



LOVE YOUR TREE

Cultivating Compassion Through Art

PROGRAM PACKET



#LoveYourTree

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Cultivating Compassion Through Art



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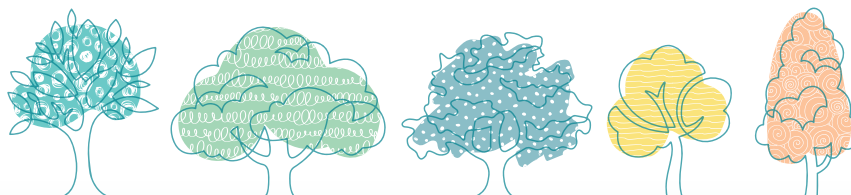
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Love Your Tree is a national arts-based program for people of all ages focused on cultivating self-compassion, body acceptance and positive mental well-being through creativity, community connection and self-reflection.

Prior to 2021, *Love Your Tree* (LYT) has focused on highlighting body diversity and helped thousands of participants use art to embrace positive body image for themselves and others. *Love Your Tree* is growing in new and wonderful ways that provide new content and make room for a celebration of diversity that extends beyond body image to overall mental wellness.

The tree is a universal symbol for growth, resilience, strength and the beauty of individual differences and diversity. Just like humans, every tree in the forest is unique, yet trees remain connected to one another and the world around them in powerful ways. Through participation in *Love Your Tree*, people of all ages are encouraged to explore the tree metaphor and share creative expressions of acceptance, gratitude for the unique form of our bodies and our lives, and appreciation of the many ways in which we get stronger and heal through connection with others.

Getting Involved Is Easy!

Step 1: Download the [Program Pack](#).

Step 2: Use the information and guided activities to create an original piece of creative art based on one (or all) of the Branches of Hope.

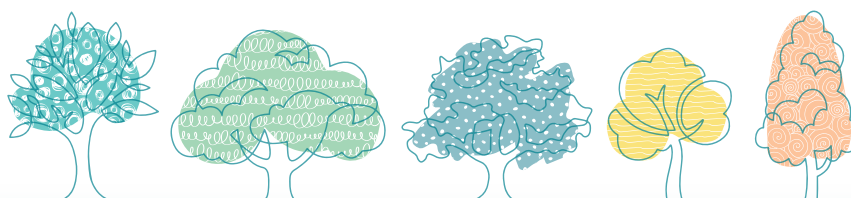
Step 3: Submit your entry at LoveYourTree.org and your artwork will be added to the national virtual art gallery.

Remember, artwork is a broad term that includes any application of your creativity and imagination. Entries may include art in all its forms. Visit the Q&A section for details about how to submit different types of art.

More Ways to Get Involved and Make an Impact:

- Host your own *LYT* art workshop for a class, nonprofit organization, workplace or community group. Simply download the [Activity Sheets](#) and [LYT PowerPoint Slides](#) (find helpful tips for hosting a workshop in the FAQ section).
- Attend quarterly events and activities. To learn more, visit LoveYourTree.org
- Download the [Branches of Hope \(PDF\)](#) and submit it with a selfie to LoveYourTree@ERCPATHLIGHT.COM.
- Send [Leaves of Inspiration \(PDF\)](#) to someone currently in treatment doing the hard work of healing from mental health struggles such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and eating disorders. Fill out and submit to LoveYourTree@ERCPATHLIGHT.COM.

For more information on deadlines and submission guidelines, be sure to read the [FAQs](#) section.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What type of artwork can I submit?

Love Your Tree is all about creativity. Traditionally, entries have been in the form of posters (paintings, drawings, etc.) or other forms of visual art such as photographs and digital design work. However, we were so inspired by all of the new submissions ([like this beautiful song](#)) that we're encouraging everyone to think outside the box! Posters, poems, collages, spoken word, TikTok videos, choreography, sculpture – as long as you can send it (or a photo or video of it) to us, it belongs in the *Love Your Tree* gallery! Here are some tips for submitting various forms of artwork.

