

# THE THEATRE CHIPPING NORTON

## ART & MENTAL HEALTH

This booklet is made with love from us to you. Take from it whatever you need - it might be just some fun art or moments to get lost in creativity, or it might be something that really helps you in hard times.

Take What  
You Need

Comfort

Hope

Inspiration

Creativity

Love

Peace

Art can change lives. If you ever want to get involved in theatre activities just send a message to Clare O'Hara, Head of Outreach at the Theatre:

[cohara@chippingnortontheatre.com](mailto:cohara@chippingnortontheatre.com) or 01608 649 112

We have something for everyone, and free places for anyone who needs them.

Remember, you are always welcome at the Theatre.  
Come as you are, this is your home too.



# IN THIS PACK YOU WILL FIND ...

Guatemalan Worry Doll craft

Journalling ideas

Lavender sensory moment

Digging & Plating

Mindfulness colouring

Bubbles & breathing exercises

Mindfulness & mental health art exercises

# GUATEMALAN WORRY DOLLS

These tiny dolls have been made for centuries by the Guatemalan people. Guatemalan children make them and tell the dolls all their worries. They place them under their pillow and by morning the children feel released of the worry. With just pipe cleaners and some wool you can have a go at making a doll & sharing your worries.

*Speaking a worry out loud can help you release yourself of some of the anxiety you are feeling. It really does help.*



*Twist two pipe cleaners to make your person. Draw a face on scrap paper and wrap it round the head. Wrap wool around to secure the face and cover the pipe cleaners to make clothes for your doll.*



# JOURNALLING

Writing in a notebook every day can really help your mental health. There are lots of different ways of using a journal - you can share thoughts, feelings or anxieties, or you can write things you are grateful for and happy about. Or if the words won't come, you can draw them. What colour are you feeling today? What shape?

We've put together some different exercises you can try here or in your own journal.

## MY STORY: INTRODUCE YOURSELF

My name is .....

I am ..... years old. I am unique and intelligent.

I am very good at .....

My favourite thing to do is .....

I am worried about .....

.....

I am looking forward to .....

.....





## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FEELINGS



A lot of journalling is about getting to know yourself. Complete the sentences below with the very first thing that comes to mind. Then read it back - what have you learned about yourself? Are you surprised by some of the answers? Is there anyone you want to share this with?

I feel happy when .....

I feel sad when .....

I feel confused when .....

I feel scared when .....

I feel angry when .....

I feel proud when .....

I feel loved when .....

I feel jealous when .....

I feel excited when .....

I feel accepted when .....

I feel silly when .....

I feel sorry when .....

I feel strong when .....

I feel embarrassed when .....

I feel trusting when .....

I feel safe when .....



# MY OUCH STORY

Everyone has a story to tell. When bad things happen, it makes it much harder to tell the story. It can be very helpful to tell yourself the story - just hearing or reading your own story can help. Think about what you want to do with your story. Do you want to share it with someone? Do you want to destroy it? Do you want to keep it safe?

I remember a time when.....

First, .....

Then .....

Last, .....

I remember feeling .....

I would like to feel .....

I need .....

Because .....

I feel safe when .....

These are the people in my life who support me .....

When I get upset, I can feel safe again by .....

# LAVENDER

Using all our senses can help us to feel calm. Smell is a really strong sense for helping with calmness. It has been used for centuries to reduce anxiety, stabilise moods, and even as a sedative! We like to use dried lavender. You can gather some into a little bag, and keep it in your pocket, or under your pillow - crush it to release scent whenever you need a moment of calm in a hectic day.



## DIGGING & PLANTING



Being outside in nature really helps with anxiety and mental health and getting digging in the soil has an even more positive impact. Did you know that digging up dirt stirs up microbes in the soil, which when you breathe them in will make your brain produce serotonin? Serotonin helps you feel relaxed and happier. You can plant your own seeds, make a wildflower seed bomb from seeds and mud, or even get to digging up weeds! Where will you find your soil and get digging? In a garden? A playground? In the fields?

