

A guide for those  
dealing with anxiety,  
depression, or life  
situations that make  
them feel turned  
upside down.



# *Finding Joy* in Your Everyday Circumstances

[www.thebickfordfive.com](http://www.thebickfordfive.com)



Stress is a necessary part of life. But when it becomes too prevalent and isn't managed well, it can lead to health issues. Some people also experience anxiety and/or depression, which can be debilitating and affect every aspect of life.

Whether you experience regular stress or deal with anxiety or depression, learning to find the JOY in your every day circumstances can be the difference between getting out of bed each day and letting the feelings get the best of you.

I'm not a medical professional, but I do have a history of anxiety and depression, and my life situation lends itself to extreme amounts of daily stress. This guide is compiled of tips I use to help me manage my days and has been written and published for information purposes only. It is not intended to serve as medical advice or to be any form of medical treatment. Please speak to your doctor or therapist before trying anything you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with in this guide.

# What's Inside

Inside this guide you'll find several resource pages to help you identify your stressors, learn ways to combat anxiety and depression, and action pages to put it all to use on your hard days.

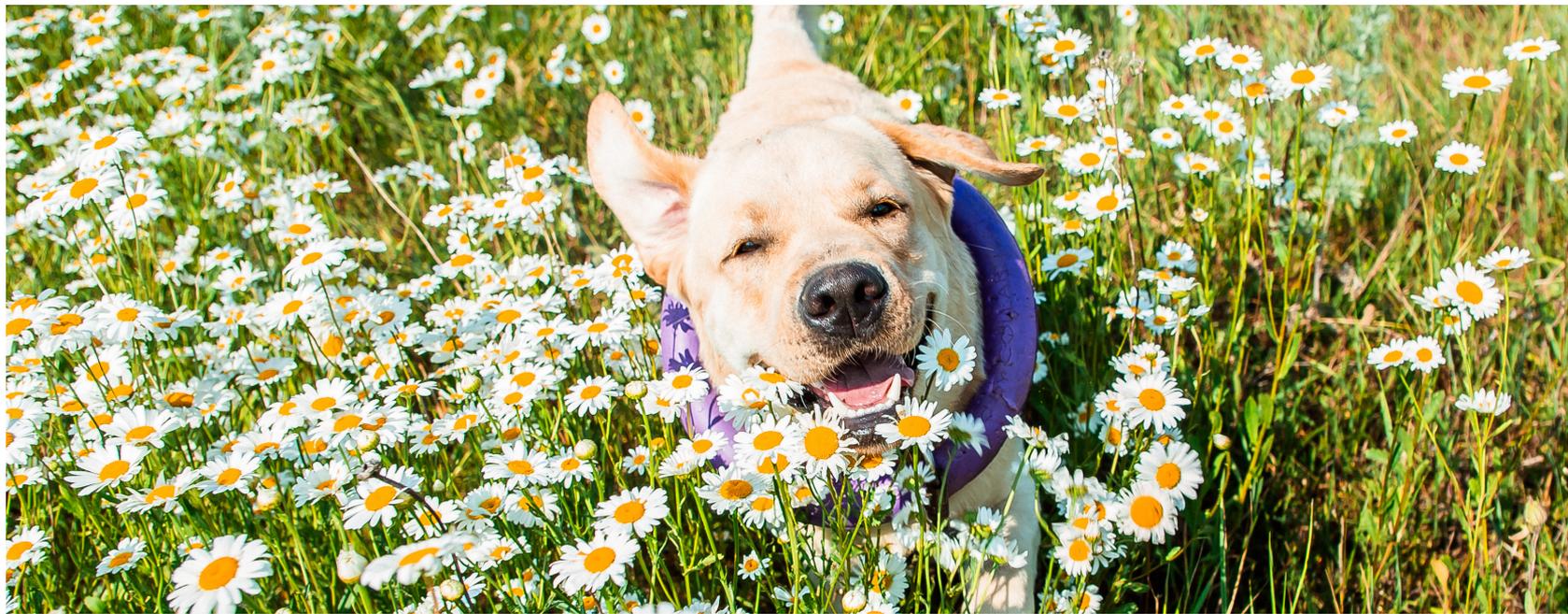
- *Defining anxiety, depression, stress, and joy*
- *Recommended remedies*
- *Self-care checklist*
- *Affirmations to calm the mind*
- *Journal prompts list*
- *Gratitude journal page*
- *Brain dump for bad days*
- *Coloring page*
- *No stress action plan*

# How to Use

You can use this guide in any way that suits you. You might find that some pages don't apply to you, and that's ok. If you're not into coloring, by all means, don't print out the coloring page! Not the journaling type? Skip it!

