

Healing in Nature Patch Program

May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Observed in the U.S. since 1949, this month emphasizes the importance of mental health, attempts to de-stigmatize it, raises awareness, and helps those who need treatment.

Mental health affects how we feel, think, and act, so it's important to nurture our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Studies have shown that being outdoors increases our brain's serotonin and dopamine—which are considered "feel-good" hormones. When they're boosted, our anxiety and depression lessen.

During this patch program, Girl Scouts will get a good dose of "feel-good" hormones by going outdoors and exploring nature.

To earn the patch, girls are encouraged to complete 10 activities in May 2023.

Journaling & Reflection

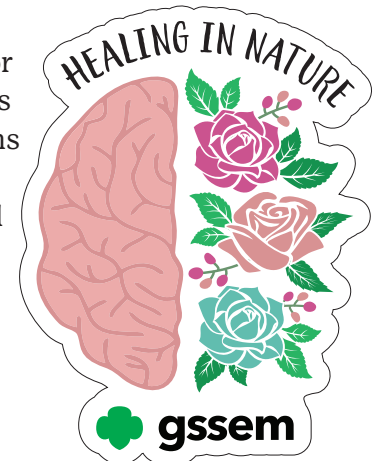
- Decorate your journal to be all about you! Print out small photos of your favorite things and glue them to a journal cover. Or, color your own design on the cover.
- Journaling is a good method to help cope with anxiety. Find a cozy spot outdoors and set aside five minutes a day to write down your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. You can find a calm, secluded spot during recess, in the backyard, or on an apartment balcony! There are journaling prompts [online](#) if you'd like some inspiration on what to write in your journal.

Gardening

- D.I.Y Terrariums: A terrarium is an indoor garden in a sealed container. The plants and soil release water vapor, essentially recycling the water. These require very little maintenance and are relaxing to create! You

can purchase a D.I.Y terrarium kit online, or research creative ways to make one with items you have at home.

- Take a trip to the local plant nursery and get a plant to take care of at home.
- Help with a local community garden.



Meals & Snacks

- Enjoy a picnic in a park! Pack a basket and blanket and enjoy an outdoor meal with a friend or family member.
- Learn how to make a new snack to pack with you on a hike. Trail mix is a quick and easy snack to prepare and it's packed with a ton of healthy ingredients to keep you energized. Looking for more inspiration? [Try these recipes.](#)

Night Sky Exploration

- Grab a blanket and a pillow and head outdoors for some nighttime meditation and stargazing!
- Explore night sky constellations. Download the Sky View app on a mobile device to see which constellations are near you.
- Explore a "Dark Sky Park." Michigan has six parks that are devoted to looking at the night sky. To find more information on a dark sky park, visit [Michigan.org](#).

Outdoor Art

- Flower Press Art: Collect plants and flowers to press between a heavy book.
- Painting: Use watercolors to paint a landscape that piques your interest.

- Writing: Try poetry to express what you are feeling while sitting outdoors.
- Write kind and motivating messages in chalk around your neighborhood, park, or a school campus.

Camping

- If you're new to camping, we recommend trying a backyard campout! Bring your troop together in a troop leader's backyard to practice sleeping in tents and try out a s'more or two.
- Plan a tenting overnight at a local park or GSSEM property.

Exercise

- Outdoor Yoga: grab a yoga mat and head outside. Try out a yoga exercise with a phone app, or come to one of GSSEM's outdoor yoga days.
- Hiking: Find a local trail to explore. AllTrails is a great mobile app to use if you would like help finding a trail near you.

Sunrise/Sunset Hike

- Going on a sunrise/sunset hike can be super relaxing. This can be done in your own neighborhood or by visiting a nearby hiking trail or park.
- Grab your journal and coloring utensil (crayons, watercolors, colored pencils, etc.) and explore your artistic side as you draw the sunrise/sunset.

A huge thank you to the following Girl Scouts for helping put together this patch program!

Anne, Emma, Jada, Kathleen, London, Maggie, Sarah, and Zoe.

****Patches may be pre-ordered for a limited time only.****

Pre-orders are accepted May 1-31, 2023, at www.gssem.org/curbside.
Patches will be available for pickup this summer.