- Visual 2D or 3D artwork (posters, paintings, drawings, graphic design, etc.)
 - Submit photo file (JPEG, PNG)
- Written works of art (poems, stories, lyrics, etc.)
 - Submit document file (.doc or PDF)
- Visual/movement performances (spoken word, choreographed dance, theatrical performance, etc.)
 - Submit video file (MP4, FLV, MOV or AVI)
- Spoken/musical performance (instrumental composition, song lyrics, etc.)
 - Submit audio or video file (MP3, MP4, FLV, MOV or AVI)

Is there a deadline to enter the program?

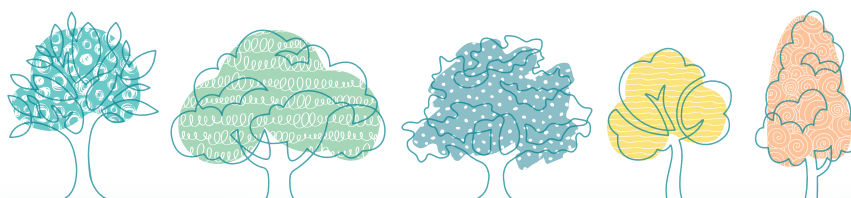
The *Love Your Tree* program will be open and active **through December 31**. If you will be hosting a workshop, submitting your own artwork or planning a *Love Your Tree* event for your own community, please keep these dates in mind. All entries for this year must be received prior to the December 31 deadline to be included in this year's online gallery. Submissions accepted outside of campaign dates are held until the campaign opens next year.

I'm not much of an artist. Are there other ways for me to get involved?

We believe everyone is an artist in their own way and it can be fun and rewarding to let creativity flow no matter what comes out of it. Don't let a lack of formal artistic ability keep you from experimenting with art. However, if you're looking for a new way to get involved or spread the positive *Love Your Tree* message with others, check out our downloadable [Branches of Hope](#) and [Leaves of Inspiration](#) affirmation cards that you can easily fill in and share on social media, submit to the campaign, or even print and give to someone who needs encouragement.

How old do I need to be to participate?

Exactly the age that you are right now. We've had the pleasure of hosting *Love Your Tree* events for preschoolers on up through senior citizens. Just like trees can keep growing and changing from tiny saplings to ancient redwoods, there's really no age limit to creativity and self-expression. However, everyone who submits artwork to the campaign is required to submit a [Participant Consent and Entry Form](#) as well. If you're under 18, that means your parent or guardian needs to consent too, so you'll need their permission to participate.



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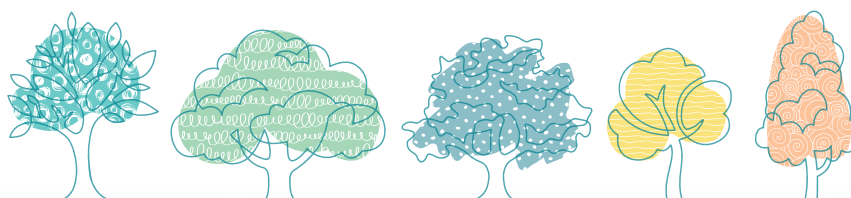


What's involved in hosting a workshop?

Workshops can look different depending on the age of your participants, how much time you have available, access to supplies or your individual goals for engagement. Workshops can be educational, relaxing, therapeutic and fun! The *Love Your Tree* campaign has easy-to-use activities and a ready-to-go PowerPoint presentation that can be helpful tools to walk participants through the *Love Your Tree* creative process. Many facilitators take these ideas and adapt them into even more beautiful creations. Over the years, *Love Your Tree* workshops have been hosted in a variety of settings:

- Middle and high school art curriculums
- Adult yoga/mindfulness classes
- Kindergarten murals
- Parent-child art workshops
- Campus-wide celebrations
- Support group activities
- Writing workshops and more

We encourage you to use the available materials here and put your own creative spin on the concepts! Remember, the only goal is to inspire self-compassion, body acceptance and positive mental well-being, and to help spread those themes through connection to the community. Need help hosting a workshop? Please email us at LoveYourTree@ERCPathlight.com.



