



SOURCES
OF STRENGTH



**RESOURCES FOR PRACTICING STRENGTH
AT HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

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LETTER FROM SOURCES: FROM OUR HOME TO YOURS THIS WINTER



Take a deep breath.

It's very important to keep doing this. Breathing in and out.
So many things have changed in the last year, and for many, it has been a hard year.

This year has challenged us in ways we would never have imagined. This winter we are staying safer at home and continuing to practice our Strength separately, but it feels hard right now. Maybe it feels hard for you too. There are simple things we can do as both individuals and households to care for ourselves and each other, to ensure that during the rough times no one gets so overwhelmed or hopeless they want to give up.

Our mission is to spread Hope, Help and Strength into every corner of every community.

We know that this year was not what any of us expected, and the pandemic has significantly impacted the physical and Mental Health of the people we care about. We want to be sure you know that it's ok not to be ok. And it won't always feel this way. When life feels difficult or overwhelming, we always want to honor and acknowledge what is happening and then turn to our Strengths.

At Sources of Strength we help teams of students and school staff identify their Strengths, or protective factors. We've spent the last 20 years talking to people who have gone through tough times, asking them how they got through them. The eight Strengths on the Wheel represent their answers, or the categories we can draw Strength from: Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, Healthy Activities, Generosity, Spirituality, Physical Health, and Mental Health.

We have created a handful of resources for you: check-ins and conversation starters, activities for exploring emotions, and practices for you and for the people in your household to calm, to cope, and to connect this winter.

We have compiled these activities and resources from our elementary curriculum and our middle school and high school programs. Share these resources with your friends and neighbors if you like. Learn more on our website at www.sourcesofstrength.org, and let's practice What Helps Us together.

- The Team at Sources of Strength

For more resources, visit www.sourcesofstrength.org,
follow us [@sourcesofstrength](https://www.instagram.com/sourcesofstrength) on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter,
and contact us at info@sourcesofstrength.org.



WE BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE
FOR YOU AND THOSE
IN YOUR HOME TO EXPERIENCE
HEALTH AND WELLNESS THIS
WINTER, AND SHARE IT
WITH OTHERS.
WE WANT TO HELP WITH THAT.



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WHEEL





DEFINITION OF STRENGTHS



FAMILY SUPPORT

Whether related to us by blood, or by choice, these are the people who support, nurture, and care for us.

POSITIVE FRIENDS

Positive Friends lift us up, make us laugh, are honest with us, and are there for us when we need them.

MENTORS

A Mentor is an experienced person who shares their insight to help guide us, and help us draw on our own Strengths to be the best version of ourselves.

HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

When we feel stressed, Healthy Activities - whether they are social, physical, or emotional - help us unwind, lift our mood, and gain clarity.

GENEROSITY

Generosity can look a lot of different ways, from donating money or time, to being intentionally kind to other people. These acts of kindness towards others, big or small, can make an impact on how we feel about ourselves.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is practiced in many ways, but at it's core we consider what gives us a sense of purpose and connection in our spirit. Thankfulness is a profound way to practice Spirituality together no matter what our cultural heritage and/or spiritual tradition.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

When we are injured, we don't have to stay in pain. We can get better with access to the medical care we need and deserve. Physical and social/emotional pain are often intergrated and it's important to take care of our bodies, hearts, and minds.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health is all about getting the support we need and deserve to help us when we are struggling. Our Mental Health is a very important part of living a healthy life, and oftentimes, getting together with a trusted person, a counselor, or a doctor can help empower us to overcome internal struggles we might be facing.



NINE STRENGTH-BASED CONVERSATIONS AND ACTIVITIES



Below are conversation prompts and activities centered around the eight pieces of the Sources of Strength Wheel. Complete these together as a household.

Each activity includes:

1. A check-in prompt to discuss over a meal, during a household meeting, on a walk, etc.
2. An activity so the people in your home can engage with Strength together.
3. A daily gratitude practice.

STRENGTHS POSTER

Check-in Prompt: What is giving you Strength this winter season? Think of the people, places, and things that are helping you mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. What people, places, practices, and activities are you excited about growing this winter?.

