



Social, Mental, Emotional Health Coloring Pages

In this guide, you will find adult coloring pages that can be utilized by your program to enhance your meal program participants' overall wellbeing. They include a fun, relaxing coloring activity as well as simple tips to deepen the participants' knowledge and skills in improving their own social, emotional, and mental health. Simply print the coloring pages and distribute to your meal participants. Feel free to make copies as needed.

The Older Americans Act Nutrition program strives to reduce hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition as well as promote socialization, health and wellbeing. The meals provided by these programs enhance the physical well-being of the participants, and these programs can also greatly improve the social, emotional, and mental health. This guide also provides examples of how the Administration for Community Living Innovations in Nutrition Programs and Services grantees are tackling more than just the physical health of participants.

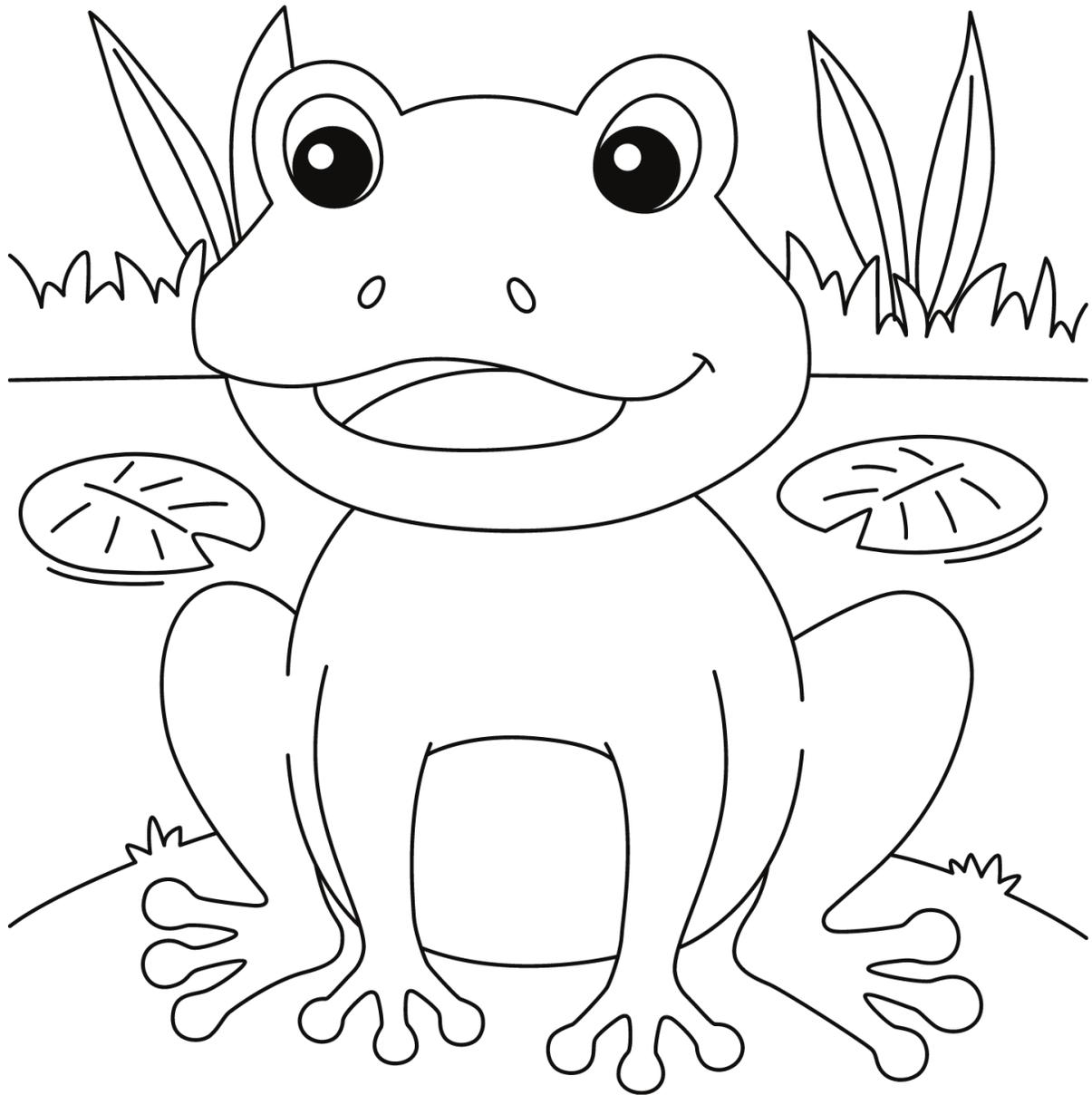
- ▶ **Reducing suicide risk in home-delivered meal program participants:** [Georgia State University](#), a recipient of 2018 and 2020 Administration for Community Living (ACL) Innovations in Nutrition Programs and Services grants, [found](#) that volunteers and staff of home-delivered meal programs, when trained, were better able to recognize warning signs of suicidal thoughts in older adult clients and intervene with a safe-for-now plan while connecting them to long-term assistance. Volunteers and staff are natural helpers within the older adult clients' lives and may be a solution to combat suicide in a population at-risk for suicidal thoughts and actions.

