

# YST ACTIVE IN MIND



YOUTH  
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ENGLAND

## GUIDELINES FOR USING THESE CARDS

### SESSION AIMS

To promote positive mental health through physical activity and positive psychology tools.

### SESSION DESIGN

Active in Mind champions will deliver sessions based around four components. Each card contains instructions for AIM champions to read to their nurture group.



### MIND

Mindfulness and athlete psychology tools to help the nurture group manage their emotions. Champions should consider tone of voice and speed of delivery - slow and calm!



### MENTORING MOMENT

Questions and guided discussion linked to the strong mind activity. Give space between each question for the nurture group to reflect on their answer. Use the questions to help the group think about steps they could take between sessions.



### BODY

Physical activity challenges require no equipment and can be practised between sessions.



### STRONG TEAM

Team-building activity used to open the session, have fun and develop trust.

# YST ACTIVE IN MIND



## STRONG TEAM

In a circle, with one person in the middle, hold hands.

- > The person in the middle walks towards the group.
- > The rest of the group will then start walking away so that the person in the middle does not walk into them.
- > To make it harder, keep the circle moving in a clockwise direction or try hopping.



## BODY

Complete this sequence of exercises ten times. We will time how long it takes to complete.

- > 10 push-ups
- > 10 sit-ups
- > 10 squats

Before the next session, practise at home. Can you beat your time?



## MIND

- > Standing in a circle with chairs behind the knees, ask each person to close their eyes and stay silent.
- > The task is to count to one minute and quietly sit down.
- > The leader should time the minute.
- > Note after how many seconds the first and last people sit down and who was closest to the 60 second mark.



## MENTORING MOMENT

- > When the last person has sat down, ask how easy/difficult it was to guess a minute. What did they notice during the time? What could they feel? What could they hear? Did other people's movements influence them?
- > Do we have too much or too little time in our day? Do we use our time well? Do you think our lives are fast-paced? Would this be the same for young people everywhere in the world? Why?
- > How could we create more time, and make time work better for us?



## STRONG TEAM

- > Ask the group to stand on a bench.
- > Give them tasks to do without touching the floor, like getting into height order, shoe size order or age order, from one end to another.
- > Repeat with different tasks in silence.
- > If they touch the floor three times as a group, or talk if they are meant to be silent, you can give them a forfeit, e.g. singing a song.



## BODY

**Complete this sequence of exercises as quickly as possible, repeating each complete cycle five times. We will time how long it takes to finish.**

- > Three tuck jumps
- > Three squats
- > Three broad jumps

**Before the next session, practise at home. See if you can beat your time.**



## MIND

**Everyone sits comfortably and closes their eyes.**

// Imagine your hearing is a radio that can tune in to different stations. What's the furthest away sound you can hear? Change the station again and listen to the sounds of your body - your breathing, your heartbeat, etc. Bring your attention to each part of your body, starting with the tips of your toes and up through your legs, hips, back, arms, shoulders, neck and head. Change the station again and listen just to your breathing. Then listen to the sounds in the room. Finally listen to the sounds furthest away. When you are ready, open your eyes."



## MENTORING MOMENT

- > How do you feel now in comparison to when they started the activity? Was it easy to concentrate? What did you hear?
- > Do our brains make up stories about the things we hear? Do we predict what we think might happen or worry about what others might think? Can anyone think of an example of this?
- > How can we concentrate on the moment and not worry about the past or make up stories about the future?



## STRONG TEAM

### Helium Stick Team Challenge instructions

- > Split the group into two and line them up in two rows facing each other.
- > Ask participants to hold their arms out in front of them and point their index fingers.
- > Lay a cane down on their fingers. Get the group to adjust their finger heights until the cane is horizontal and everyone's index fingers are in contact with the stick.
- > Explain that the challenge is to lower the cane to the ground.
- > **The rule:** Everybody's index fingers must remain in contact with the cane at all times. Holding the cane is not allowed - it must rest on top of fingers only.