Activity: Create a household Strengths Poster together. Using crayons, markers, pencils, pens, etc. and a blank piece of paper, cardboard, or poster, ask everyone in your home to draw the things this holiday season that are giving them Strength. These can be people, activities, pets, places, practices, traditions - all the things that fill each person up and make their spirits soar. Have everyone draw at the same time and put down as many things as possible in 5-10 minutes. Keep in mind that you are creating a poster/paper covered in pictures, not a list. Once finished, share together why these things give you Strength and hang your poster in your home.

Gratitude Practice: Ask each person in your home to draw three things they are thankful for. You are on your way to starting a new healthy habit!

FAMILY SUPPORT

Check-in Prompt: Who are the people that provide you with Family Support? These can be people in our foster families, step families, biological families, extended families, and chosen families. What is one new tradition you can start with the people you consider Family Support this winter?

Activity: Choose someone you consider family and find a way to send them some extra care this holiday season. Mail a care package with letters, artwork, and a homemade meal/treat, or send a small gift. Connect with them virtually through social media, , phone call, or email.

Gratitude Practice: Share with your household three things you are thankful for.

POSITIVE FRIENDS

Check-in Prompt: What qualities make somebody a Positive Friend for you? How can you connect with a positive friend this winter?

Activity: Have each person in the home reflect on the qualities they look for in a Positive Friend. As a household, create "holiday grams" to send to each of your Positive Friends in the mail. Get creative with it!

Gratitude Practice: Journal about three things you are thankful for. This time, write down three people who you look up to and why - whether that person is a Mentor, family member, friend, coach, celebrity, teacher, or another leader.

MENTORS

Check-in Prompt: Mentors are the people and role models in our lives whom we can trust and talk to. They often inspire and challenge us to be the best version of ourselves. Mentors could be a teacher, coach, parent, family member, or community member. Who is one Mentor that you can reach out to this winter? What are some things they have helped you with in your life?

Activity: Write thank you cards to each of your Mentors. Everyone can make their own and personalize them however they wish. Consider sending an email, digital card, video, or holiday gram.

Gratitude Practice: Reach out to three people you are grateful for.

HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

Check-in Prompt: What Healthy Activities help you feel joy? What Healthy Activities help you to calm and unwind? What are the things you do to help you energize? What are new activities you can try this winter?

Activity: Create a list of winter Healthy Activities you can complete together. These can be new skills you are learning (playing an instrument, yoga, new recipes), favorite pastimes (game nights, evening walks, dance parties), and ideas for bringing calm to the home (reading, meditation, writing). See how many Healthy Activities you can complete together!

Gratitude Practice: Take photos of three things you are thankful for.

GENEROSITY

Check-in Prompt: When was a time that you received Generosity, and what was a time when you practiced Generosity? How did those examples of Generosity impact you?

Activity: Do some research together on local opportunities to display Generosity this winter season. As a family, set a goal to do one generous act in your community!

Gratitude Practice: Show and tell three things you are thankful for with your household.



Have fun! Games, music, and laughter are essential ingredients for our Mental Health and wellness. When we laugh and play, we connect with each other, and relational connections will build up our Mental Health.

SPIRITUALITY

Check-in Prompt: Spirituality reminds us that we are connected to more than just ourselves. We can lift our spirits by practicing our faith traditions, experiencing prayer, mindfulness, and meditation, engaging in our cultural rituals, ceremonies, and customs, and by practicing gratitude. What are some people, places, or practices that lift your spirit? What are some ways you can lift your spirit this winter?

Activity: As a household, use art supplies, magazines or photographs to make a map of places that lift your spirit and help you feel like you are a part of something bigger than yourselves. If you can't physically go to this location right now, use your imagination and your memory! Share stories to remember the way it feels to be at/in this spiritual place.

Gratitude Practice: Journal three things you are thankful for. Consider writing a poem or haiku!

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Check-in Prompt: When was a time you were grateful for medical access, for yourself or someone you love?

Activity: Choose three ways as a household you can practice increasing your Physical Health this winter. This could include doing an exercise everyday, a hydration challenge, creating new recipes together, and any other ways the people in your home can think of to keep your bodies strong.

Gratitude Practice: Ask a friend to share three things they are thankful for.

MENTAL HEALTH

Check-in Prompt: It is normal to go through ups and downs in life, and we all experience emotions that can feel big or overwhelming. Whether you experience big anger, or anxiety or you feel sad, down or depressed, what helps you manage those emotions and bring them back down to size?