- ▶ **Using technology to combat social isolation:** Using innovative technologies to enhance its Meals on Wheels program, [Interfaith Ministries](#) for Greater Houston, a recipient of a 2019 Administration for Community Living (ACL) Innovations in Nutrition Programs and Services grant, is conducting the [Connecting Seniors to Care \(CSC\)](#) project. This project provides homebound seniors with Alexa devices in order to study how use of the device affects their overall quality of life and Social Determinants of Health.

- ▶ **Activity-based intervention gives older adults something to look forward to:** [New York City Department for the Aging](#), a recipient of a 2020 Administration for Community Living (ACL) Innovations in Nutrition Programs and Services grant, has been implementing [Do More, Feel Better \(DMFB\)](#), a volunteer-delivered, self-management program to help older adults recover from depression by helping the older adults plan pleasant and rewarding daily activities. As part of weekly meetings, volunteers will help depressed older adults set a goal of doing at least one pleasurable or rewarding activity each day. These goals can include physical activities, social activities, or other activities or hobbies that have value and meaning for the older adult. It is difficult to feel depressed when doing valued activities that bring pleasure and accomplishment. Engaging in pleasurable and rewarding activities will help break the vicious cycle of depression and improve perspective, mood, interest level, energy and overall quality of life.



- Social interactions are important for one's health and well-being. Research has shown many [health benefits](#) to socialization, including:
- Increased appetite
 - Delayed memory loss
 - Improved self-esteem
 - Intellectual engagement and stimulation
 - Reduced risk of depression and anxiety
 - Improved immune system and cardiovascular health.



▶ Have you ever felt lonely? If so, you aren't the only one. More than one in five adults [report](#) feeling lonely or isolated either often or always. Actions such as getting a good night's sleep, finding an enjoyable hobby, or finding ways to connect with like-minded people may help combat these feelings.



