

“ If you are who you are meant to be,
you will set the world ablaze.
— ST CATHERINE OF SIENA ”



A GUIDE FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE
TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WELLBEING





A MESSAGE FROM THE **SAFEGUARDING OFFICE AND SYDNEY CATHOLIC YOUTH...**

The Safeguarding Office and Sydney Catholic Youth have developed this booklet to help Young People understand and manage their overall sense of wellbeing. It is important for us all to nurture our wellbeing as we journey through our day-to-day lives. New challenges can arise causing us to lose our sense of peace; impacting us spiritually, physically and mentally. By learning how we can help ourselves in times of trouble, we can better tend to our wellbeing and seek help when we need it.

The Safeguarding Office and Sydney Catholic Youth hope that this booklet will help you to navigate your unique journey in understanding and balancing your sense of wellbeing.



THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY ACKNOWLEDGES THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AS THE FIRST INHABITANTS OF THE NATION AND THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LANDS WHERE WE LIVE, LEARN AND WORK.

“

Now may the Lord of peace
Himself give you peace at all
times and in every way.
The Lord be with all of you.

– 2 THESS 3:16

”

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Impact Your Wellbeing **6**

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INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation defines mental wellbeing as '*a state in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.*' Having a strong sense of wellbeing impacts how good we are feeling, gives us the ability to help manage our thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

It is important to develop an understanding of your own wellbeing as it allows you to recognise your emotions and support your mental health which then in turn helps guide you in the world, achieve your goals, find meaning and purpose and helps you to live your life to the fullest.

From the ages of 13 to 18 it is very likely that you will experience a large amount of change in different areas of your life such as school, friendships and relationships. With everything that is happening in the world today and in your own life, it is only natural to have ups and downs. In light of this, it is important to know how to look after yourself so that you can stay as healthy as possible. It is also just as important to know that when you are going through a hard time it's okay to ask for help and support.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK IS TO:



INFORMATION

Provide you with information on how to identify factors that may negatively impact your wellbeing



STRATEGY

Provide you with strategies you can use to look after and maintain a strong sense of wellbeing



ACTIVITY

Provide you with activities that will help you to check in with yourself and others

SAINT ALOYSIUS GONZAGA

PATRON SAINT FOR Young People

There are so many ways that our wellbeing may be impacted throughout our life. What once used to unsettle us may no longer be something we battle with. Then, all of a sudden, new experiences emerge, causing stress and feelings of uneasiness as we enter a new phase of our lives.

In this guide, we will begin by identifying some factors that can impact your sense of wellbeing. We will then go on to provide you with some information and techniques that you may find useful in assisting with the management of your overall wellbeing.

It is important for you to know and remember that it is ok for you to reach out and speak to someone you trust about your concerns or worries. At the end of this guide you will find a list of support services that you may find helpful.



St Aloysius was born in Italy, his father wanted him to become a soldier so at the age of 4 St Aloysius began training as a soldier. St Aloysius would teach catechism to the poor children and take care of those who were sick with the plague. St Aloysius is the patron saint of teenagers and youth, and has demonstrated that young people are not too young to become saints.

“ IT IS BETTER TO BE A
CHILD OF GOD THAN
KING OF THE WHOLE
WORLD. ”

FACTORS THAT MAY IMPACT YOUR WELLBEING

Stress

Stress can vary from person to person and experience to experience. There are times where stress can actually be helpful in certain situations, prompting you to be attentive and take action. Other times, stress can be overwhelming and can even prevent you from engaging with others as you would normally.