## BODY

Complete this sequence of exercises 20 times as quickly as possible. We will time how long it takes to complete.

- > Five push-ups
- > Five squats
- > Five sit-ups

Before the next session, practise the exercises at home and try to beat your time.



## MIND

### Wall Sit Challenge

- > Stand tall with your back to the wall, feet hip-distance apart.
- > When your back is fully in contact with the wall, start to slide down, until your thighs are parallel with the floor.
- > Check that your knees are lined up above your ankles - adjust your foot position if not.
- > Hold for one minute (or as long as possible).

**Complete mentoring moment then repeat with positive self talk.**



## MENTORING MOMENT

- > Hold for one minute (or until they give up) - ask the group what their thoughts were.
- > What could be better? How would you encourage someone else? What could you say to yourself?

### **Repeat wall sit using positive phrases.**

- > Did it feel easier?
- > What other unhelpful self-talk do we hear from ourselves?
- > What is the positive phrase we need to hear every day?
- > Each person to write a positive affirmation to stick up at home. **"I am....."**





## STRONG TEAM

### Finger Grab

- > Everyone in a circle. Hands out to their sides. Left palm turned upwards and hand flat.
- > Everyone places their right index finger onto the flat palm of the person next to them. On "GO" everyone tries to grab the finger in their left hand and pull their right finger free.



## BODY

### Plank Challenge

- > Hold a plank, with good position, for as long as possible.
- > Time how long you can hold the plank for.
- > Repeat with a side plank.

**Before the next session, practise at home. See if you can beat your time.**



## MIND

### Human Camera

- > In pairs, one child is the camera, the other the photographer.
- > The camera has their eyes closed with the photographer guiding them from behind.
- > The photographer guides their camera to the photo spot and squeezes their partner's shoulders.
- > Camera briefly opens their eyes to "take the picture".
- > Partners switch roles.



## MENTORING MOMENT

### Questions

- > In pairs, discuss what picture the camera saw and what the photographer was taking a picture of.
- > Do the pictures match?
- > Mentoring prompt: Sometimes our perspective is different to that of someone else in the same situation.
- > Are there any situations in your life that would benefit from a different perspective? For example - can you look at a disagreement from the other person's point of view?



## STRONG TEAM

### Human Knot

- > The group stands in a circle.
- > Each person grabs another person's hand across the circle.
- > The team must unravel themselves without breaking hands.



## BODY

### "Bring Sally Up"

- > Follow the song "Flowers" by Moby whilst squatting. When the song says "Bring Sally Up", the group stands up. When the song says "Bring Sally Down", the group squats and holds the squat until the lyrics repeat "Bring Sally Up".



## MIND

### Gratitude Jar

Each member of the group is encouraged to write one thing they are grateful for and put it in an empty jar or bucket. (This task could then be repeated at future sessions.)



## MENTORING MOMENT

- > In a group, share something you are grateful for or read from the gratitude jar.
- > How do we feel when we are grateful?
- > Could we choose to be grateful daily?

**Encourage the group to keep a daily personal gratitude diary.**



## STRONG TEAM

### Pass the Parcel

- > In advance, wrap a "parcel". Between each layer place a positive quote on a piece of card.
- > When the music stops, the parcel is opened and the quote read aloud.
- > Leader asks the group what the quote might mean.



## BODY

### Tabatta workout

Do 20 seconds of an exercise then rest for 10 seconds. Repeat eight times. Count how many of each exercise you complete. Swap between these two exercises:

- > Mountain climber
- > Star jumps

**How many did you do? Before the next session, practise the exercises and try to beat your score.**



Today we are thinking about how everything changes. Individually spend a few minutes doodling things that have changed in the last few months.

**Prompts:**

- > Think about things they have no control over, for example the weather and other people.
- > What things have changed that you could influence?
- > Maybe a habit or behaviour or an action you take.