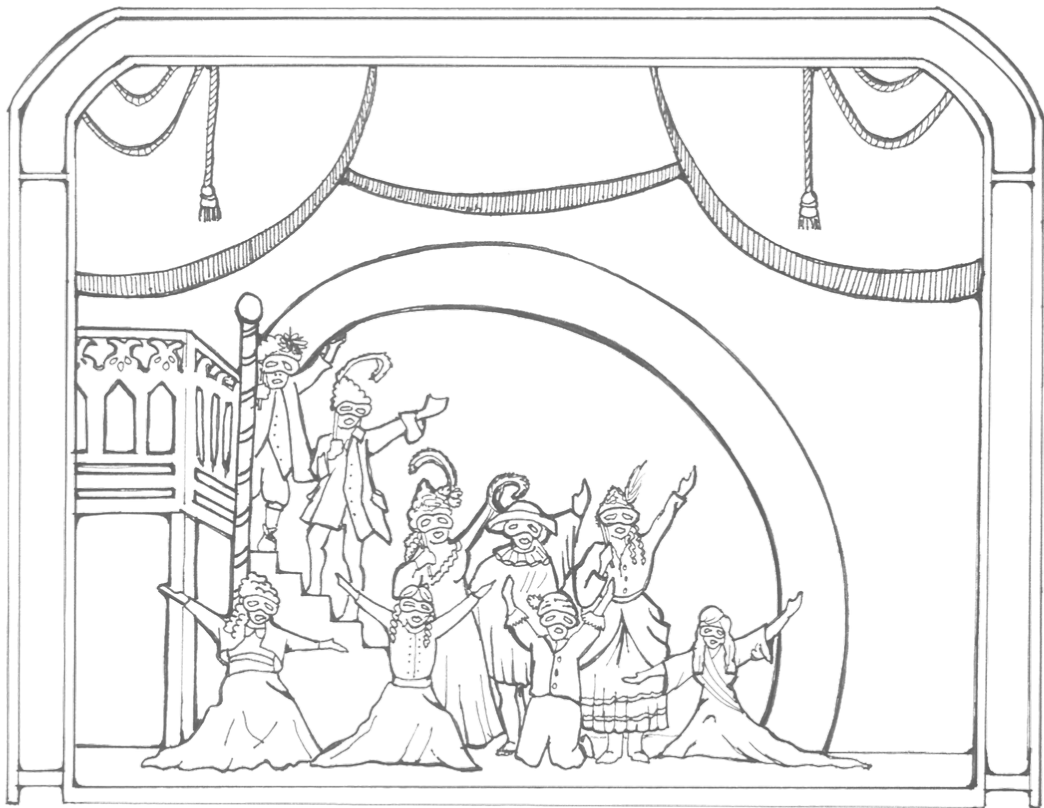


# MINDFULNESS COLOURING

Colouring has the ability to relax your fight or flight brain, the amygdala. It has the same properties as meditating for calming anxious thoughts. Take Part Director & artist Vanessa has drawn these images for you to colour - she says "the front of the theatre is plain white but what colours and patterns would you add to it if you could redesign it?"