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THE FIVE BRANCHES OF HOPE

Love Your Tree uses the metaphor of the tree and its universal symbols to help participants celebrate themselves and others across the following “branches of hope.”



Diversity & Uniqueness

Just as trees are all unique in their shapes, functions, sizes, colors, growing patterns and blooming seasons, so are we! *Love Your Tree* honors the natural beauty of diversity and the beauty of our imperfections. With their branches sprouting in different directions and roots attaching in different soils, every tree is an individual and no two are exactly alike in appearance or existence. In this way, the tree can symbolize our individuality and our distinct paths as different experiences shape us into who we are.

Examples: *“Like trees in a forest, we all grow in different ways and can find our own light.”*
“Like a tree, my body is unique and worthy of love.” *“Like a tree, I am more than my outward appearance.”*



Community & Connectedness

Trees symbolize togetherness and serve as a reminder that we are never alone or isolated. Did you know that trees can communicate with one another through root systems and need one another to grow properly in a forest system? Even across continents and oceans, trees are constantly in a cycle of connection with the air we breathe and the environments we live in. Like trees, we are deeply connected to each other and the world even beyond our own family tree.

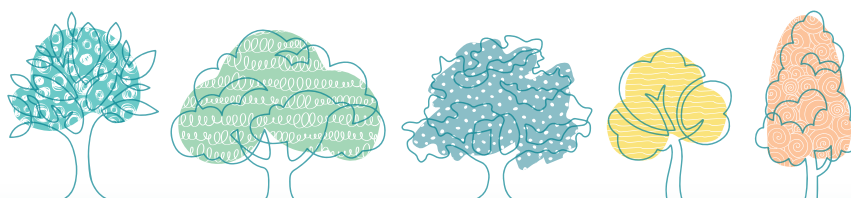
Examples: *“Like a tree, I have deep roots and am not alone in my journey.”* *“Like a tree, I am connected to my community.”* *“Like a tree, I am an essential part of something bigger.”*



Mindfulness & Joy

Walking through a forest is known to have a calming effect on mood and provides a wonderful atmosphere for mindfulness and self-reflection. Imagine all the different ways we interact with trees – relaxing in a hammock strung between two old trunks, kids climbing and laughing in the branches or simply sitting and watching the wind blow through the leaves. *Love Your Tree* uses the tree symbol to encourage rest, meditation, playfulness, peace and connection with nature as a form of self-care and joy.

Examples: *“Like a tree, I can be still.”* *“Like trees in the wind, I am relaxed with each breath.”*
“Like a tree full of playful kids, I am full of joy.”



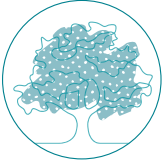
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Resilience & Change

Even when trees lose their leaves or look bare during winter, new buds appear and fresh leaves unfurl in the spring. Other trees stay green through unexpected droughts or serve as shelter through the coldest winters. Over time, trees adapt to unexpected situations, often growing over or around barriers like sidewalks and fences, sprouting new branches. This is similar to how people grow and change over a lifetime, and it reminds us that we can adapt to all types of unforeseen circumstances.

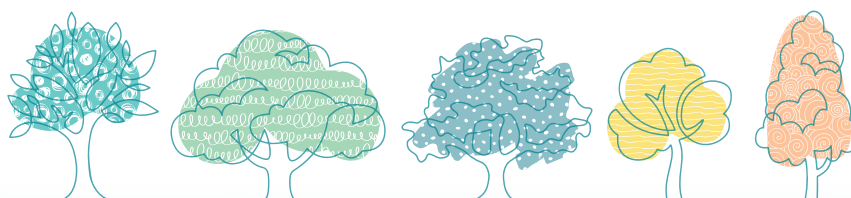
Examples: *"Like a tree, my mind is blooming."* *"Like a tree, my body changes through the seasons in my life."*



Strength & Growth

Different types of trees stand strong all over the world and display their strength in a variety of ways. Some spread their roots deep or wide into the soil to ground and stabilize themselves. Others grow right into the edges of cliffs or are perfectly suited to stay upright during a hurricane. Just as trees grow strong, we can grow stronger physically and mentally. In the same way that trees are essential for life and are used for structure, comfort, nourishment and relaxation, we too have many strengths to share with the world.