Activity: Create a [Household Wellness Plan](#) or gather to create individual Wellness Plans to help when someone is feeling big emotions. Encourage each person to create a list with ideas that include people, pets, and places where you can find connection and ideas for things that help you experience fun, energy, calm, connection, and reflection. Or create homemade journals together for everyone to practice daily journaling!

Gratitude Practice: Reflect on all the ways you practiced gratitude over the past nine days, and consider practicing thankfulness for the next 21 days using art, photography, conversation, or journaling. Well done! You're well on your way to creating a healthy habit!

When hard things happen, honor and acknowledge them,
and then turn toward your Strengths.

Tell the truth even if it's hard, but make sure to spend the majority of your time not just focused on the hard, but talking about what helps. Who were the Positive Friends who supported you? What are the Healthy Activities that bring you joy? How was your Spirituality a Strength? When talking about an obstacle or a challenge, try to focus 10% of the story on what hurts, and 90% of the story on what helps. This allows us to move through difficulty and models healthy strategies for others.





ADDITIONAL CONVERSATION PROMPTS

Below are some additional conversation prompts you can use for household discussions, writing prompts, or conversation starters during meals.

Family Support

- What is an example of a time Family Support was really strong for you?
- What is an example of a time Family Support was really strong for you?
- Who do you see as your chosen family (i.e. best friends' parents, friends of your parents, a coach, Mentor, or friends)?
- What unique traditions do you have in your family?

Positive Friends

- Who is a Positive Friend for you and what do you appreciate about them?
- Share about a time you were a Positive Friend and when someone was a Positive Friend for you.

Mentors and Trusted Adults

- Who is a Mentor for you and what do you appreciate about them?
- Who is a Trusted Adult that makes you feel safe to be yourself?
- Which adult do you most commonly ask for help, whether with school, a social issue, etc?

Healthy Activities

- Share a story of how you used Healthy Activities to cope with a difficult situation.
- Name three Healthy Activities you enjoy - include one energizing and one calming activity.
- What is a Healthy Activity you might like to try?

Spirituality

- What traditions, practices, culture, or religion help you experience Spirituality?
- What are spiritual or gratitude practices that help you?
- Share about a time when you felt peaceful and content.

Generosity

- Who do you think is the most generous person you know and why?
- Name a person who has been generous towards you. How have they shown Generosity?
- What is one way you can show Generosity today?

Physical Health

- Share about a time that medical access was a Strength for you or your family or friends.
- How can you keep your body healthy?
- How can you show support for medical and Mental Health professionals?

Mental Health

- When you feel overwhelmed, name the person who helps you feel calm?
- When you are angry, what is an activity you can do to cool down and to cope?
- When you feel sadness, who are the people you want to connect with?

Thankfulness

- What are three things you are thankful for today?
- Who are three people you are thankful for today?
- What are three experiences you've had that you are thankful for?
- Write a short thank you note to someone you are grateful to have in your life.

Belonging

- When is a time you felt that you belonged?
- Who is someone that makes you feel like you belong?
- How do you help others feel like they belong?
- What makes you unique?

Growing Our Strengths

- One thing that I have done to grow stronger is _____.
- One thing that I can do to grow in Strength is _____.
- A person that I can support in growth is _____.
- What Strength have you used in the past week? How did it help?
- Who is someone who has helped you grow in Strength? How has this helped you?

Connection

- When did you connect someone else to help?
- When did you connect someone to a Healthy Activity?
- How has someone else connected you to Mental Health?
- How have you connected others to your community?
- Where would you go to connect a struggling friend to help?

ADDITIONAL STRENGTH-BASED ACTIVITIES

Below are some different Strength-based activities you can engage in with your household.

Family Support

- Call a family member, “just because”
- Take a sibling out for hot chocolate
- Write your own family winter mad lib
- Create a new winter family tradition
- Cook dinner for your family
- Recreate an awkward family photo
- Thank someone for being your “Family of Choice”

Positive Friends

- Have a snowflake cutting contest
- Choose one friend to commit to checking in with once a week
- Plan a watch/listen party with friends
- Write a note thanking someone for being a Positive Friend
- Host a virtual game night, party, or themed event with your Positive Friends

Mentors

- Tell your Mentor they’re doing a great job
- Challenge a Mentor to do a TikTok dance with you
- Ask a Mentor to tell you about a story about a time they learned a lesson
- Host a virtual check-in with your Mentor