Bullying

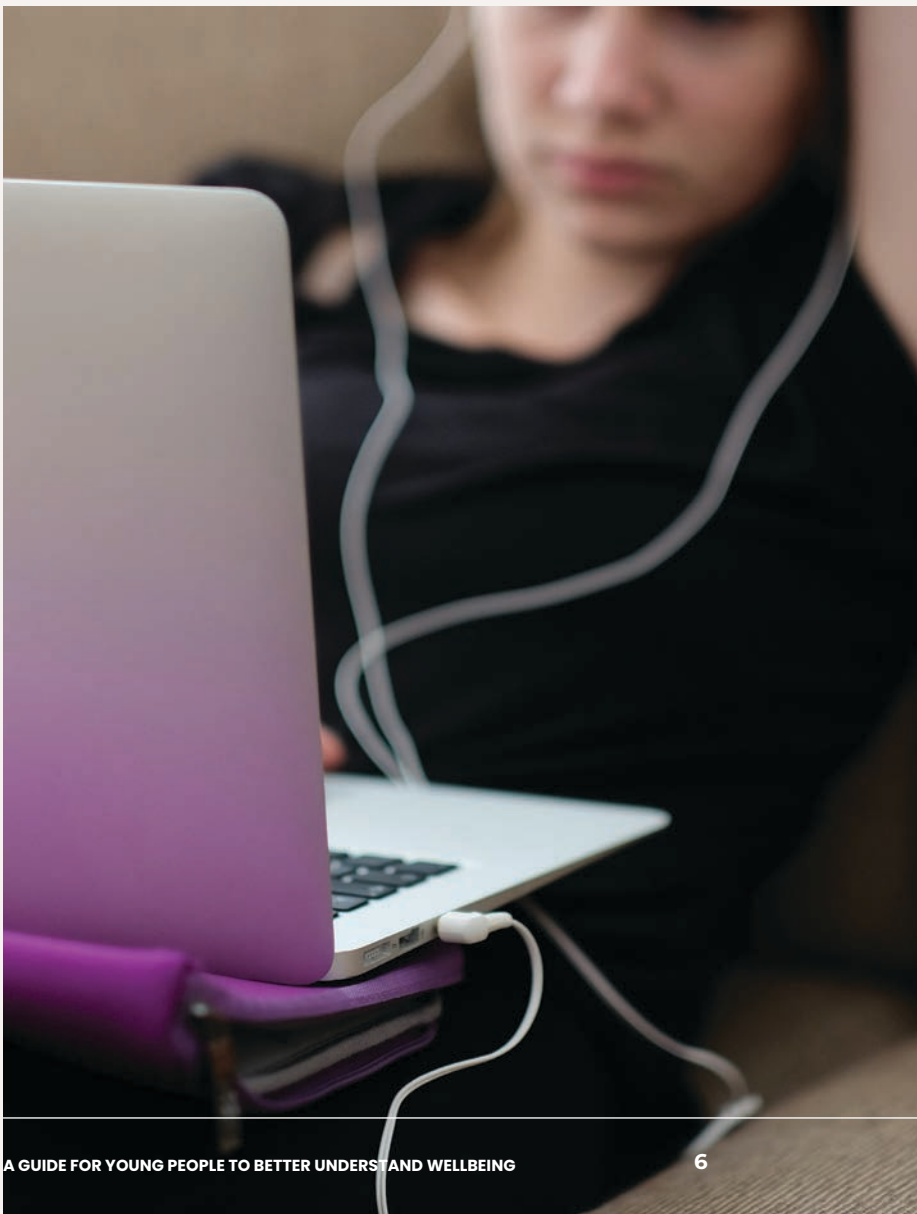
Bullying is a repeated and deliberate action towards a person or group of people that is aimed at causing distress and harm to another's wellbeing. Bullying behaviours can be verbal, physical or social. It can take place anywhere; on the bus, online, within your friendship group, or even at home.

Online Pressure

Feeling pressure from social media can take its toll on our mental wellbeing. If we have an unhealthy body image, we can feel insecure, fearing that we are too short or too tall, too fat or too thin, or that we don't have perfect skin or muscly biceps. It can also impact the way we perceive our circumstances making us think that we need to be richer, have more friends, or more social events to attend.

Change

Such as moving towns or changing schools. Even being told you have a new teacher can be unsettling.



Illness

Can be physical or mental, our bodies and minds are not separate, so it's not surprising that when we are physically unwell we can sometimes feel mentally unwell.

Body Image

Body image is the sum of how a person feels, thinks, behaves and views their body. The way each person visualises and behaves towards their body is unique to everyone and manifests in a variety of ways. The reason for this huge variation of how we behave and think about our bodies is that we are different. We all come from different backgrounds and are influenced by society, which includes family, friends, and media, all of which contribute to how we think about ourselves and what is the ideal body.

Death of a loved one

Grief is the natural emotional response to the loss of someone close, such as a family member or friend. Grief can also occur after a serious illness, a divorce or other significant losses.

Grief often involves intense sadness, and sometimes feelings of shock, numbness or even denial and anger. For most people, healing occurs with time.