Examples: *"Like a tree, I can get through difficult storms."* *"Like a tree, I have many strengths and grow with every challenge."* *"Like a tree, my body is growing in its own wonderful way."*



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SELF-EXPLORATION AND CREATIVE BRAINSTORM: ACTIVITY SHEETS

1. What is your favorite kind of tree? _____

You can explore various images of trees in print or online. Sometimes it helps to search for photos of your favorite outdoor places or locations and see which kinds of trees exist there. Can you recall any favorite memories related to trees?

2. What is your favorite part of the tree? Circle examples from the list below or write in your own.

Roots	Leaves	Bark	Rings	Shade/Shadow
Trunk	Blossoms	Fruit	Shape	Other?
Branches	Seeds	Knots	Smell	_____

3. Write down three words to describe this part of a tree and/or describe why you like it.

(Examples: colorful, bold, aromatic, peaceful, fun to play on, etc.)

4. What is something that makes you unique or different?

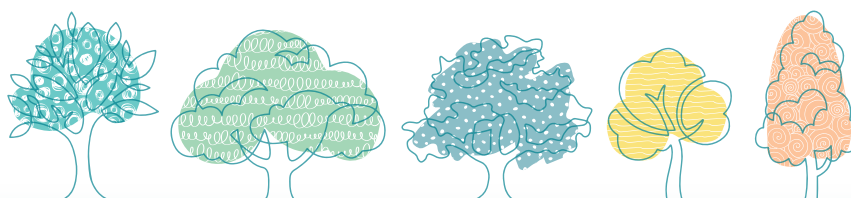
(Examples: interesting freckle pattern, great with dogs, infectious laugh, passion for traveling, etc.)

5. What are some communities or groups that are important to you? Or who are the people in your life you feel most connected to? (Examples: church groups, friends, family, advocacy organizations, neighbors, etc.)

6. What is something you are proud of or a challenge you have faced (or are facing)? Have these challenges changed you in a positive way? (Examples: seeking treatment for a mental health issue, trying a new hobby, healing from an injury, overcoming negative body image, healing from a toxic friendship, etc.)

7. What makes you feel strong or in what ways have you grown stronger over the last year?

(Examples: I feel strongest when I'm playing with my kids; I'm strong in my faith; I've started saying what I'm feeling and it makes me feel strong and confident)



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8. Where is your favorite place – or what is your favorite way – to spend time in nature?

(Examples: in my backyard around the fire pit, at the top of a mountain, listening to the waves at the beach)

9. What is your favorite part of your body? Circle examples from the list below or write in your own.

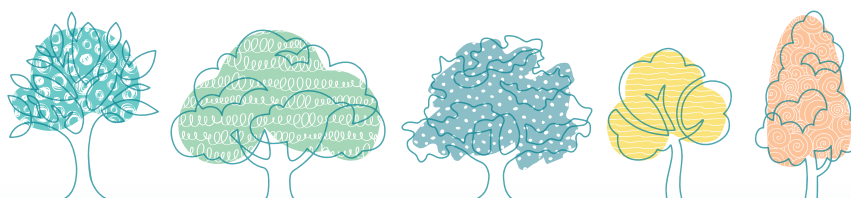
Head	Neck	Wrists	Knees	Heart
Face	Shoulders	Hands	Skin	Muscles
Eyes	Chest	Fingers	Calves	Nails
Hair	Brain	Waist	Ankles	Toes
Nose	Arms	Hips	Feet	
Lips	Elbows	Thighs	Freckles	

10. Write down three words to describe what you love about those parts of your body or what they allow you to do.

- _____
- _____
- _____

11. What are your favorite characteristics or parts of your personality? Circle examples from the list below or write your own.

