

# Express Yourself

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**Children's Mental Health Week, 2021**  
shines a spotlight on the importance of children  
and young people's mental health.

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**HEALTH & MIND CLUB**

Children's mental health week is observed from **February 1st to 7th**. The theme of this year's Children's Mental Health Week is

## Express Yourself



Expressing yourself is about finding ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas, through creativity. This could be through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography, and film, and doing activities that make you feel good.

### Being creative and expressing yourself can:

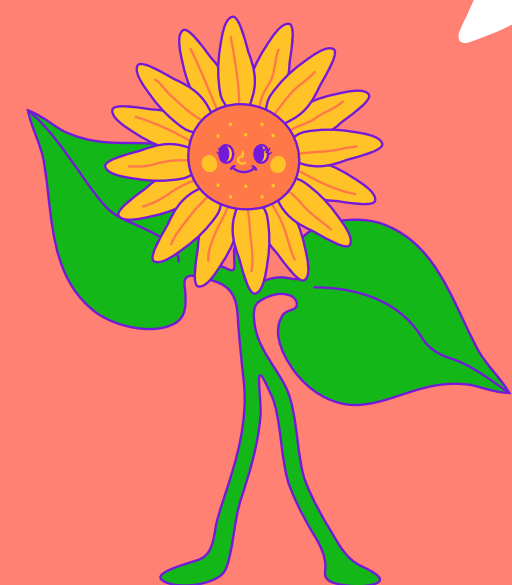
- Help you to relax and de-stress.
- Generate “feel-good” endorphins which can lift your mood, help you feel empowered, and create a sense of identity and achievement.
- Help to boost your self-esteem, connect with others, and give you purpose and meaning.

It is important to remember that being able to express yourself is not about being the best at something or putting on a performance for others. It is about finding a way to show who you are, and how you see the world, that can help you feel good about yourself.

For Children's Mental Health Week 2021 we encourage students (and adults) to explore the different ways we can express ourselves, and the creative ways that we can share our feelings, our thoughts, and our ideas.

### Thoughts to Ponder Over:

- How does society often expect young people to look, think, speak, and act? And where do these ideas come from?
- Do these expectations stop you from expressing your true self?
- How does that make you feel?





# SELF-EXPRESSION



Self-expression is about communicating your **individuality**. This can be through words, clothing, and hairstyle, or through art forms such as writing, drawing, music and dance. Self-expression can help you to showcase your true self – your story, your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. But this can also make us feel vulnerable, so you might want to take things one step at a time. We often get told by our family, friends, school, communities and through social media how we ‘should’ look, think, speak, and act. These constant messages about what we ought to do, and who we ought to be, can make it difficult to let go of expectations and express our true selves.

## ***Self expression helps us connect to our true selves***

It is a great way to relieve yourself of stress and free your mind. Self-expression can help you reflect on your life, actions, decisions, relationships, beliefs, and thoughts – rather than keep them buried deep down.

Here are a few ways to express yourself:

### 1. Have a go at defining yourself

We students are a work in progress.

**“The self is not something that one finds. It is something that one creates.”**

Consider the following:

- Make sure that your definitions are not overly narrow or limiting.
  - Keep yourself open to new experiences, talents, interests, passions, and opportunities.
  - Being an adolescent is all about creating our own identity and expressing it!

### 2. Make a short video or photo montage about yourself

This could include your current likes and dislikes, strengths, interests, dreams, and passions.

### 3. Pick a quotation that means something to you

Choose a quotation about self-expression that resonates with you. This could have been said by a famous person, or selected from a song or book etc.

- You might want to use some of the following questions as prompts:  
How does this quote make you feel?  
What does it make you think of?  
What colors or shapes reflect how you feel when you read this quote?

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### 4. Write a daily journal

Keep a daily journal in which you can write about whatever comes to your mind. Jotting down your thoughts can also help you to problem-solve – mind maps are a great tool for this. Creating vision boards about your future dreams and aspirations can also help to motivate and inspire you.

### 5. Make inside - outside boxes

Follow these simple instructions:

- Decorate a box with images and words on the outside to represent the qualities you show to the world.
- Decorate the inside of the box with images and words that represent the inner qualities, interests and passions that are hidden to most people.
- Discuss why we all do this and what stops us sharing all of ourselves with others.



By expressing ourselves thoughtfully, we can better communicate, collaborate, and build a community with others.