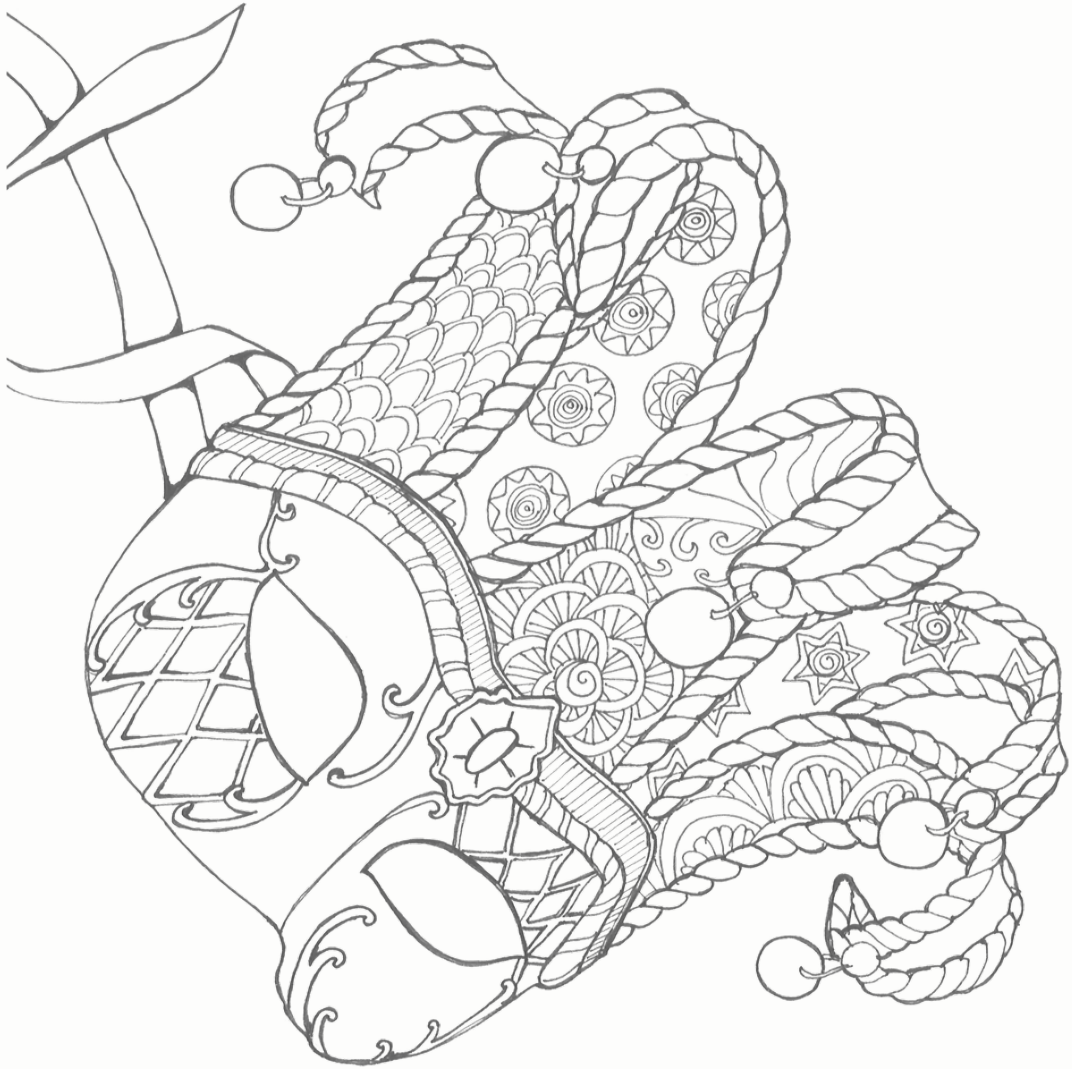


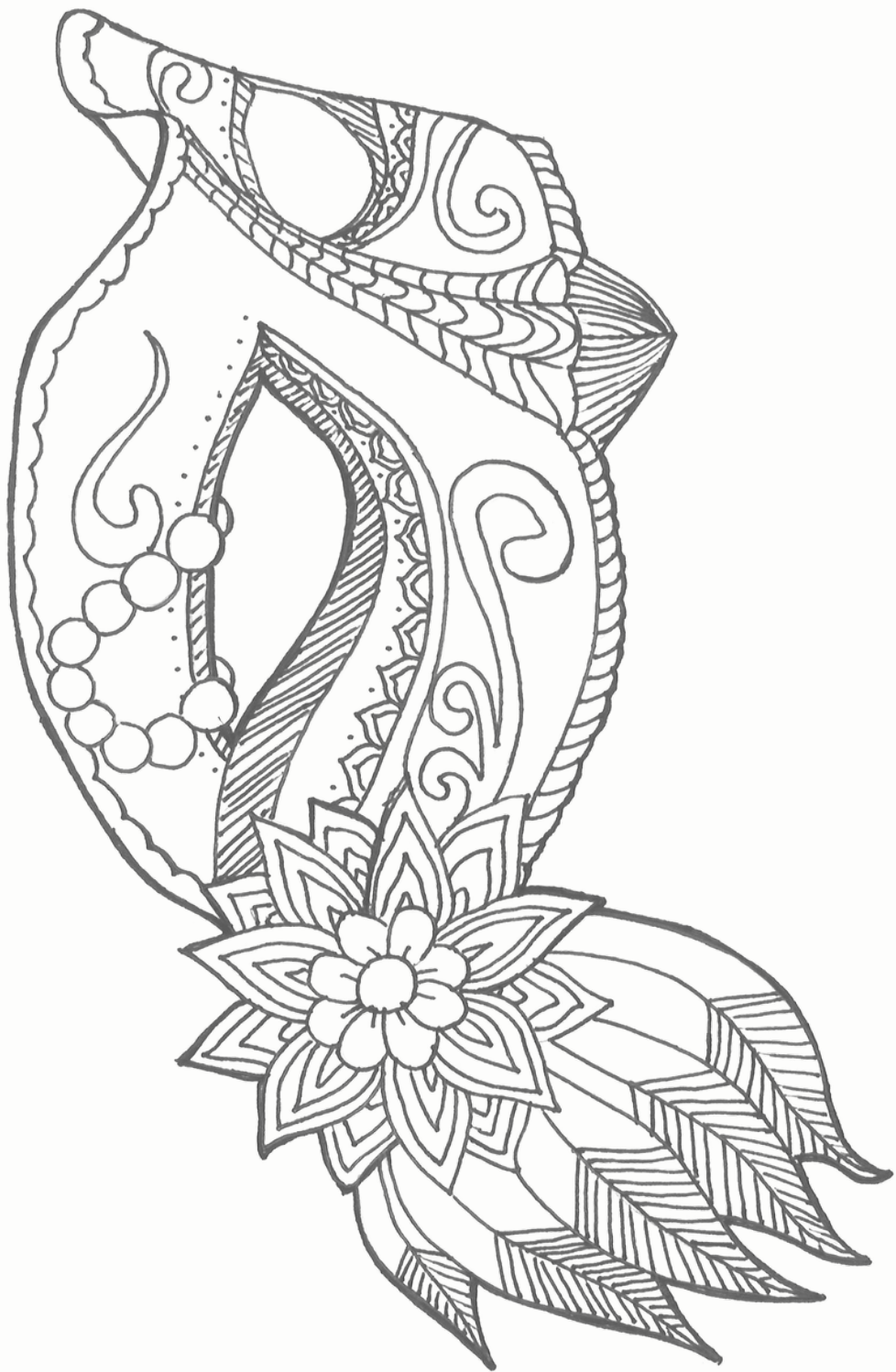
Every year at Christmas, the Theatre has a panto based on a classic fairy tale. Vanessa has drawn this design based on past pantos. Did you see any of them?