Loved	Social	Intelligent	Unique	Honest
Different	Grounded	Outspoken	Authentic	Other?
Passionate	Beautiful	Confident	Reflective	_____
Comfortable	Resourceful	Fast	Artistic	
Creative	Complex	Resilient	Compassionate	
Natural	Strong	Flexible	Funny	
Respected	Determined	Trustworthy	Caring	



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12. Artist Statement: Based on your responses to the above questions, how would you complete the following statements? You can choose one or complete all of the prompts as a way to experiment and explore your *Love Your Tree* messages.

Like a tree, I am... _____

Like a tree, I will... _____

Like a tree, I grow... _____

Like a tree, I provide... _____

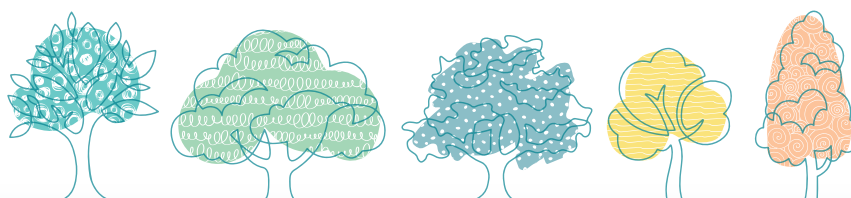
Like a tree, my body is... _____

Like a tree, I... _____

If you filled in multiple statements, review them and circle the one that you like best. It should be the one that makes you feel powerful, confident and inspired when you read it. It can help to visualize what that statement may look like as a poster.

The above statement can now serve as your artist statement. Use this phrase, along with all of your responses on the worksheet, to inspire your *Love Your Tree* poster or creative submission. Remember to incorporate the metaphor of the tree to do one or all of the following:

1. Celebrate your own resilience and/or strength.
2. Illustrate the importance of community and social connection.
3. Communicate gratitude for your body or celebrate what makes you unique.
4. Highlight the natural diversity of people and paths to healing.
5. Encourage mindfulness or self-care.
6. Challenge the media's narrow definition of success or beauty and dispel pressure to be "perfect."



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SKETCHING PROMPTS

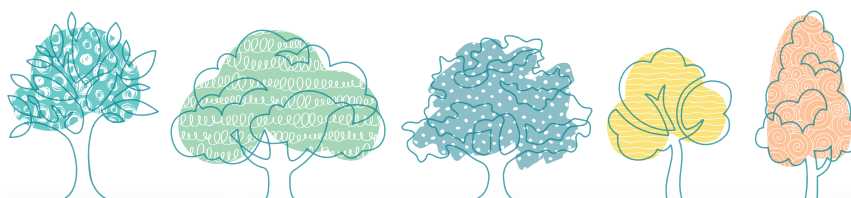
Use a separate piece of paper if you need more room.

Step 1: Quickly sketch your favorite kind of tree.

Step 2: Quickly sketch yourself, incorporating any of the characteristics that make you unique or aspects of your body and personality for which you are grateful.

Step 3: Explore the two sketches together.

Ask yourself: Are there any similarities? How can I combine the two images? Play with the possibilities!



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Step 4: Use the tree elements identified on your worksheets to represent aspects of the body.

Example: Toes and feet spreading out like roots above the ground where the tree is anchored.

Step 5: Use the tree/body metaphor to create a blended image of your artist statement.



"Like trees, our differences make us beautiful."

Liz L., Diversity

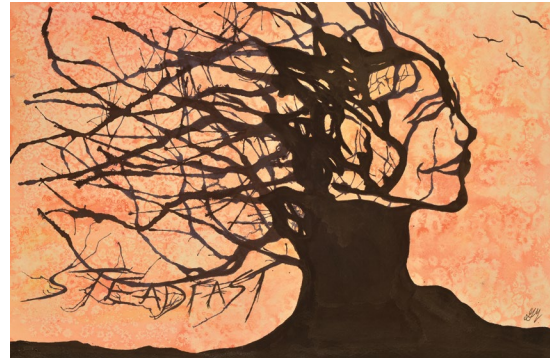
Age Category: 15-18



"Like a tree, my body...is strong."