Depression

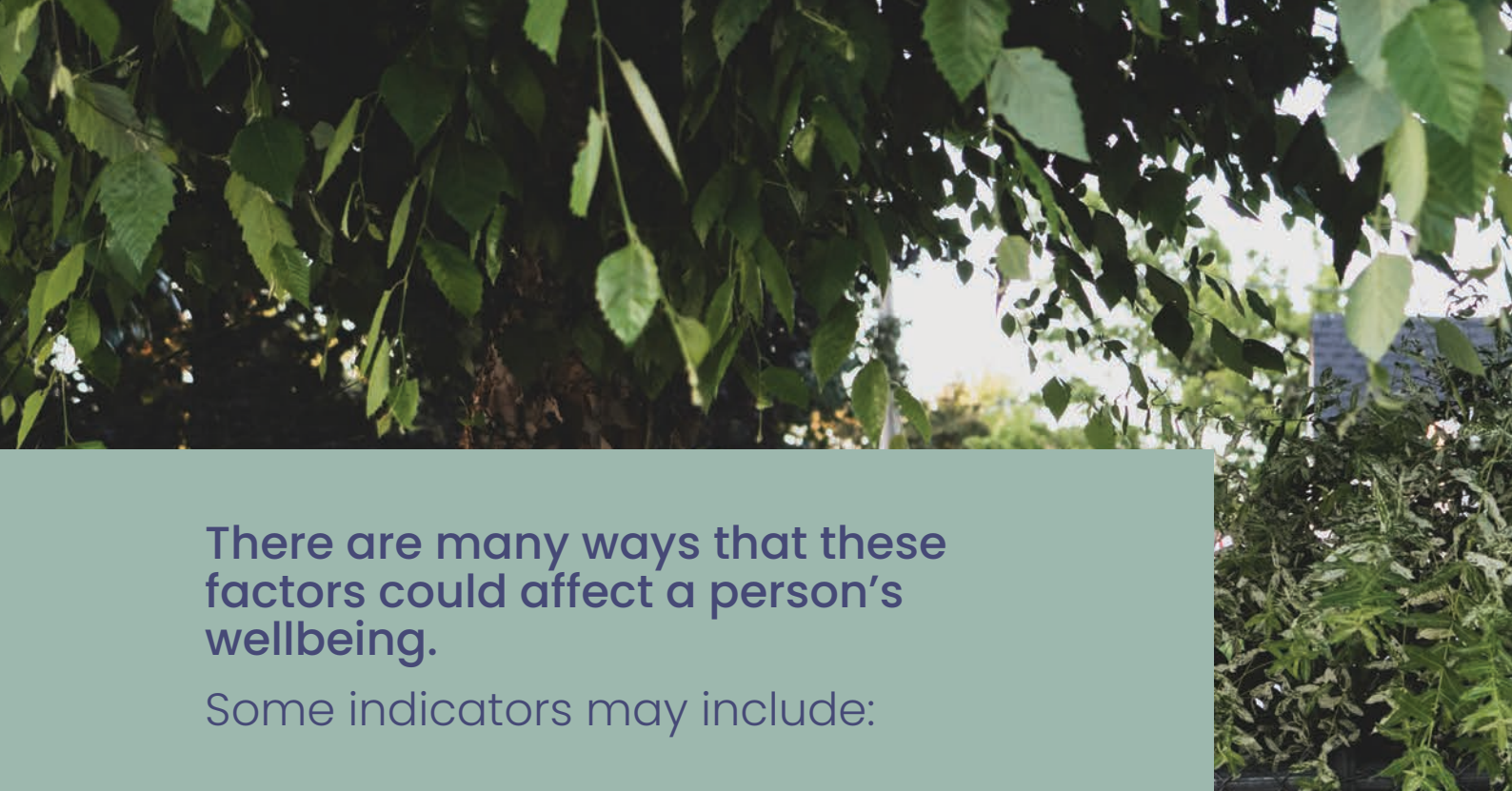
Can look different for everyone. Some young people may have trouble maintaining a normal work schedule or fulfilling social obligations. This could be due to symptoms such as an inability to concentrate, memory problems, and difficulty making decisions.

Friendships and Romantic Relationships

Changes in friendships and romantic relationships can leave us feeling deflated and overwhelmed.

Unrealistic expectations from ourselves or others

Our expectations for ourselves impact the way we view the world and our place in it. We may experience expectation pressure from our family, friends or even ourselves. We could even have unrealistic expectations for those around us. The types of unrealistic expectations vary from person to person but can include the perception of one's body image, intellect, financial status and even family members.



There are many ways that these factors could affect a person's wellbeing.

Some indicators may include:

- Restlessness
- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Headaches
- Mood changes
- Muscle tension
- Loss of memory
- Trouble sleeping
- Loss of appetite
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling down about yourself
- Finding it hard to cope
- Have thoughts of hurting yourself
- Feel suicidal
- Have trouble with school work
- Feel physically sick
- Feel hopeless or powerless
- Feel alone, sad, angry or confused
- Feel unsafe or afraid



What can you do if you are experiencing any of these factors?

Firstly, it is important for you to know that you can speak to someone you trust i.e. parent/guardian, teacher, youth minister.

- Relaxation strategies such as deep breathing, gentle muscle relaxation, physical activity, taking time out to rest and scheduling activities you enjoy can all help you to de-stress and balance wellbeing.
- Problem solving strategies may help you to manage some of the concerns that may be causing you stress:

Identify what problems may be contributing to your stress.

Evaluate these problems to see if you can address that need immediate attention.

Implement your proposed solution. Remember that you can ask someone to help you in each of these steps.