These are simply suggestions and things that I've found work for me, and I'm just sharing them for you to have access to some of the same things that worked for me. So, print one page or print it all. It's completely up to you!





**Before you can tackle your feelings, you need to give them a name. So let's touch on each of the words this guide focuses on.**

# Giving it a Name

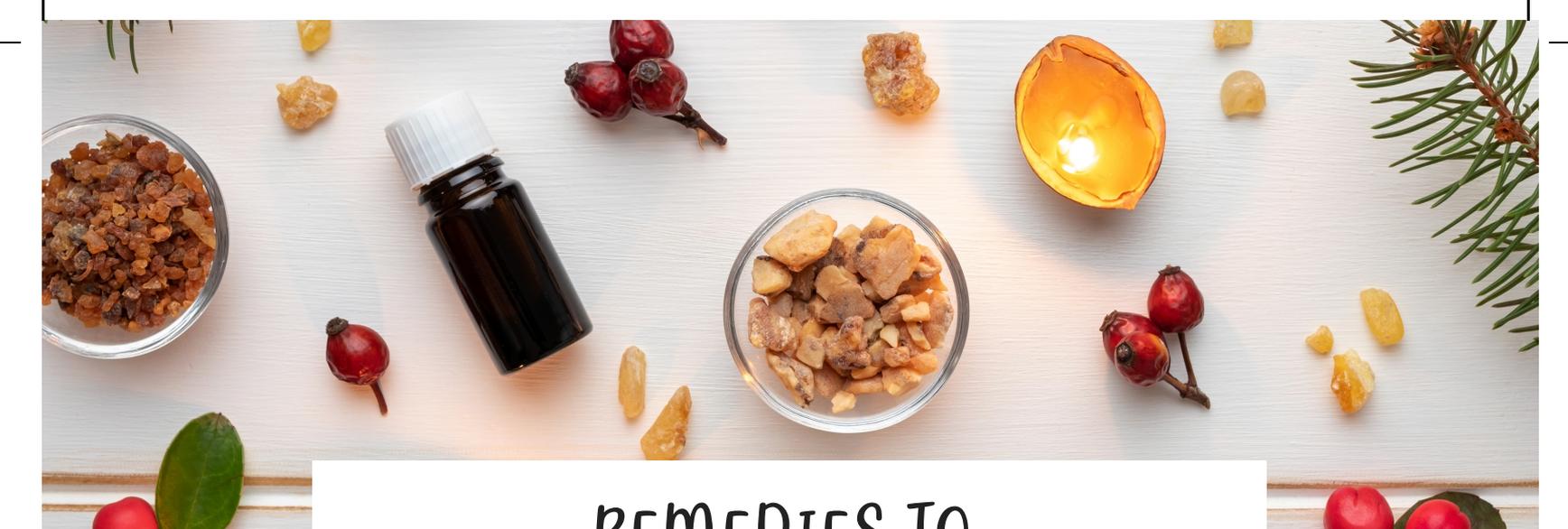
**Joy:** The best part! Joy is defined simply as 'a feeling of great pleasure and happiness'. That's our goal with this guide. To help you find a little more JOY in each day.

**Stress:** Stress is your body's reaction to a situation or thought that creates feelings of physical or emotional tension. It can be positive when it helps you get something done or stay out of danger, but too much stress can cause health issues, which is why it's important to manage it. Here's a great website on stress.

**Anxiety:** The term anxiety is often loosely thrown around, but persistent and overwhelming anxiety that interferes with daily activities can mean an underlying anxiety disorder. It is characterized by extreme thoughts of fear and worry.

