



# **Keep Calm and Zine On**



**calm**

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## Zine Creators

The youth advisors of the Cohort network of AdoLescents and youth with Multiple mental health conditions (CALM) study have co-produced this zine to artistically convey their experiences of living with multiple mental health conditions.

This zine seeks to uplift the voices of those with multiple mental health conditions, which are often overlooked by mainstream health care services and communities.



# About Us

At the heart of meaningful mental health research lies a call to both listen to and make room for diverse perspectives and experiences. The lived experiences of youth, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, have historically been dismissed, which has led to research and thus policies and treatments that fall short of what actually helps youth, and by extension their families and healthcare practitioners.

CALM and several other studies across the country are working to conduct research in a way that includes and is centered around youth feedback and advising. This makes for more equitable and accessible research which benefits not just youth seeking treatment, but also all the people involved in shaping the experience of living with mental health conditions, diagnoses, and disorders in today's world.

The Youth Advisory Group, YAG, is a group of 11 youth with a wealth of lived experience who offer feedback on different projects under the CALM umbrella with our 'North Star' being the facilitation of equitable, accessible, and de-stigmatized language and materials in the CALM study.

# Youth Testimony

"I began my work with the CALM YAG in February of 2023 - while I was actively experiencing symptoms tied to my case of having several mental health conditions. Not only was it empowering to find other youth from several cities across Canada who were united in the goals and values of de-stigmatizing and advancing mental health care for youth, but it marked a sort of inflection point for me; my lived experience was not just valuable, it was something that could be acted upon in the name of creating better treatment and policies for other youth."

# Music That Helps

Struggling with multiple mental health conditions can be really overwhelming. Some days it feels impossible to get out of bed, but music has always helped me out. I am so grateful for music. Without it, I don't know where I'd be. Music has helped me through tough times. I wanted to share some of my go-to songs with you in hopes of sharing the power of music.

The first section of songs is what helps me be in a better mood and/or mindset. They can help remind me that things will get better and/or create an effect that makes me want to sing and dance my heart out and have fun.

## Positive Songs

Explicit Language  
Warning!

## Fun Songs

**Who Says** - Selena Gomez  
**Fight Song** - Rachel Platten  
**Champion** - Fall Out Boy  
**Normal** - Lightning Thief Musical  
**This Is Me** - Greatest Showman  
**Hey Jude** - The Beatles  
**Scars to Your Beautiful** -  
Alessia Cara  
**AOK** - Tai Verdes  
**Nobody Hates You** - Jessia  
**Rainbow** - Kesha  
**Aftermath** - Adam Lambert



**Uptown Funk** - Mark Ronson ft. Bruno Mars  
**Welcome to the Black Parade** - My Chemical Romance  
**Golden** - KPop Demon Hunters

**Zero to Hero** - Disney Hercules  
**Dancing Queen** - ABBA  
**Bohemian Rhapsody** - Queen  
**Dancing Through Life** -  
Wicked - (Fiyero's part)  
**Sorry Not Sorry** - Demi Lovato  
**Burnin' Up** - Jonas Brothers  
**Daydream** - Ella Fitzgerald  
**Sir Duke** - Stevie Wonder

Music can help in many different ways. The above songs help make me feel happy again, but sometimes it's nice to feel these other, harder emotions, such as sadness and anger. It took me a long time to realize that our emotions are here for a reason, and it's ok to feel these emotions. So, I put some of my favourite relatable songs below.

## Relatable Songs

**Karma** - AJR  
**Bad Life** - Sigrid ft. Bring Me the Horizon  
**Stressed Out** - Twenty One Pilots  
**I'm Confident I'm Insecure (Acoustic-ish)** -  
Lawrence  
**I Am the Weapon** - Three Days Grace  
**Thanks to You** - All Time Low  
**Let Me Be Sad** - I Prevail  
**No Time to Explain** - Good Kid



**Nightmares** - Set it Off  
**Trauma** - BoyWithUke  
**Everybody Hates Me** - Bruiser  
**I'm Doing Fine** - Marino  
**Everything Sucks** - vaultboy  
**Keep Myself Alive** - Get Scared  
**Welcome to my Life** - Simple Plan  
**So What** - P!nk  
**Good News** - Shaboozey



The courage to keep going:

# *Fragments of a healing heart*

Dear Julissa,

I know your pain. I hear you and understand that there is a lot going on right now all at the same time. I want to start this by saying my deepest condolences for the loss of mom. I know you did everything you could, and I appreciate all of your strength that you have shown during this time. But, I also know that right now, you are lost and completely broken from losing her. It is okay not to be okay. This is not something that any young teenager should go through. Do not feel pressured to “move on” just because people tell you to do that. Everyone grieves differently, so it is normal to feel what you feel right now. I know that you are disgusted by the school’s lack of empathy and support for you. They do not nor will they ever understand you and what you are going through. Unfortunately, the school’s administrators are prejudiced. It felt like the school staff only respected those who are like them. . That is a fact. The school has a “zero tolerance” policy in place for bullying and “discrimination”, but we know that it is all a myth.