- Mindfulness can help you to focus on the present. Often our thoughts are focused in the past or the future and we miss what is happening in the present moment.

Sometimes the factors that impact your wellbeing may be too big for you to handle on your own. By reaching out to someone, they may be able to assist you in getting the help you need. There is no shame in seeking help.

LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THESE STRATEGIES

Talk to someone you trust

Having the courage to reach out and speak to someone you trust can be difficult, let alone having to verbalise what is on your mind. Sometimes the fear of opening up to someone can prevent you from seeking the help you may need. Below are some practical tips to consider that may help you verbalise your concerns to someone you trust.

Identify **who** the best person is for you to reach out to that can offer you support. This may be a family member, youth minister or a professional counsellor or psychologist.

Clarify **what** it is that you would like to say to them. Sometimes articulating something that is bothering you can be hard. Try writing down in your phone or diary what you would like to say so it is clear in your mind.

Figure out **when** is a good time for both you and the person you trust to talk. You may have to organise a time with them so that you can have their full attention. It doesn't have to be in person either. You can message, call or video chat them.

Establish clearly **how** you would like your person of trust to hear what you are saying. Make sure you are clear that you are going to them to ask for advice, for a listening ear and/or practical support. The clearer you are, the better they can help you.

Don't give up. If your person of trust was unable or unwilling to help you. Don't feel defeated and give up. Keep going until you get help, there are many people out there who can and want to help.

Can you think of three trusted adults you could speak to?

SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

Did you know?



St Thérèse born in 1873, desired to become a saint at a very young age. Therese experienced bullying at school. She chose to perform little acts with great love to serve God and was eventually canonized a saint in 1925.

“ I UNDERSTOOD THAT EVERY FLOWER CREATED BY HIM IS BEAUTIFUL, THAT THE BRILLIANCE OF THE ROSE AND THE WHITENESS OF THE LILY DO NOT LESSEN THE PERFUME OF THE VIOLET OR THE SWEET SIMPLICITY OF THE DAISY. I UNDERSTOOD THAT IF ALL THE LOWLY FLOWERS WISHED TO BE ROSES, NATURE WOULD NO LONGER BE ENAMELED WITH LOVELY HUES. AND SO IT IS IN THE WORLD OF SOULS, OUR LORD’S LIVING GARDEN. ”

STRATEGIES

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a great way to slow down and draw your mind to focus on what is in front of you. It can assist with alleviating anxiety and help you gather your thoughts.

On the next page are some images for you to colour in and see what you think. Work through it slowly and try to identify what you found challenging.

As you begin, take note of how you're feeling.

How do your thought processes change as you're drawing/colouring.

Pay attention to your surroundings – what do you see, smell, feel, hear or taste?

Did you find the mindfulness challenge helped?

Did you notice any racing thoughts slow down?

Reflect on why this way of relaxing may or may not be helpful to you in the future.

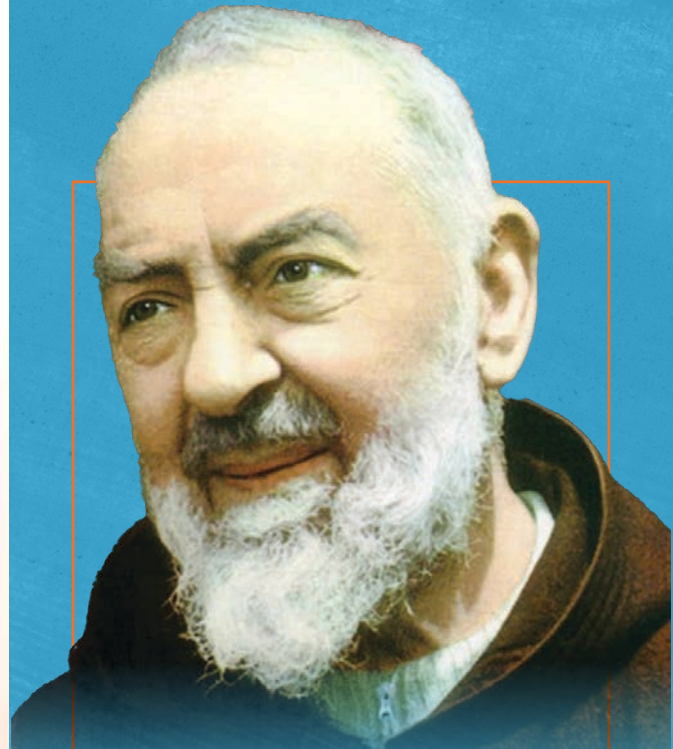
Challenge:

Have you considered trying a digital detox?

1. Identify a time period where you can switch off from social media – it may be one hour, a day, a week or even longer.
2. Logoff from your social media accounts on your identified time periods so notifications don't distract you.
3. Take up something during these times so you aren't tempted to log back in. You could try reading, journaling, exercising, spending set time with a friend or even going on a spiritual retreat!