Stella H., Luzu

Age Category: 11-14



"Like a tree, I am...steadfast."

Gavin M., Steadfast

Age Category: 15-18

Step 6: Decide what kind of art you would like to create based on your tree representation.

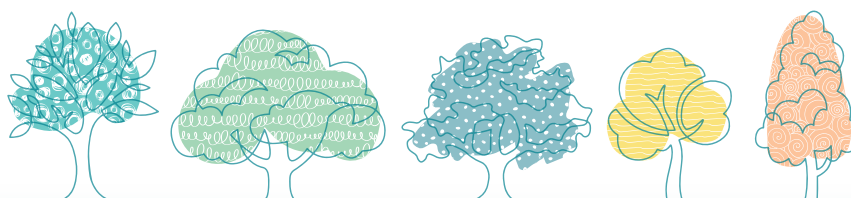
These are just some of the possibilities:

- Poster (paint, colored pencil, collage, pastels, pen and ink, etc.)
- Poem or spoken word
- Song/lyrics/musical composition
- Dance choreography
- Original photograph
- Sculpture

Step 7: Create and submit. Once your idea comes to life, don't forget to take a picture and/or upload it to the Love Your Tree virtual gallery at LoveYourTree.org

Step 8: Share your art and the Love Your Tree message with the world. Creating your own artwork is just part of the process. Art is so powerful! By sharing your message of body positivity, self-acceptance or resilience with others, you are not only helping yourself but also inspiring or empowering the people who see it to create change or overcome challenges in their own lives.

Share a link to your artwork in the online gallery via your social media channels. Be sure to use the #LoveYourTree hashtag.



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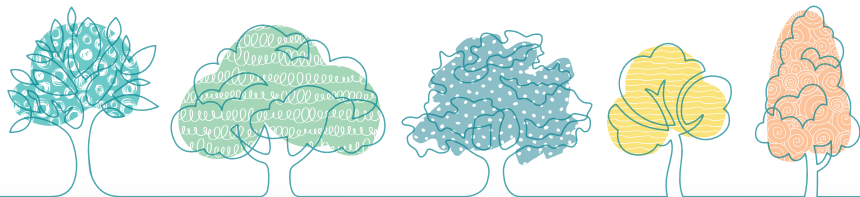
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BRANCHES OF HOPE: SELF-AFFIRMATION CARDS

Celebrate yourself and your unique journey by completing the prompts on the cards. Snap a selfie with your card and share on social media, or send a photo to LoveYourTree@ERCPATHLIGHT.COM to help shine a light on the importance of self-compassion and community connection.

Diversity and Uniqueness	Community and Connectedness
Like a tree, I am unique because...	Like a tree, I am connected to...
Resilience and Change	Strength and Growth
Like a tree, I show resilience by...	Like a tree, I grow stronger through...



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BRANCHES OF HOPE: SELF-AFFIRMATION CARDS

Mindfulness and Joy	Diversity and Uniqueness
Like a tree, I find joy in...	Like a tree, my body is...



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LEAVES OF INSPIRATION: SHAREABLE AFFIRMATION CARDS

Brighten someone’s day by completing the prompts. Upload or snap a photo and send to LoveYourTree@ERCPathlight.com, and your inspiring messages will be shared with individuals in treatment as they work to heal from depression, anxiety, eating disorders and other mental health conditions.