## What is one thing you would like to change that you have control over?

For example, a habit or behaviour. Thinking about that behaviour, what are the advantages/disadvantages of staying the same or of changing? Compare in a table:

<b>Advantages of not changing</b>	<b>Disadvantages of not changing</b>
<b>Advantages of change</b>	<b>Disadvantages of change</b>

### Small group discussion:

What prevents us from making changes that are positive? How can we create change for ourselves? What could you do this week?



## STRONG TEAM

### Wink Murder

The group sit in a circle. One member of the group, "the detective", leaves the room whilst the role of "murderer" is allocated. On the return of "the detective" the "murderer" winks at team members, who then dramatically act dying. The murderer must attempt to eliminate everyone without being detected.



## BODY

### Yoga

Yoga sun salutation.

**Find a YouTube video of the Sun Salutation to follow.**



## MIND

Guide the group through the “Mindfulness Rain Shower” activity.

// Sit tall in a chair. Close your eyes and take three slower, deep breaths. Pay attention to your thoughts. Imagine each thought as it passes through your mind sticking to your skin. Imagine walking with those thoughts outside into a rain shower. See the rain wash away your thoughts and as the sun shines and dries your clothes see yourself calm and peaceful enjoying the warmth of the sun. Take three more soft, slow breaths and when you’re ready, open your eyes.”



## MENTORING MOMENT

Was it easy to let your thoughts wash away?  
Do you notice your mind being busy or repeating the same thoughts?

- > It takes practice to let our thoughts drift away and not become caught in them.
- > Let’s practise the mindfulness exercise every day between now and the next session.





## STRONG TEAM

### Group Juggle

In a circle, ask the team to keep as many balloons in the air as possible. Increase the challenge by keeping as many balls moving as possible.



## BODY

### One-minute challenge

Complete as many exercises as possible in one minute. Rest for one minute then repeat. Count how many you do.

#### Choose three exercises:

- > Burpee
- > Press-ups
- > Squats
- > Sit-ups
- > Lunges
- > Tuck jumps

**Before the next session, see if you can beat your score at home.**



## MIND

### Cow Bell

- > Whole group sits in a circle.
- > One person is in the middle of the circle and blindfolded.
- > The circle passes a bell around whilst the person in the middle attempts to keep track of it.
- > When the leader calls "stop", the blindfolded person points at the bell.
- > If correct, they swap with the bell holder.



## MENTORING MOMENT

- > What did we need to be successful in the ball juggle game? (Prompt group towards attention and focus.)
- > How were we able to follow the bell without being able to see it?
- > Is it helpful to our mental health if we can choose where we focus our attention?
- > What can you focus on this week?



## STRONG TEAM

### Charades

- > Play a game of charades. In advance, write down different emotions on pieces of paper.
- > Split the group in to two teams. Each person takes it in turns to act out an emotion.
- > The rest of their team must try to guess the emotion.



## BODY

### Yoga

Warrior yoga.

**Follow a Warrior Yoga sequence on YouTube.**



## MIND

In advance, draw or print pictures of emojis - one emoji on each piece of paper. Spread the pictures around the floor. Ask the group to stand by the emoji they feel.



## MENTORING MOMENT

Ask the group to think about where in their body they feel the emotion they are standing by. Ask a few people to share what the emotion feels like physically.

Repeat standing by an emoji that creates a negative thought.

### **Guide the group through the mindfulness activity:**

// Arms by sides, take three slow breaths. Imagine the negative feelings gathering like hot energy in your hands. Breathe in deeply and squeeze your fist tight. Breathe out and open your hands. Imagine the hot, negative energy flying away."

Repeat until the negative thought has disappeared.



## STRONG TEAM

### Rope Square

Lay a rope (both ends tied together) in a circle on the floor. Everyone picks up the rope and holds with both hands. Ask the group to close their eyes and walk round in a circle a few times. After they've completed a few turns ask them, without opening their eyes, to make a square. Repeat with other shapes.



## BODY

Using the long rope as a skipping rope, take it in turns to practise skipping. Once everyone has had a turn, challenge the group to see how many people can skip at once.