**Depression:** Depression can often go hand in hand with anxiety, as is the case for me. It is a condition where a person finds themselves overly sad and unmotivated or disinterested in things for long periods of time, and it affects the way a person functions.

See more on anxiety and depression here.



## REMEDIES TO *Increase Joy*

When you're feeling overly stressed, or dealing with anxiety or depression, having a toolbox of ways to cope can be helpful. In the following pages, I share a few of the ways to cope, including affirmations, journaling, brain dumping, and self-care. Since I focus mostly on the emotional side of things, I wanted to give you some ways that I don't discuss, just so that you have a few more to draw from.

- **Seeing a therapist** - talking it out can be very helpful, and some doctors can also prescribe medicine that can help if your situation calls for it.
- **Essential oils** - I use essential oils in my daily routine as a way to lift my spirits. Smell is a great way to alter your mood, as the limbic system, where smells are activated, also houses your memory/emotion center. There are many brands out there, so please do your research.
- **Healthy diet & exercise** - while I am not the best at this, it is helpful to watch what goes in your body and how you treat your body. Exercise is proven to reduce stress as well.
- **Himalayan salt lamps** - the properties of these lamps are thought to have many health benefits, such as easing anxiety.
- **Supplements** - taking supplements like vitamin B and magnesium, among others, have positive benefits on your health and mood.
- **CBD oil** - this is still very controversial, but we do use this in our home for our daughter that has several special needs, and it seems to have a very strong calming effect on her.
- **Sunlight** - as silly as this sounds, the sun is proven to boost Vitamin D levels, which contribute to happiness.

# 30 Self-Care Ideas

Use this list to find ideas of ways to add in a little self-care on a daily basis. Self-care is an important part of combating stress and finding joy.

## Mind

- Read a good book
- Try meditation
- Unplug from technology
- Say your affirmations
- Write in your journal
- Get some fresh air
- Create a vision board
- Get ready for the day
- Let go of guilt
- Learn to say 'no'



## Body

- Enjoy a bubble bath
- Take a nap
- Go for a walk
- Go dancing with friends
- Drink more water
- Take several deep breaths
- Get a massage
- Stretch or practice yoga
- Eat something nourishing
- Get a manicure or pedicure



## Spirit

- Cuddle with a pet
- Enjoy a sunset, stars, or clouds
- Listen to good music
- Watch a funny movie
- Lunch date with a friend
- Hug someone
- Color, paint, or create
- Reward yourself
- Do something spontaneous
- Declutter or clean up





# 10 AFFIRMATIONS TO *Generate Joy*

- ① I am calm and in control of my feelings.
- ② I will get to where I want to be and enjoy the journey.
- ③ I have everything I need to see this challenge through.
- ④ Fear is not in control and it cannot hold me back.
- ⑤ I deserve love, understanding, and compassion.
- ⑥ I have the ability to find joy in everything and I will seek out joyful moments today.
- ⑦ I attract only good things and good people to my life.
- ⑧ The success of my day is fully in my hands.
- ⑨ I will focus on progress, not perfection.
- ⑩ I am at peace with my current situation.

# JOURNAL PROMPTS TO *Activate Joy*

Pick any prompt and spend some time journaling to help activate joy in your day.

## FOR ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

- What positive changes have you experienced in the past few months?
- When things seem tough, what do you want to remember?
- Write about something you have overcome.
- What is your favorite memory?
- What makes you the happiest in life?
- Brainstorm a list of things you like about yourself.

## FOR REDUCING STRESS

- List 10 things that make you smile.
- Write about what you are most thankful for at this moment.
- Brainstorm 10 ways to promote self-care today.
- What would you do if you weren't afraid?
- Share your favorite ways to relax.
- What is a story that makes you laugh every time?

## FOR FINDING JOY

- Write about something beautiful that you saw today.
- What is something you truly treasure?
- What is something positive you've experienced lately?
- What difficult parts of your life contain hidden blessings or joy?
- Describe your dream life.
- How can you share joy with others?