Diversity and Uniqueness	Community and Connectedness
<div>Like trees, our differences are beautiful because...</div> <div>~ Your #LoveYourTree Advocate</div>	<div>Like trees, we are connected by...</div> <div>Your #LoveYourTree Advocate</div>
Resilience and Change	Strength and Growth
<div>Like trees, we show resilience by...</div> <div>~ Your #LoveYourTree Advocate</div>	<div>Like trees, we show strength through...</div> <div>~ Your #LoveYourTree Advocate</div>



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LEAVES OF INSPIRATION: SHAREABLE AFFIRMATION CARDS

Mindfulness and Joy	Diversity and Uniqueness
<p>Like trees, we can find peace when...</p> <p>~ Your #LoveYourTree Advocate</p>	<p>Like trees, our bodies are...</p> <p>~ Your #LoveYourTree Advocate</p>



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PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND ENTRY FORM (Page 1 of 2)

Please fill out both pages before submitting this form.

Thank you for participating in *Love Your Tree*, a creative arts activity for people of all ages focused on cultivating self-compassion, body acceptance and positive mental well-being. Entries can be any original form of visual art, written word or expressive/performance art. Examples include, but are not limited to, posters/paintings, songs/lyrics, poems and original choreography. Appropriate entries received through December 31 will be added to the online gallery.

Ready to Submit Your Artwork?

Both options will require participants under the age of 18 to obtain parent/guardian consent.

1. Submit your artwork online at LoveYourTree.org. You will be prompted to complete the online consent form and upload a photo/file of your entry.

– OR –

2. Submit your artwork via email to LoveYourTree@ERCPATHLIGHT.COM and attach a photo/file of your entry along with this completed and signed consent form. (Teachers or workshop facilitators may also collect these forms and files and submit as a group.)

Entry Details:

Artist name: _____ Age: _____ DOB: _____

Parent/guardian name (if artist is under 18): _____

Email: _____

Location (City/State): _____

Title of artwork: _____

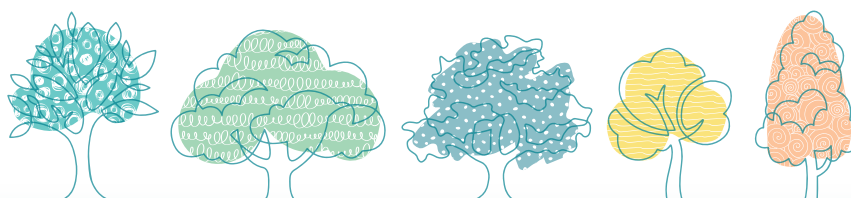
Artist statement (i.e., *Like a tree, I am...*): _____

Did you participate in a *Love Your Tree* workshop? Yes No

If so, please list the name of your facilitator/teacher: _____

Was your participation in *Love Your Tree* related to your involvement in a group/organization or school/college?

If so, include it here: _____



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PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND ENTRY FORM (Page 2 of 2)

Please fill out both pages before submitting this form.

Would you like the name of this group listed with your art in the online gallery? Yes No

Would you like to share anything else about the story/inspiration for your artwork or your experience participating in *Love Your Tree*?

Consent:

I understand that by signing below and submitting my artwork to the *Love Your Tree* campaign, I am giving Eating Recovery Center and Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Center full permission to utilize and share my submission online (website and social media) and in print format now and in the future. I understand that my first name/last initial and age may be posted with the artwork. I confirm that my/my child's artwork is an original piece of art that was designed and created solely by me (or my child) and has not been copied from other sources. I understand that submitting a piece of art does not guarantee that it will be displayed or featured on the site and that I am not being compensated in any way for my entry or participation.

Artist Name (PRINT)

Artist Signature

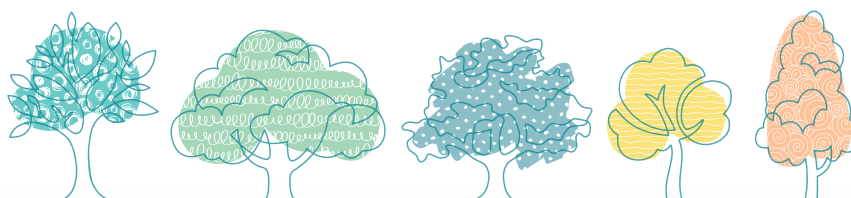
Date

If the artist is under the age of 18, please have a guardian sign here.

