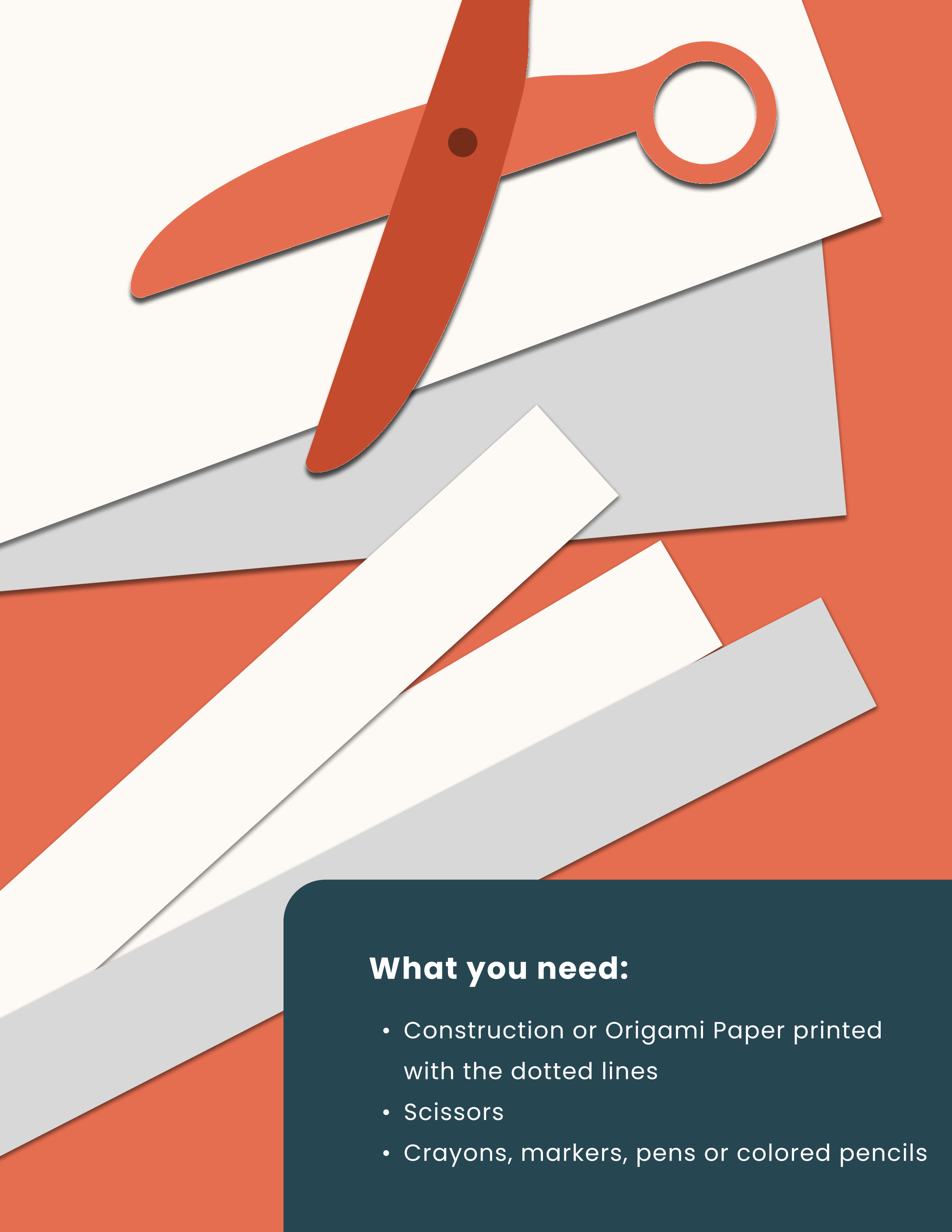
What you need:

- A printer and paper
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils. You could also use water colors, paint, and brushes.









What you need:

- Construction or Origami Paper printed with the dotted lines
- Scissors
- Crayons, markers, pens or colored pencils

Affirmation Stars

Boost Confidence with Affirmation Stars! Engage your students in a fun and meaningful activity that helps them build **positive self-talk and resilience**. These affirmation stars encourage young learners to recognize their strengths, celebrate what makes them unique, and develop coping skills for emotions like anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt. Students can write uplifting words about their abilities, emotions, and personal achievements on their stars. [Check out this blog post.](#)

How to use it:

1

Students should each receive a piece of 8.5x11 paper with dotted lines along the page.

2

Lay the paper down horizontally and cut along the dotted lines, creating 16 even strips.

3

Students should write one affirmation on each strip.

4

Fold the strips into stars (directions on folding below).

5

Ask the students to deposit their stars into a jar that will be kept in the classroom.

6

Have each student take one star, open it, and that will be their daily affirmation.

7

Encourage students to revisit their stars throughout the day as a boost of motivation.

Get Ready to Fold

1

Tie a knot toward one end of the strip. Leave just enough room at the short end to tuck it back into the knot when you're done – but don't tuck quite yet.

2

Crease the knot to form a **tight**, flat pentagon with a short end and a long end.

3

Fold the short end back toward the pentagon and crease the edge.

4

Tuck the short end into the pentagon.

5

Fold the long end of the strip back over the pentagon and crease the edge.

6

Continue to fold the strip around the pentagon, loosely creasing the edges as you fold it. Stop once the strip is too short to fold again. You want it long enough to be able to securely tuck it into the pentagon. If it's not long enough, cut off the last fold to create a new end.

7

Tuck the end into the pentagon.

8

Pinch each corner of the pentagon between your thumb and forefinger to create an indentation.

9

Continue with each point until the star is defined.

Watch our Affirmations Stars Tutorial

[CRISISTEXTLINE.ORG/AFFIRMATIONSTARS](https://crisistextline.org/affirmationstars)