SAINT
PADRE PIO
OF PIETRELCINA

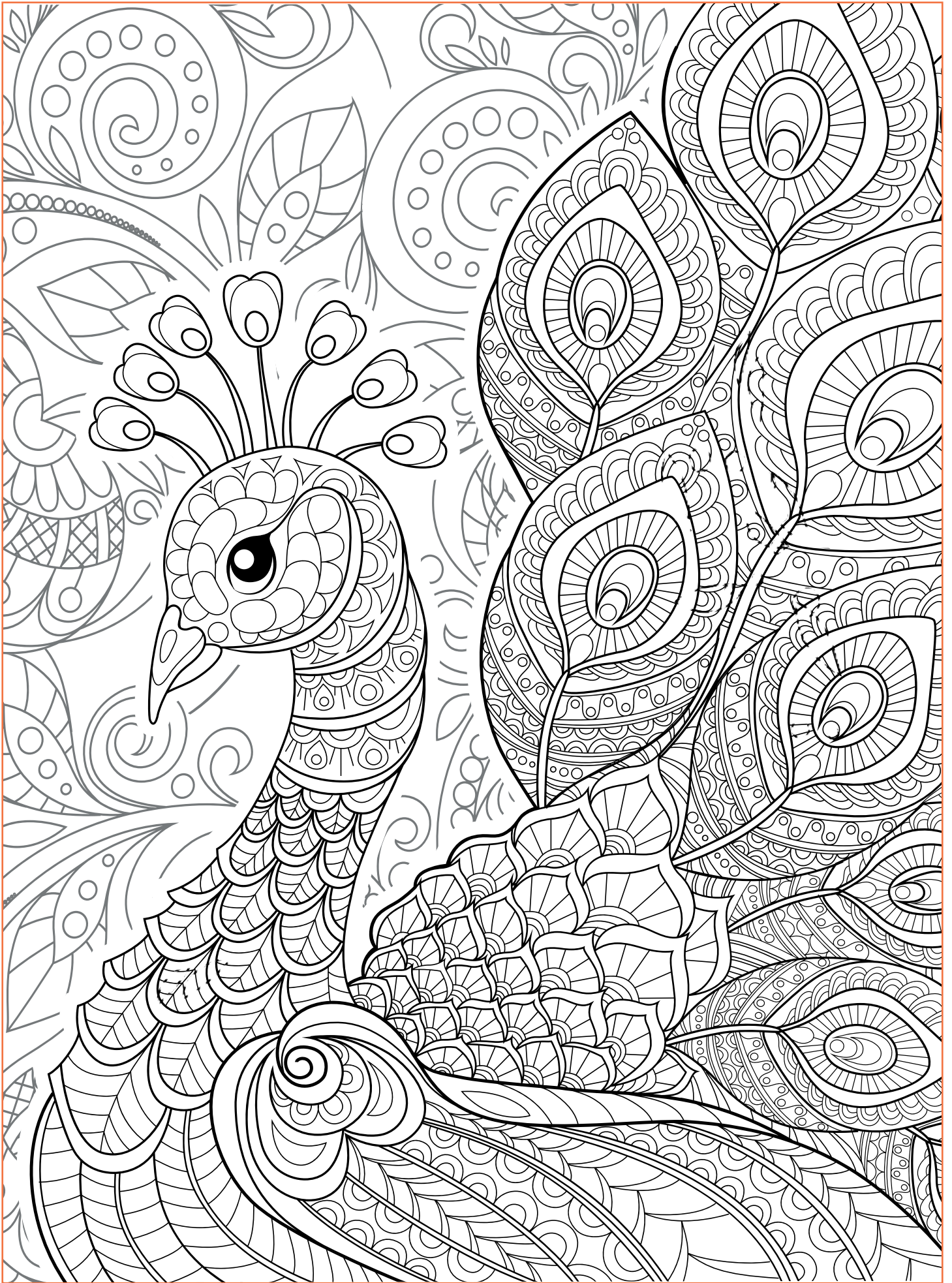
Did you know?