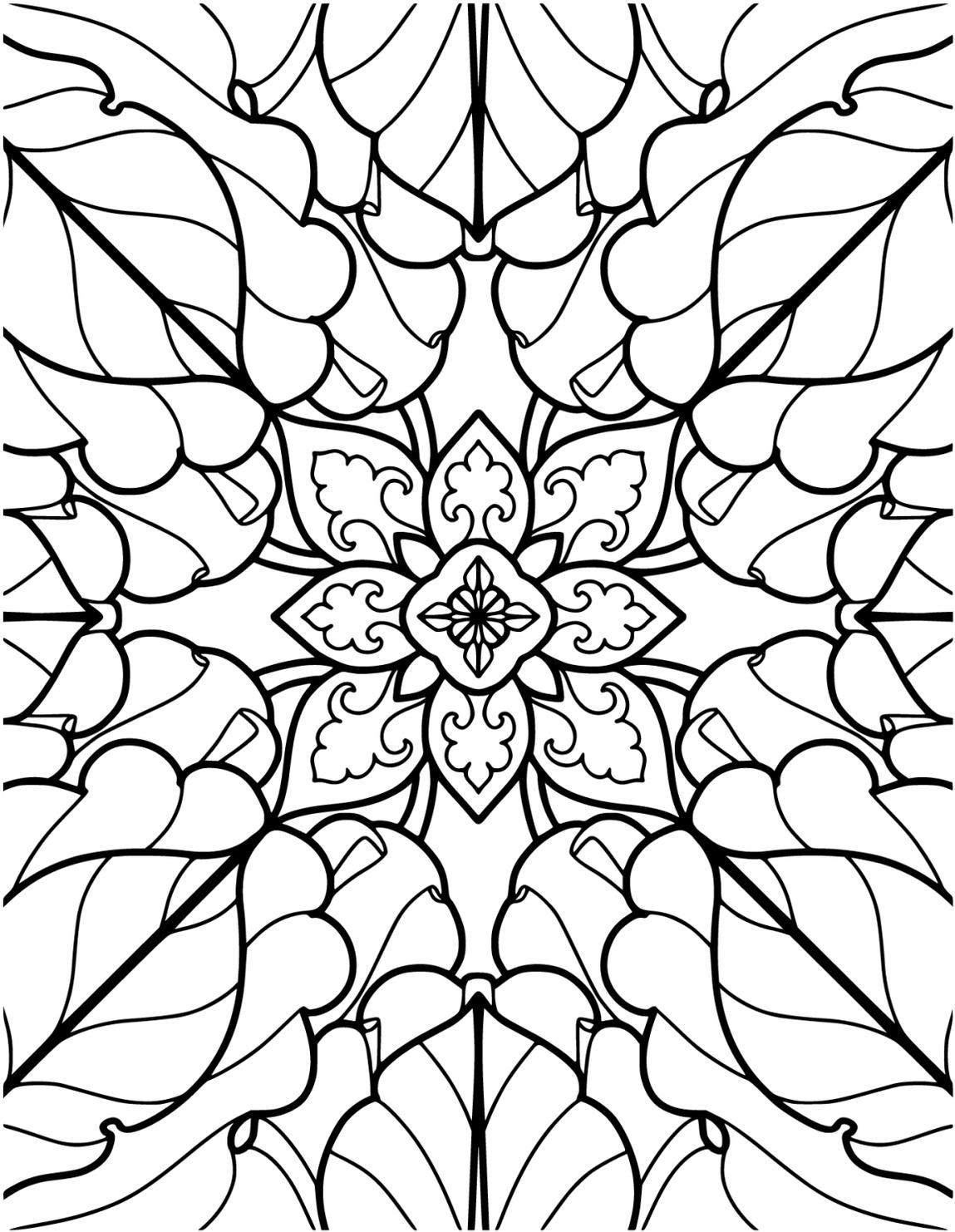
► Meals from congregate meal and home-delivered meal programs are designed to provide a balance of nutrients, and when you eat better, you feel better! Eating with a focus on nutrient-rich foods, including a variety of fruits and vegetables, and consuming adequate protein, whole grains and low-fat/fat-free dairy products may help [improve our mood](#). How could you include one new healthy food this week?



► Physical activity isn't just good for your body. It can also improve your mental health! Find ways to enjoy gentle movement most days of the week. Physical activity does not require a gym membership. Simply engaging in activities such as walking, tai chi, or even intentional movement while sitting can have positive benefits.



- It is no secret that we usually feel better when we get a good night's sleep. Sleep is important at any age, and there are [things we can do](#) to improve our sleep quality and routine.
- Engage in physical and social activities during the day
 - Stick to a regular sleep schedule; go to bed and get up at the same time each day
 - Play soft music and eliminate screens (television, computer, and smart phones) prior to bedtime
 - Develop a soothing bedtime routine to signal to your brain it is time to begin relaxing
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- ▶ Stress happens to all of us, and many changes that occur as we age may induce additional stress in our lives. Learning to manage stress can go a long way in ensuring mental and emotional health. Developing [habits](#) such as journaling, meditation or prayer, physical activity, or even learning a new skill can help manage stress when it arises.