The intricate Venetian masks and costumes are from Cinderella. The arch and background are from Mother Goose. We hope you can join us for our Panto this year. If you would like tickets but paying for them is a barrier to coming, just email me at [cohara@chippingnortontheatre.com](mailto:cohara@chippingnortontheatre.com) and I will find some free tickets for you if I can.

Venetian masks are incredibly intricate and often very colourful. What colours will you add to these designs?














# BREATHING


Breathing is a wonderful and important tool in helping feel calm. Whenever you feel overwhelmed, stressed, or angry, try taking a very deep breaths in and out. Count to four as you breathe in and six as you breathe out. Breathing deeply like this signals to your nervous system that it can calm down.




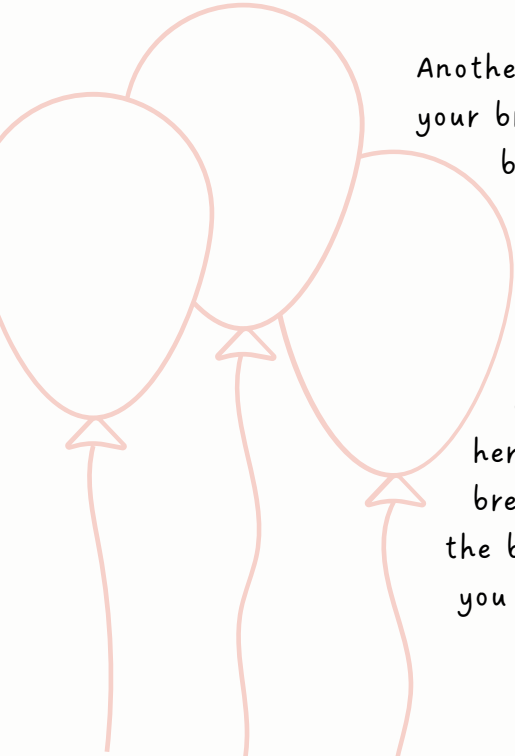
## BUBBLES



Bubble mixture can be a great way of regulating breathing. Try blowing out slowly and gently through a bubble wand to create as many big bubbles as possible. This is the sort of slow, deep breath that can help you to feel calm.



## BALLOON BREATHING



Another idea you can try to get your breathing nice and deep is balloon breathing. Imagine you are blowing up a very big balloon as you breathe out slowly and deeply. Whilst you breathe out colour in one of the balloons here. You'll need to keep your breath slow and steady to get the balloon coloured by the time you run out of out-breath!