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date



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To learn more, visit LoveYourTree.org
Email us at LoveYourTree@ERCPATHLIGHT.com

Follow us on social media:
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LOVE YOUR TREE

Cultivating Compassion Through Art



HOSTING YOUR OWN EXHIBIT

Love Your Tree is an arts-based program for people of all ages focused on cultivating self-compassion, body acceptance and positive mental well-being through creativity, community connection and self-reflection. A crucial part of the program is the creation of artwork by individuals and groups. But an even more important part is the sharing of that artwork in the virtual art gallery at LoveYourTree.org and in your local communities.

Art is powerful! Art sparks conversations, inspires new thinking and even shifts cultural perspectives. When people see, hear or read your *Love Your Tree* messages, you are planting seeds. Conversations about mental health, body positivity and self-love will start growing where they might not have before!

What's the best way to plant more seeds and reach more people?

HOST YOUR OWN LOVE YOUR TREE ART EXHIBIT! Here's how...

1. Identify a desired exhibit space and seek permission to use it.

This could be anything from a bulletin board to a campus courtyard, hotel lobby, common area at a shopping mall, local cafe or even a local art gallery. (Tip: Store owners and restaurant managers will often agree to display posters for free if they are connected to an event that brings in business for them.)

2. Identify a date and time for your exhibit opening (and closing).

This might be a one-day special event or it might mean your group's artwork is displayed in a common space for up to a month or more.

3. Establish a plan for how you will display the posters and how many you can include.

This might involve heavy-duty tape or wall-safe tape, staples for bulletin boards, easels, fancy art hangers or display panels. It's up to you to determine what works best for your space, your budget and your community. Be sure to include labels with the artist name and poster title, which can easily be printed from a home printer.

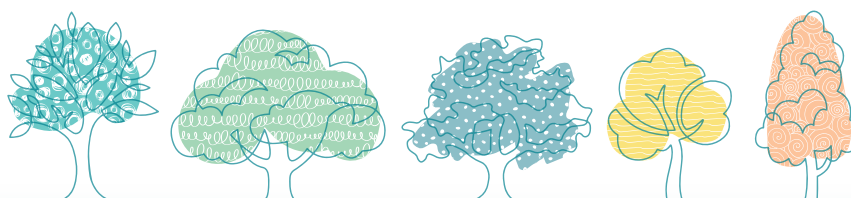
4. Recruit friends and volunteers to help you set up and clean up your exhibit.

5. Spread the word by creating a flyer or online event listing on social media or public calendars.

Start promoting your event in person (flyers, posters, invitations) and online (social media posts, calendar listings) and ask friends, family and colleagues to help spread the word.

6. One or two days before your exhibit opening, curate your *Love Your Tree* exhibit!

This generally requires help from your friends/volunteers. Larger and more complicated exhibits might require more time and effort to set up. This is also a great time to email potential guests a reminder about the event.



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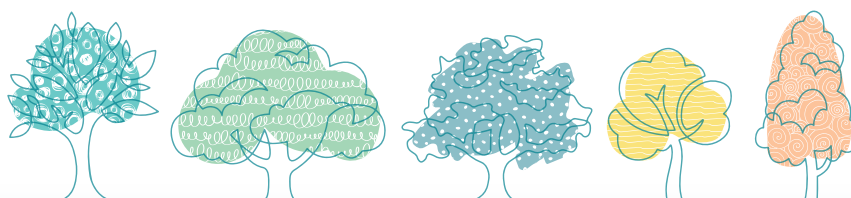


7. Host your event and have fun!

If you have a budget – or time to solicit donations – you can consider providing refreshments to your guests, playing background music or inviting a keynote speaker on mental health, body image or mindfulness to make the night extra special. Reach out to us at LoveYourTree@ERCPATHLIGHT.com and we may be able to support you in your search.

8. Take photos of your event and featured artists.

Send them to us at LoveYourTree@ERCPATHLIGHT.com and/or post them on your social media page with **#LoveYourTree**. You can also include them in thank-you emails or cards to participants, attendees and volunteers.



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