## FOR EVERY DAY LIFE

- What are you learning about yourself lately?
- Tell about a time you received a word of encouragement or a gift at just the right time.
- Share about a person who inspires you.
- What makes you a good friend?
- What is something you are looking forward to?
- What mistake or failure are you grateful for?



# My Joy Journal

Keeping a log of what you are feeling and the good things that come into your life each day can help you recognize the joyful moments and negate the feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression. Try it!

## Morning

**Q1:** How are you feeling right now?

**Q2:** What can you do today to be joyful?

**Q3:** List 5 words that bring you JOY.

## Evening

**Q1:** What brought you JOY today?

**Q2:** How can you carry this JOY into tomorrow?

**Q3:** How did you share your JOY with others?

# BRAIN DUMP TO *Make Room for Joy*

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Not everyone feels better after reading positive affirmations, and what's needed instead is a brain dump to take out all of their trash.

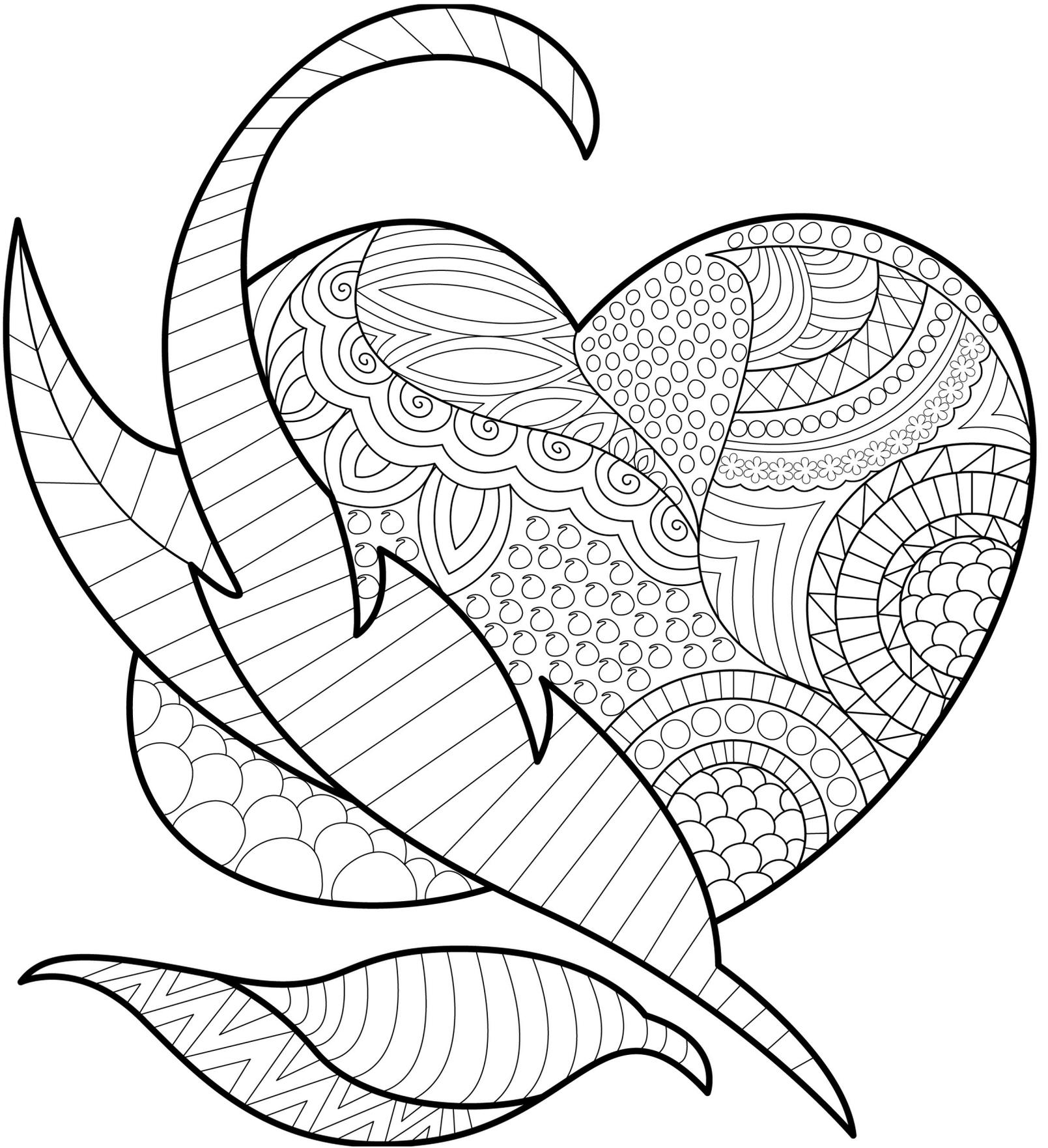
## 1. My Frustrations

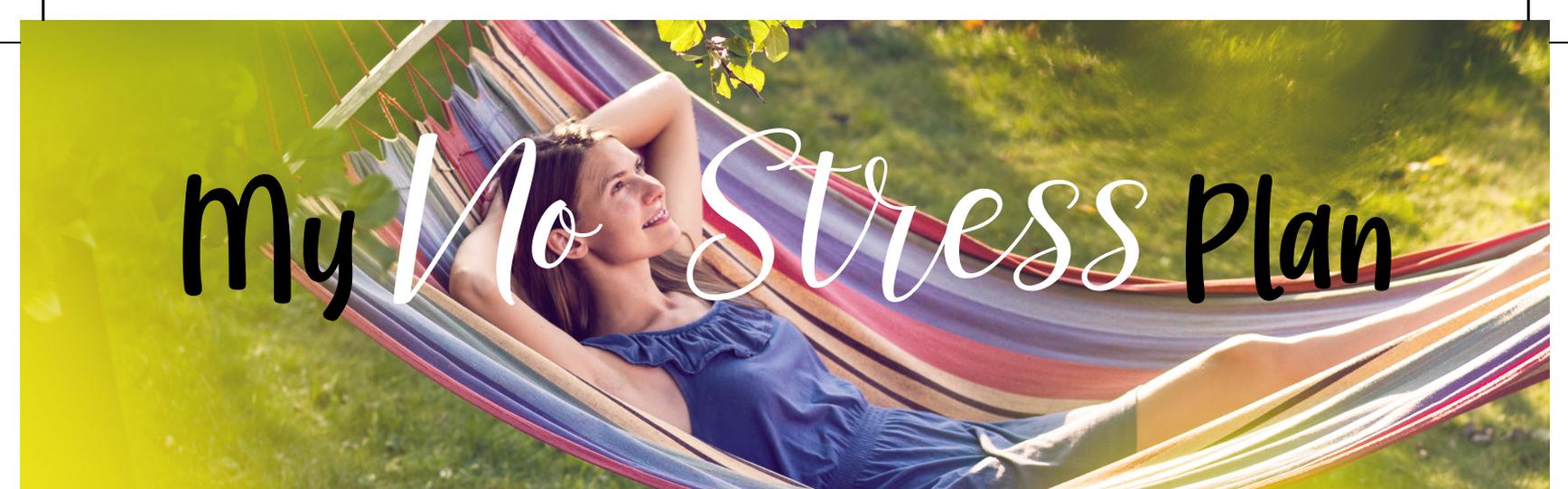
## 2. My Disappointments

## 3. My Self-Defeating Thoughts

## 4. My Fears

## 5. My Sorrows





# My No Stress Plan

After reading through some of the techniques provided, complete this plan of action to have handy the next time your stress gets out of control.

Signs I'm becoming stressed:

Ways I can relieve stress:

People I can depend on:

Things I can focus on:

Places I can go:

Reasons why I need this:

Words I can tell myself:

Things I can use to calm myself:



# Thank You...

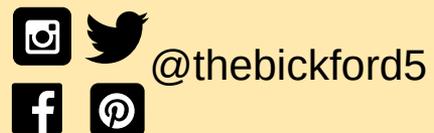
Anxiety, depression, and feelings of stress don't go away overnight, but I hope this guide has brought you some JOY for the time being.

Keep working on it, keep reaching out, and keep following along on our journey as we navigate the chaos of life.

~Angela  
The Bickford Five



## Contact Information



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