# MINDFULNESS & MENTAL HEALTH



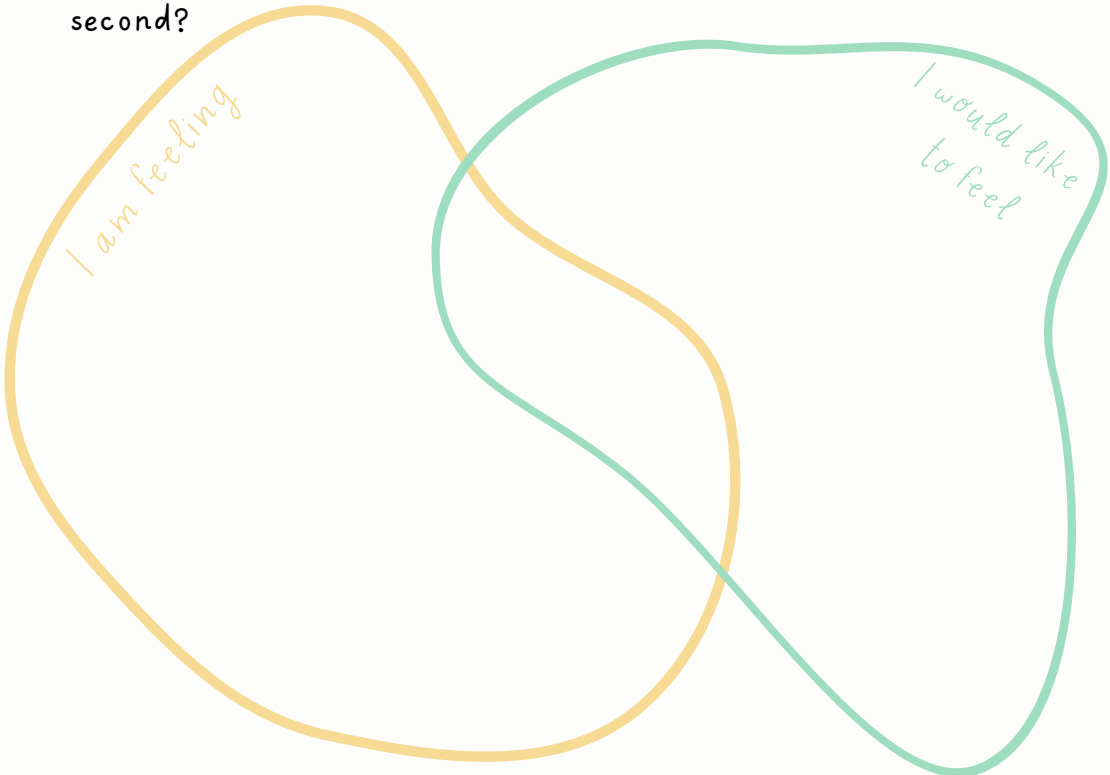
## ART EXERCISES



Art is a brilliant tool for getting to know yourself more deeply, and expressing your feelings, needs, hopes and fears.

### EMOTION DRAWING

Art can reveal feelings you can't put into words. Here, try drawing how you feel today, and how you would like to feel. What colours do you feel? Are you a gentle cloud of colour, a scribble, or an image? Do you feel lightly pencilled in or heavily? What would bring you from the first picture to the second?





## CALM IMAGES

Let's design your own calming image. What colours feel calming and soothing to you? What shapes? Lines, circles, big shapes, small? Does a pattern feel calming to you? Or maybe an image - perhaps its a drawing of a place you feel calm, or a person who helps you feel calm. Choose your colours and create your own calm image here.





## MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL

Our final art exercise is all about you. You are a totally unique, special person. Noticing the positive things about yourself helps you to stand tall and face the world. Think about some things about you that are really positive and draw yourself with these attributes in the mirror.





# THE THEATRE CHIPPING NORTON



At the Theatre we know that art changes lives. We'd love to get to know you, and if you ever want to get involved in theatre activities just send me a message to:

Clare O'Hara

[cohara@chippingnortontheatre.com](mailto:cohara@chippingnortontheatre.com)

01608 649 112



For more helpful mental health exercises check out:

- [www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk)
- [www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters)

If you need more support with mental health, we recommend contacting:

- A trusted teacher, school nurse or family support worker at school
- Your doctor - ask for help with mental health

Hotlines that can help include:

- The Samaritans, a free 24 hour phone line for mental health support: call 116 123 free of charge
- Papyrus, a free suicide-prevention hotline for young people 9am - midnight everyday. Call 0800 068 4141 or text 07860 039 967 or email [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

If you are in crisis, feeling suicidal or need urgent help:

- Call 999 or 111 right away