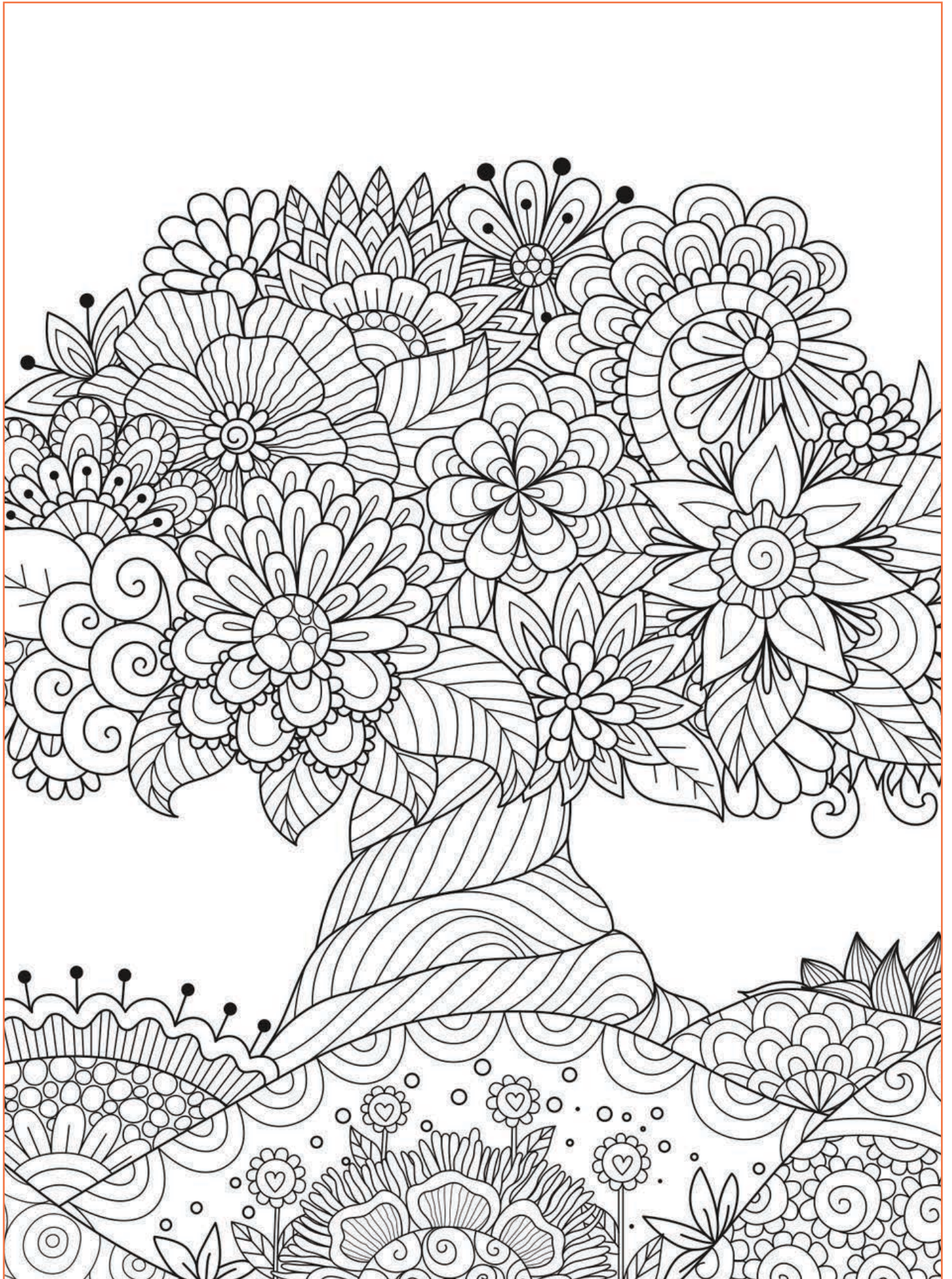


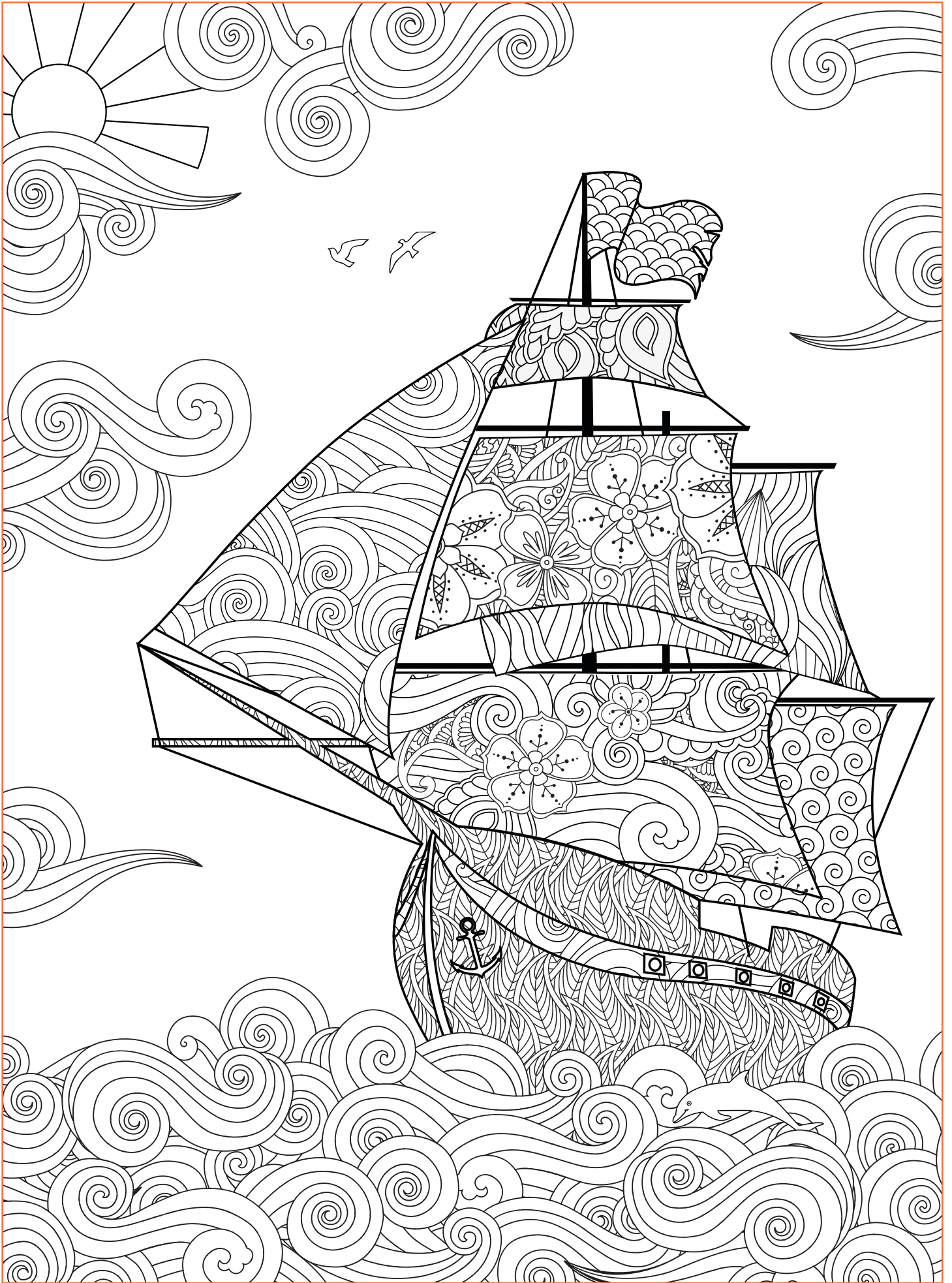
Padre Pio was born in Italy and decided to devote his life to God at the age of 5! He suffered greatly throughout his whole life and was even gifted with the stigmata. People from all over world would come to visit him and seek his intercessory prayer and counsel. Dying in 1968, Padre Pio was made a saint in 2002.

“ PRAY,
HOPE AND
DON'T WORRY. ”









STRATEGIES

Sleeping Hygiene

Sometimes we don't always get a good night's sleep. Many things can play on our minds as we try to settle down for a good night's rest.

Research has demonstrated that Young People need at least seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Establishing a sleeping routine will help improve not only your physical health but also your mental health.

Ways to improve your sleep hygiene:

- Set an alarm for the same time each morning.
- Go to sleep around the same time each evening.
- Switch off electronic devices - TVs, phones, iPads, laptop, at least 30 minutes before bed.
- Try not to nap during the day.
- Exercise away from your bedroom. Going outside for even 15 minutes can make a real difference.
- Take note of your environment: is your room too hot or cold? Try to reduce light sources, you may need an eye-mask. Are there high levels of noise? Try ear plugs.
- Try sipping chamomile tea before bed.
- Try reading a book to help your mind unwind.