Healthy Activities

- Take a one-hour screen break
- Cook or bake a holiday recipe
- Walk to a park
- Read a great book
- Try a new food
- Watch the clouds
- Cuddle with a pet
- Create a truly epic playlist
- Paint or draw
- Go on a hike



Generosity

- Split wood for an elder in your community
- Shovel a neighbor's walkway
- Buy gifts from small local businesses
- Do a litter pickup in your neighborhood
- Read a story to a younger sibling or neighbor
- Write notes to those who are stuck at home
- Listen without any agenda
- Help an elderly neighbor or single parent
- Volunteer for a cause you care about

Spirituality

- Close your eyes and take the deepest breath you've taken all day. Repeat 3 times.
- Look at the night sky
- Name 3 things you are grateful for right now
- Practice yoga
- Pray
- Watch a live musical performance
- Sit by water and just breathe

Physical Health

- Schedule a doctor or dentist appointment
- Take a shower or bath
- Give yourself a hand/foot massage
- Go for a walk or run
- Choose a healthy snack
- Sit in the sun
- Take a vitamin and eat a vegetable
- Floss (dance or dental practice)
- Get an annual physical
- Drink water

Mental Health

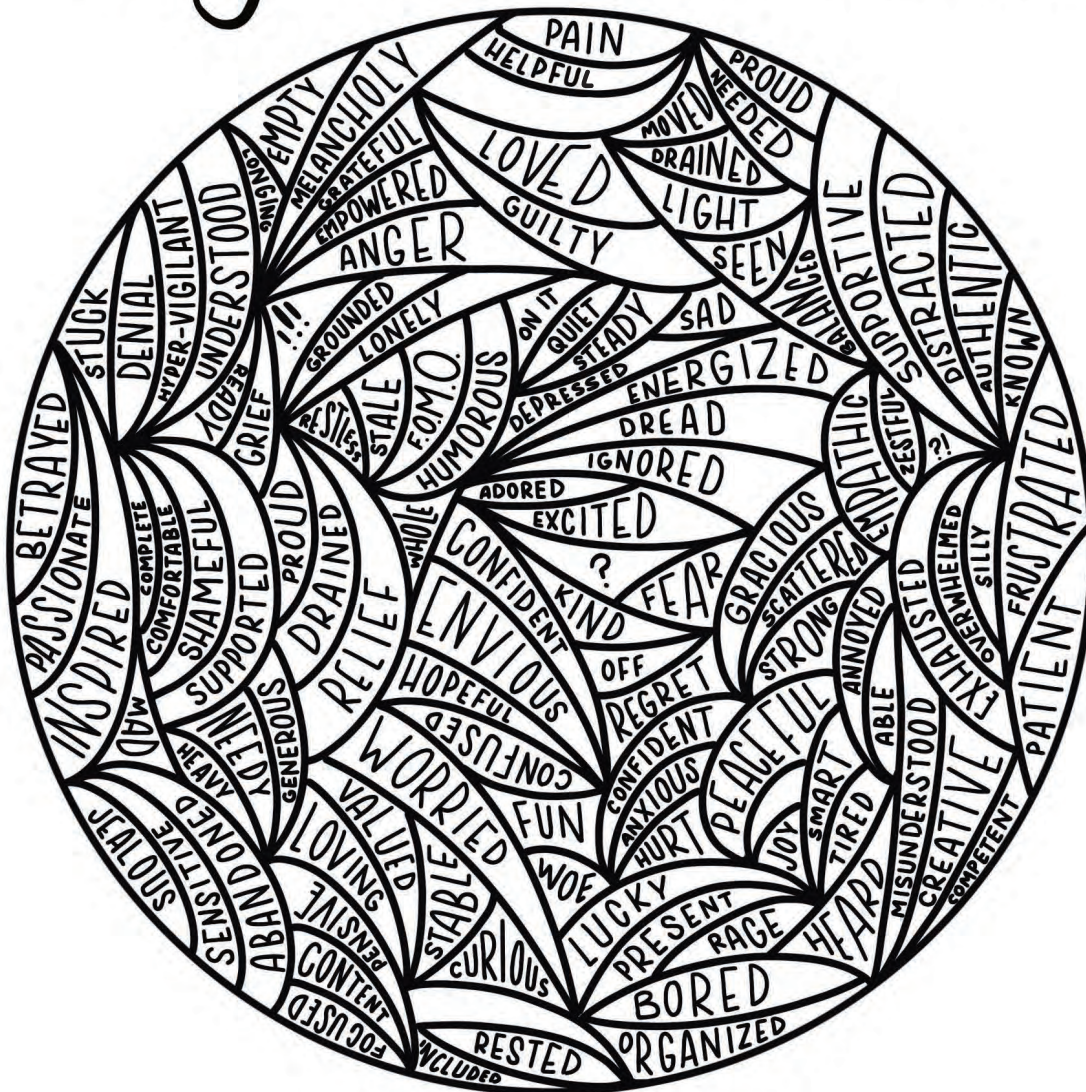
- Color the Tangled Ball of Emotions
- Make a list of 3 self-care strategies to try
- Reach out to your school counselor
- Start a journal
- Learn a breathing practice