## MIND

### Spider web meditation

**Lead the group through the following mindfulness exercise.**

// "Sitting comfortably, close your eyes and take three slow, deep breaths. As you breathe, imagine yourself in a forest. Notice the trees, the leaves on the ground, the sounds, the smell. You are standing alone and you notice stuck to your shirt are your thoughts. The unhelpful thoughts, thoughts that are unkind about yourself. Negative self-talk. Things you don't want to feel. As you begin to walk through the forest, you brush against cobwebs. As you brush against them, your negative thoughts stick to the web. Your shirt becomes freer of words the more you wander. As you reach the edge of the forest you notice your shirt is clean and carved in the mud along the path are the words 'I am enough'. Breathe those words into your thoughts. When you're ready, open your eyes."



## MENTORING MOMENT

- > Are there any negative thoughts we carry around with us? Write one on a piece of paper. Screw it up and leave it in the bin.
- > This week, notice any negative thoughts you have and imagine putting them in to the next bin you see.
- > Replace the thought with a positive affirmation. "I am ....."



## STRONG TEAM

### Splat

- > The player standing in the middle of the circle is the "splatter". The splatter randomly points to someone and shouts "SPLAT!"
- > The player pointed to must duck down; then the two players on either side of the "ducker" must "splat" each other by pointing to the other and saying "SPLAT!"
- > The last one to splat sits down, and the player ducking stands back up. The game continues until there are two players left. They then play Rock Paper Scissors to determine who will be the new splatter in the middle.



## BODY

### Frog Stand challenge

- > Start the exercise by getting into the bottom of the squat position and placing the hands on the ground in front of the feet, next to the toes.
- > Now move the knees so that they're resting against the bent elbows for support (with your knees in this position your legs will help carry some of your bodyweight to make the hold possible).
- > Lean forward into the hold taking the weight onto the hands so the feet are raised completely from the floor. Beginners may not be able to lift the feet entirely off the ground but, with regular practice, balance and strength skills will develop to accommodate the exercise.



## MIND

### Take 5 breathing

- > Spread your hand and stretch your fingers out like a star. Using the index finger of the other hand, trace around the outline of your hand and fingers.
- > Start at the bottom of your thumb and slide your finger up your thumb, pause at the top, and then slide your finger down the other side. Continue tracing your fingers up, pause, and down. Slide your finger slowly, watch your finger move and notice how it feels. Keep going until you have finished tracing your fifth finger.
- > Place your pointer finger at the bottom of your thumb, and breathe in as you slide up. Breathe out as you slide down. Breathe in as you slide up your second finger, and breathe out as you slide down. Keep going until you have finished tracing your fingers and you have taken five slow breaths.



## MENTORING MOMENT

### How do you feel now?

- > What happens to our body when we feel stressed or anxious? (Heart rate and breathing increase.)
- > We can change how we feel by changing how we breathe. Slow breathing reduces our heart rate.
- > Practise hand breathing this week before bed.





## STRONG TEAM

### Mirror

Each person finds a partner and stands facing them. One person is the leader; the other is the mirror and copies the actions of their leader.



## BODY

- > In pairs, using any exercises you like, alternate passing the exercise.
- > Partner 1 completes their exercise, deciding how many repetitions to do. Partner 2 copies.
- > Partner 2 completes their exercise for partner 1 to copy.
- > Continue for 5 minutes.



## MIND

### Reflection meditation

**Lead the group through the meditation.**

// Sit comfortably, take three slow breaths. Imagine you are sitting in front of a small pond in a forest and the water is still. Look into the pond. See the reflection of the trees and birds in the water. What else do you see? Do you see yourself? Imagine dropping a pebble in the pond and breathe slowly as you watch the ripple disappear. When the water is still, open your eyes”.



## MENTORING MOMENT

- > How do you want the world to see you?
- > How do you want to see yourself?
- > What could you do this week to be like the person you want to see?

**Until the next session, walk like the person you want to see in the mirror.**