When you try implementing these new habits, try to do so gradually. Implementing these changes all at once may have a negative impact on your current routine. You need to allow time for your body to adjust and develop new habits. Try going to bed an hour earlier to begin with rather than setting unrealistic goals. It can take some time to notice changes so don't give up on the first night.

Relaxation Techniques

In conjunction with the above mentioned sleep hygiene recommendations, you could try some different relaxation techniques to assist you in your preparation for sleep and unwinding for the day. Like the development of any new practice, they will take time to develop and become a natural part of your daily routine. Why not try one out for a while before going to sleep of an evening?

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This relaxation technique requires you to intentionally focus on different muscle groups in your body by contracting and relaxing them whilst breathing.

Which muscle groups should you focus on?

- Hands
- Wrists
- Forearms
- Biceps
- Shoulders
- Forehead
- Around the eyes and nose
- Cheeks and jaw
- Around the mouth
- Front and back of the neck
- Chest
- Back
- Stomach
- Hips and buttocks
- Lower legs
- Thighs

What to do

1. Lie down in bed on your back
2. Breathe in and tense the first muscle group for approximately 5 – 10 seconds
3. Breathe out and quickly relax that muscle group
4. Wait 20 seconds before repeating the process and engaging the next muscle group

Continue this process until you have worked through all the muscle groups. After this, focus on keeping those muscles relaxed, as you go to sleep.