You know that it is not normal for grown ups to spread false rumors about you and your family. You know they treat you differently than the others because you are Latina and the majority are white. The dirty looks you get in the hallways and in your classrooms because of your “attendance”, despite the fact that all the teachers knew the reason why. I mean they did disclose to everyone in the entire school about losing mom. There was a total lack of understanding for what you were going through. Why were they asking you to “prove” that you in fact do have multiple mental health issues that affected your ability to complete your assignments like the “average” student would? Why would they disregard the documented accommodations you had on your IEP? The school is treating you unfair and you are right to assume that it is because you are not white. It is also safe to say that this is proof that although there are policies in place, there will be people who do not respect the rules. You have every right to be upset from the disrespect you receive. Nobody deserves to be treated with this injustice. Ever.



You know that your mental health is getting worse, not any better. Nothing motivates you anymore. Every night you cry alone in your bed because of everything that is happening around you. You feel that nobody understands you or how you really feel. Your panic attacks are getting worse because of the constant fear of not being good enough, the way you think mom wanted you to be. You are reaching your breaking point and I think you know that.

The stigma you get is also really affecting you. I know. Listen, it is not going to be easy in the next few years and you will face a lot more unrealistic expectations from everyone around you. The school will make things harder on you. Teachers are going to tell you that you are not going to have success in the future because of your mental health. But trust me, you will have positive experiences ahead. I promise you that there will be a bit of light in the darkness. The grief will get better, it is just going to take a little longer for you to become “normal” again. The pain and guilt that you feel right now is normal with the grieving process, but it will become manageable. The experiences you have with the discrimination from school as well as the stigma from your mental health are actually going to help choose your career. Believe me, you are not the only one who is going through the stigma on your mental health. The words “crazy”, “dumb” and “lazy” that you were told from everyone around you are called “labels”. It is people using negative stereotypes on those who struggle with their mental health for no reason whatsoever. It happens more often than you thought. We live in a world where we need to be this “perfect” human being but everyone has their own opinion of what being perfect looks like. Suddenly anyone who is struggling with their mental health is expected to just “get over it”. I know that you have been told that way too many times, but there is no such thing as getting over it. It is a journey that you have to go through. It takes a lot of hard work and commitment, but it is completely worth it. I know that you can do it because I believe in you.

No matter what life throws at you, take one step at a time, take things at your own pace, and do not give up. Focus on yourself and find your support system because it is the best gift that you will ever have. You are so strong, stronger than you think.

Love,

Future Julissa.



# Great Fidgets

Fidget toys are amazing. They help me focus, work with emotions, and give me a space to move while I feel hyper. It can be hard to find the right fidget, so I'm here to share my current favourites in hopes of helping you find your fidget! Please note that even though I may love these fidgets, you may not find them to suit you, and that's okay! I wish you the best of luck in finding your fidget!



## Infinity Cube:

- Continuous loop
- Some have a touch of weight to them
- Variety of colours and material (such as plastic vs. metal)



## Fidget cube:

- Multiple functions (for example: clicking, glide, roll)
- Many colour selections



## Pipe cleaners:

- Shape it anyway
- Texture is fluffy but strong
- You may need to replace eventually after uses. The fluff wears off and shows the wire



## Elastic Wristband/ Elastic Wristband Hair Tie:

- You wear it, so it's always on you
- Less noticeable
- Texture feels soft/fabricsy
- Bracelet acts more like a comfortable elastic band



## Pop It:

- Variety of sizes
- Normally quiet
- Many colour selections



## MONTROY Squishy Ball:

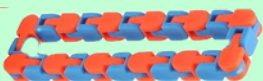
- Molds a bit.
- Texture is a tad squishy and the outside is rubbery

*Sometimes hands will smell like rubber after using*



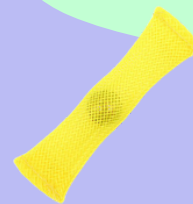
## Small Ball:

