

## 5 Creative Ways to Care for Your Wellbeing



Do you find it hard to channel your thoughts and feelings? Do you struggle to find the words to express what's going on in your mind?

When it comes to making sense of your inner monologue and addressing emotional issues like depression, stress and anxiety, traditional support options such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and other talk-based therapies may be extremely beneficial.

However, just as your physical health requires regular effort to maintain, so too does your mental health. That's why it's so important to make wellness a part of your daily routine in a way that works for you. Luckily, there are other outlets to calm your thoughts and process your feelings than sweating it out on a treadmill!

Research conducted by BBC Arts found that music, drawing, dance and other artistic activities can not only provide an effective distraction tool for stress, but can also boost wellbeing by helping you get a better understanding of your emotions and enabling you to channel them in a creative way. Regular artistic expression can also help to build your confidence, promote a sense of accomplishment and encourage you to stay present by focusing on the process rather than the end result.

Regardless of your skill set, there are many ways to care for your wellbeing creatively. So, whether it's a paintbrush, a needle and thread or simply the movement of your own body to your favourite sounds, grab your tools of choice and let's get creative!

## **Mindfulness Colouring Books**

Remember how fun and free it felt to while away the afternoon with a colouring book and a rainbow of felt tip pens as a kid? That's because colouring helps to relax your brain, improve your focus and relieve stress and anxiety by putting you in a meditative, mindful state. In fact, psychologist Carl Jung believes that "colours are the mother tongue of the subconscious," and that expressing yourself through adult colouring books can aid recovery from trauma and stress.

## **Dance & Movement**

Non-competitive dancing is a great way to lose yourself creatively, which in turn helps you disconnect from worry, rumination and self-critical thoughts. In a 2021 [article](#) published by UCLA Health, 98% of the 1,000 dancers surveyed said that conscious dance helped them let go of distressing thoughts, gave them greater confidence and compassion and improved their overall mood. So, what are you waiting for? Blast those tunes and get your body moving – regardless of your sense of rhythm!

## **Painting with Calming Colours**

Just as red makes us aware of danger and green gives us permission to go, colours can have a massive impact on our psychology and human behaviour. Whether you're looking to lift your spirits or soothe your soul, painting with traditionally calming tones like lavender, sky blue, muted green and pastel pink is

a great way to quiet your thoughts and promote inner calm when you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

## **Collaging**

If you're intimidated by putting pen or paintbrush to paper, there's another artistic process that can help you express your feelings while enjoying full artistic freedom. Collaging is a fun activity that almost anyone can enjoy, and involves gathering materials from books, magazines and other found media to create a brand-new work of art.

Expressive Arts Educator Shelley Klammer believes that collaging by intuition helps you discover new information about your subconscious, provides a 'symbolic release' of emotions and helps you process and express your personality in visual, non-verbal forms.

## **Needlework**

The simple act of sewing, embroidering or crocheting with a needle and thread can help alleviate feelings of anxiety by enabling you to focus your mind on one single task – something that is increasingly harder to do in our fast-paced, 'always-on' world.

By giving yourself a break from these constant distractions with a stitching project, you can distance yourself from negative thoughts, lose yourself to the creative process and achieve a state of mindfulness that leaves you better positioned to work through your problems.

From revisiting a forgotten creative hobby to taking up a brand-new one, don't wait to see how artistic expression can help you manage your wellness, reduce your stress and process your issues in a way that's not just beneficial – but often beautiful.

If your employer offers Vivup's Employee Assistance Programme, there are lots of useful resources and downloadable workbooks to help you discover new ways to manage your wellbeing. You can also access a 24-hour telephone helpline for responsive, confidential and totally independent advice should you or a colleague need mental health support.

## Sources

[How do artistic creative activities regulate our emotions? Validation of the Emotion Regulation Strategies for Artistic Creative Activities Scale \(ERS-ACA\) | PLOS ONE](#)

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['Free moving' dance has healing benefits for mental health | UCLA Health Connect](#)

[The Benefits of Collage Therapy – Shelley Klammer \(typepad.com\)](#)

[How Sewing Can Support Your Mental Health \(happiful.com\)](#)