STRATEGIES

Healthy Boundaries

Having personal boundaries allows us to understand and process what is or is not ok. Establishing boundaries in all forms of relationships helps us to feel safe and keep the relationship healthy.

There are many different types of relationships we can have with other people

- Our parents
- Siblings
- Family members
- Friends
- Acquaintances
- Best friends

By identifying the types of relationships we have with people around us, we can establish who we could and should not share our vulnerabilities and insecurities with.

How can you communicate your personal boundaries

- Be direct
- Be assertive and polite
- Provide a reason why you don't feel comfortable
- Repeat yourself if necessary
- If the contact is online, you can stop contact, delete, block or even report

SAINT GIANNA MOLLA

Did you know?

Thankfulness list

Take time to reflect upon and write down, the things that you are thankful for both small and big. It could be as small as your morning cup of coffee to your best friend or pet. Try thinking of 10 things in your life that you are thankful for.



St Gianna Molla was a Mother and a doctor specialising in pediatrics. She cared deeply for mothers, children, the elderly and the poor. St Gianna pregnant with her fourth child, chose to save the life of that child rather than herself. Her husband was able to be present at her canonisation for the sacrifice she made.

“ THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS IS TO LIVE MOMENT BY MOMENT AND TO THANK GOD FOR ALL THAT HE, IN HIS GOODNESS, SENDS TO US DAY AFTER DAY. ”

STRATEGIES

Exercise and Eating Well

Exercising and eating well are pivotal when it comes to our overall wellbeing. But let's face it, finding the right balance can be pretty tricky.

- Walk or ride your bike to school or work
- Exercise with a social sports group
- Go dancing with some friends
- Try hiking with friends

Getting out into nature can drastically improve our wellbeing. Sometimes the thought of going outside may be too overwhelming for us. Here are some ideas to get more connected with nature without the need to go for a hike or always step outdoors.

Here are some helpful tips and ideas:

1. If you have space, plant some vegetables to tend to. If you don't have a garden bed, try herb pots.
2. Bring nature inside! Find out what plants thrive indoors. Maybe you could place flowers on your window sill.
3. Listen to audio recordings of natural sounds such as a waterfall or birds.
4. Eat your lunch in a nearby park.
5. Try bird watching.



BLESSED GIORGIO FRASSATI

Did you know?



Blessed Giorgio Frassati loved to get out in nature. In fact, mountain climbing was one of his favourite activities. Born in Italy and later dying at the young age of 24, Blessed Giorgio Frassati had led many young people to the Church and developed a great devotion to the Eucharist.

“ EVERY DAY, MY LOVE FOR THE MOUNTAINS GROWS MORE AND MORE. IF MY STUDIES PERMITTED, I’D SPEND WHOLE DAYS IN THE MOUNTAINS CONTEMPLATING THE CREATOR’S GREATNESS IN THAT PURE AIR. ”

STRATEGIES

Journaling

A journal can be helpful for recording events, dates or times but it also can be a way to help alleviate and manage stress and anxiety. Writing down what you are feeling, can be a way of processing your experiences and emotions in a way that can calm you.

By writing down our feelings and thought processes, you can see habits and patterns, you can set goals and work out problems. Sometimes seeing a problem on paper makes it clearer and not as overwhelming.

There are many different ways to journaling. You could have a structured journal where questions prompt you, you could have a blank journal or even a combination.

If it's your first time journaling, there are two easy methods you could try:

1. **Gratitude journaling** – just like the thankfulness list mentioned above, you could write down each day, week or month what you are grateful for. Looking back on what you are grateful for can boost your mood when you are feeling down.
2. **Bullet journaling** – this method simply involves making bullet points of your feelings, your events or tasks. It can help you organize your thoughts and offers a quick snapshot of your mood.

SAINT
FAUSTINA
KOWALSKA

Did you know?



St Faustina, at the encouragement of her spiritual director, wrote in a journal a record of her conversations with Jesus. Born in Poland, St Faustina promoted Jesus' request that his message of Divine Mercy be spread throughout the world. You may even recognise the Divine Mercy image from your local parish Church.

“ JESUS,
I TRUST
IN YOU. ”

SUPPORT SERVICES



Lifeline

13 11 14
lifeline.org.au



**eSafety
Commissioner**

esafety.gov.au



BeyondBlue

1300 22 4636
beyondblue.org.au



1800Respect

1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au



Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800
kidshelpline.com.au



Headspace

1800 650 890
headspace.org.au