EXTRA CREDIT: PRINTABLES AND RESOURCES

Print or make copies of the Tangled Ball of Emotions for each person in your household and complete the activity together. Alternatively, have everyone in your home choose a color and create a collective art piece representative of how each person is feeling right now.

the Tangled Ball of Emotions



- ☐ = Emotion I'm feeling right now.
- ☐ = Emotion I've been feeling recently.
- ☐ = Familiar emotion, but not recently.
- ☐ = Emotion I rarely experience.

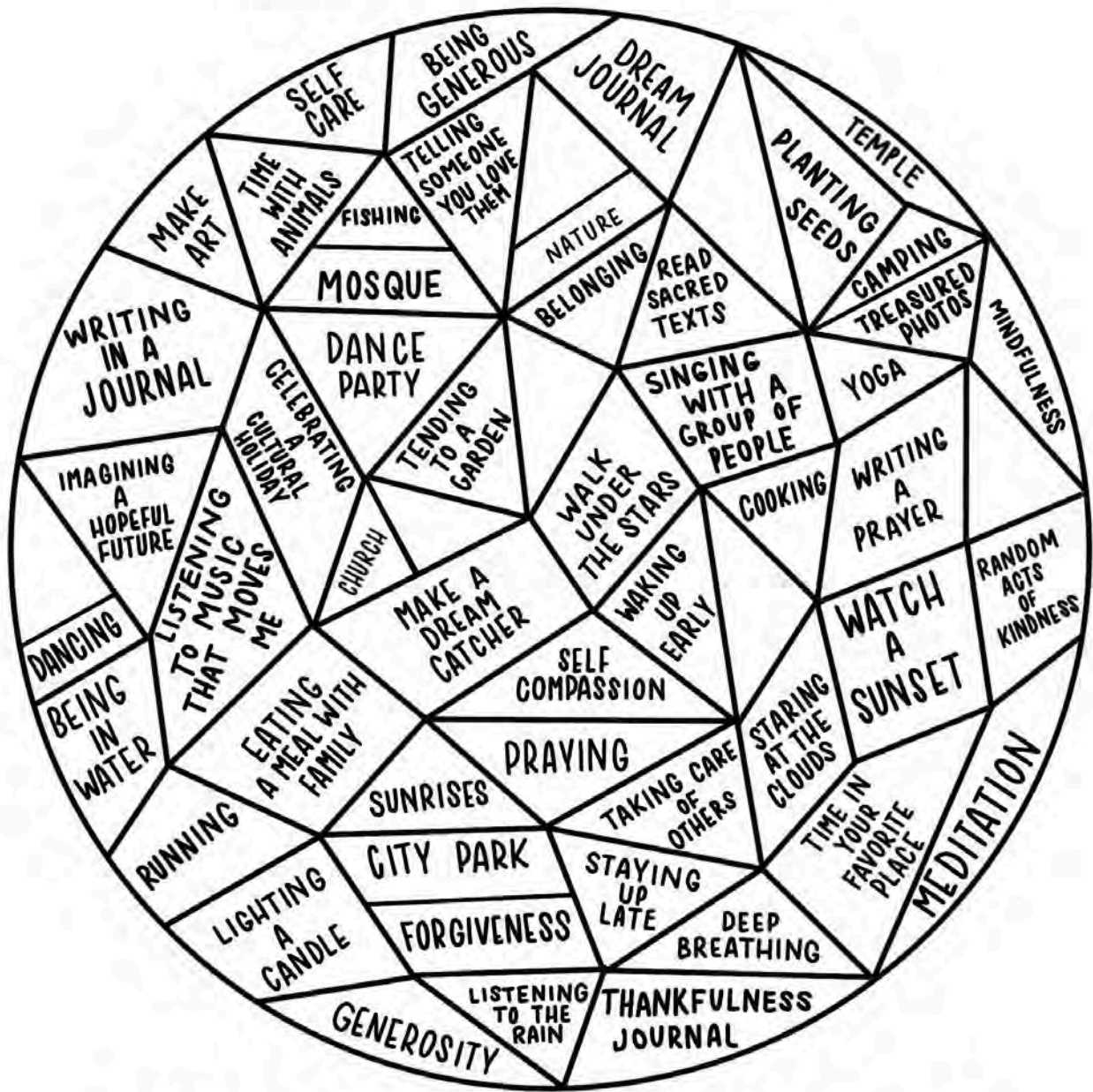
Print or make copies of the Strength Check-In for each person in your household and complete the activity together. Alternatively, everyone in your home can choose one color and create a collective art piece representative of what Strengths each person is practicing and what Strengths they would like to explore.