- Usually feels kind of squishy/plushie
- Used in small places or large places
- Less noticeable while using it



## Wacky Tracks:

- Click sound
- Bendable and moveable
- Texture feels smooth
- Many colour selections



## Mesh and Marble:

- Small
- Easy to carry around
- Less noticeable while using it





*do you remember your dreams?*  
I know I forgot mine once.  
3 a.m. again, tears streaming down my face.  
but one day I made it out,  
found my people,  
and I started to remember.



one day, you'll look back, realizing you made it through,  
and you'll be glad you stayed :)



# 3 tips to Manage Distress and/or Overwhelming Emotions

All people will experience intense emotions throughout their lives - regulating sustained, overwhelming emotions and distress is a challenge that some people have to manage. Here are a couple quick ideas for particularly tough moments such as panic attacks!



Dunk your face in a bowl of ice water - as weird as it sounds, there's a lot of science that shows it helps to quickly lower your heart rate and slow things down. Try to keep your nose submerged for atleast 30 seconds!

Go for a quick run! Intense physical activity of any kind can be a great outlet for strong feelings. Even 15 minutes has been shown to be helpful.



Mental grounding and dedirecting your focus to your surroundings when paired with other calming activities can be helpful.  
54321 - 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and one thing you can taste



# CREATIVE RESOURCES



As we created a zine to share our voices through creative mediums, we wanted to share some free creative resources that you can use to also express yourself in a creative manner. Below are some free apps and websites that offer methods for exploring your creativity. Please note that some of these apps may display ads and/or offer paid subscriptions, but you do not need to purchase a subscription to use them.

## Free Apps

HAPPY COLOUR



ART

SKETCHBOOK



ART

PIGMENT



ART

TAYASUI SKETCHES



ART

GUITARTUNA



MUSIC

YOUSICIAN



MUSIC

FLIPACLIP



ANIMATION

STOP MOTION STUDIO



ANIMATION

## Free Websites



ART

PIXEL ART



PHOTO



VIDEO



ART

CANVA



MUSIC

MUSESCORE



MUSIC

AUDACITY



TUTORIALS



VIDEO

YOUTUBE\*



WRITING

THEWORDFINDER



GAMES

NEW YORK TIME GAMES



CODING

SCRATCH

Check out your local library got makerspaces

Makerspaces offer the use of various technologies to create art, including 3D printing, vinyl cutting, laser engraving, and more!

\*We wanted to share that YouTube is a great place to explore your creativity through making videos or searching for tutorial videos from other creators. Still, we want to do so with caution, as YouTube is becoming a mainstream social media platform.

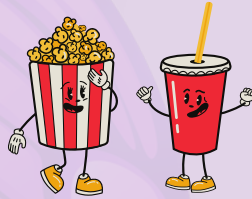
Remember to take breaks!

# Self-care strategies

Self care is way more than just taking a bubble bath at home or listening to your favourite music when you feel stressed. Self-care is about taking care of our own mental health and improving your life to help reduce stress and to decrease your risk of illnesses. Here is a list of self-care strategies that you can use to improve your well-being!



Start a workout routine!



Take small frequent breaks

Give yourself a movie night

Take a digital detox



Surround yourself with positive people



Practice mindfulness

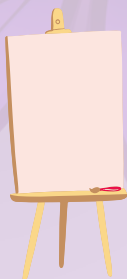
Get plenty of rest



Build an attitude of gratitude



Start a journal



Create a vision board



Set healthy boundaries

Read an interesting book



Learn a new hobby



Allow yourself to feel your emotions

Go out for a walk



Have a cup of tea



# Mental Health Resources

- **Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)**: Find your local CMHA or call 1-833-456-4566.
- **Integrated Youth Services**: Find your local hub/centre to access integrated health, wellness and social services
- **Youth Line**: For 2SLGBTQ+ peer support, text 647-694-4275 (Sunday to Friday, 4:00pm to 9:30pm ET) or use the chat box on their website.
- **9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline**: To access support, call or text 9-8-8.
- **Kids Help Phone**: Call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868.
- **Hope for Wellness Helpline** (available to all Indigenous people): Call 1-855-242-3310 or use the chat box on their website to connect with a counsellor online.
- **Trans Lifeline**: Call 1-877-330-6366 for peer support services run by trans people for trans and questioning folks.
- If you require immediate care, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department. **You are deserving of help.**