DIRECTIONS:
 COLOR IN THE ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW.
 FILL IN BLANK SPACES WITH OTHER WAYS TO PRACTICE STRENGTH

- ☐ = Activity I regularly do
- ☐ = Activity I've done recently
- ☐ = Activity I'd like to try

SPIRITUALITY



CHOOSE THREE COLORS TO REPRESENT THE DIFFERENT PEOPLE,
PLACES, AND PRACTICES WHERE WE EXPERIENCE SPIRITUALITY FOR

- ☐ MYSELF
- ☐ PEOPLE I KNOW
- ☐ OTHER PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

CHECK IN!

HOW DO YOU FEEL?



I FEEL AWESOME!



I'M DOING WELL.



NOT GOOD, NOT BAD, I'M FINE.



I FEEL SAD.



I AM ANGRY!



I FEEL WORRIED OR ANXIOUS



I AM TIRED!



SELF-CARE CARD



Before being a support to others, it is important to take care of yourself. Think of the safety brief on an airplane. In the case of an emergency you are directed to always apply your own oxygen mask before assisting others. How are you doing?

1. Positive Friends I can talk to:

2. Mentors or Supports I can talk to:

3. If I am feeling down or sad, I can do these activities:
 - Physical activities/stress relievers (such as walking, biking, working out, yoga):

 - Quiet, calming activities (such as taking a nap, writing in my journal, petting my dog):

 - Concentration activities (such as watching a funny show, reading a novel, writing thank you notes):

4. Ways I can help others right now:

5. Three things I am grateful for today:

6. Good things that have happened recently, even in the midst of tough stuff:

7. What are ways I can invite others (spouse, kids, friends, coworkers, community, etc.) to use their Strengths too?

***If I am concerned about my thoughts right now,
I can call the Lifeline at 800.273.8255**

Winter BINGO



TRY OUT A NEW RECIPE	BUNDLE UP & TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE	MAKE A WARM BEVERAGE FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE	GIVE YOURSELF ONE NIGHT OF QUIET	DONATE FOOD OR CLOTHING TO A LOCAL CHARITY
JOURNAL FOR TEN MINUTES	CREATE A CALM SPACE WITH CANDLES, MUSIC, ETC.	DO 25 RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS	ASK A FRIEND HOW THEY'RE DOING AND REALLY LISTEN	LEARN HOW TO SAY, "HAPPY HOLIDAYS" IN THREE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES
SET A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION THAT FOCUSSES ON STRENGTH	BAKE COOKIES FOR A NEIGHBOR	PUT ON FUZZY SOCKS	MAKE A HOMEMADE GIFT FOR A FRIEND	CREATE A NEW FAMILY OR FRIEND TRADITION
MAKE A PILLOW FORT	TEST OUT COCOA & CIDER RECIPES	TAKE A BREAK FROM SCREENS	VOLUNTEER AT A LOCAL PET SHELTER	CREATE A WINTER FEEL-GOOD PLAYLIST
MAKE PAPER SNOW FLAKES	WRITE LETTERS OF GRATITUDE TO THREE PEOPLE WHO GIVE YOU STRENGTH	COZY UP WITH A GOOD BOOK	HELP OUT A NEIGHBOR	HOST A VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEAL WITH YOUR FAMILY OF CHOICE

Winter BINGO