

Setting a Course for Hope, One Step at a Time



The following activity is designed to help put our 7 ways to recharge* into practice. There's no question about it: taking small steps towards action helps us break free from feelings of powerlessness and nourish our sense of purpose and hope.

Total Activity Duration 60-120 minutes

Group Rules

Freedom of choice: Participation is voluntary; nothing is mandatory.

Care: When listening, we make an effort not to judge, to stay open to others and be respectful for everyone's emotions.

Attention: We make sure that all participants have the opportunity to speak.

Group Arrangement

Invite the group to sit in a **circle or U-shape**.

Materials

- 1 stone (or other small, heavy object) for each participant
- 2 feathers for each participant
- 1 pillowcase or piece of fabric that can be tied into a bundle
- 1 individual reflection sheet for each participant ([Annex 1](#))
- 1 collective reflection sheet for the group ([Annex 2](#))
- 1 text to guide you through the meditation ([Annex 3](#))

There are thousands of ways to create hope.

Here at Mouvement Santé mentale Québec, we cultivate hope by planting small seeds of action that can help us break free from powerlessness, even in hard times. What about you?

* To learn more about how each of the 7 ways can help cultivate hope and rekindle a sense of meaning, consult the booklet *A Case for Hope – From powerlessness to inspiration*.
[\[https://mouvementsmq.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/msmq_plaidoyer_ang_web.pdf\]](https://mouvementsmq.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/msmq_plaidoyer_ang_web.pdf)



Setting a Course for Hope with the 7 Ways

Duration : 10 minutes

Background for the group

Each and every one of us has a mental health. The 7 ways offer simple strategies to take care of it. These tips are helpful no matter what: whether things are going well or facing challenges.

Reminder : How can the 7 ways nourish our sense of hope?

When we pay attention to our emotions, we can identify the need(s) behind them. Responding to those needs helps us choose a direction aligned with our values.

Taking action becomes easier when we set realistic goals, draw on our strengths, and stay open to new ideas and strategies. An important element to reaching these goals is surrounding yourself with caring people who make you feel good, as we know that supportive people and healthy environments are essential to sustaining hope.

Lastly, to have the energy needed to take action, we have to take breaks on a daily basis so that we can recharge our batteries.



Meditation : My Forest (5 minutes)

Background for the group

Participating in a group activity can bring up a wide variety of emotions. Let's take a moment to settle in the space, within ourselves and within the group, by visiting our inner forest.

Text to guide you through the meditation in [Annex 3](#).

Objectives of the meditation:

- Welcome our internal state as we arrive;
- Connect with our feelings;
- Open ourselves up to what others are feeling.

ICEBREAKER

What is hope? (5-10 minutes)

Reflecting on a quote about hope

Choose one of the quotes* below and ask the group: **What does this quote bring up for you?**

* The quotes above were taken and translated from: Nicole BORDELEAU, 2025, "Espoir," in BORDELEAU, N., S. MARQUIS, C. MICHAUD ET M. PISTORIO. *Espoirs – Quatre voix pour réenchanter le monde*, Édito, p. 155 à 218.

"Any gesture could move a star."

"What matters in the end isn't how we define it or why I believe in it. What matters is that hope exists."

"Hope and action are two sides of the same coin, and both of them are linked to our spiritual essence."

"That being said, hope in our future must not be taken as a promise of security or a guarantee when neither is assured. We must count on hope that is both lucid and rooted in action."

ACTIVITY 1

What Are You Carrying with You?

Duration : 30–45 minutes

Prompt for the group

After our meditation, let's stay in our forest for a moment and take a look at what we're carrying with us on a daily basis.

We'll take the time to identify the things we carry that are good for us and give us energy (feathers) and, by contrast, what takes up our energy (stones).

Each participant will fill out their reflection sheet ([Annex 1](#)), using the following symbols:



Feathers : What recharges you and gives you energy?



Stones : What is a challenge you're currently dealing with?

You can give extra time if participants want to personalize their sheets.

Facilitation note *To support your facilitation, here are some questions that link the activity to the 7 ways. Use as needed to support participants in their reflection.*



..... What small, achievable goal could support your bigger goals?

..... How has your morale been lately, generally speaking?

..... How do you see yourself? Do you value yourself? If so, how?

..... What recharges your batteries and makes you feel good?

..... What space do you make for new things in your life?

..... How do you honour your values?

..... How are your relationships with your social circle and family?

ACTIVITY 1

What Are You Carrying with You? (continued)

Group Discussion: Our Shared Bundle (15 minutes)

Each participant is invited to share their stones and feathers (as they feel comfortable), then symbolically place their stone and feathers in the “shared bundle” (the pillowcase or piece of fabric).

Prompt for the group

If you're carrying something heavy in life, it can feel a little lighter when you feel heard and understood by others. Sharing our feathers might inspire us to find new ways to lighten our loads.

Even though the feathers are lighter, they can soften the weight of stones and work wonders! They bring softness and poetry into our lives, and if we're ticklish, they sure can make us laugh. Metaphorically, making space for feathers can bring us unbelievable energy to help carry our stones, or even set them down for a moment.

Reflection question

- Has a feather ever helped you carry a stone?



Lightening our Collective Load

Duration : 30–45 minutes

Recognizing Your Strengths (15 minutes)

One by one, each participant is invited to answer the following question:

- **Which of your strengths has helped you overcome a challenge in the past?**

If they wish, participants can share an example and describe a time when they used their strength.



First Step (20 minutes)

Participants are invited to fill out their reflection sheets by identifying the first step they would take to lighten their load. ([Annex 1](#))

One by one, each participant is invited to share their first step and to answer the following questions:

- **What are they taking away from this reflection?**
- **What comments or observations would you like to share about the activity?**

Facilitation note *Here are some ideas of possible answers and questions to help further reflection. Use as needed to support participants as they reflect on their first steps.*

Using one of my strengths.	<i>Is there a strength that would be particularly helpful? Which one?</i>
Making more space for feathers.	<i>Is there a specific “feather” that you would like to make more space for? Which one?</i>
Focus on one stone at a time.	<i>What might your “stone” need?</i>
Ask for help (someone I know, an organization, other).	<i>Who are your allies? What services or organizations could be helpful?</i>

Setting a Course for Hope and Light

Duration : 20 minutes

This part of the workshop involves a **group discussion**.

Goal of the discussion:

- Complete the sentence shown in [Annex 2](#): “**Together, we are setting a course for hope by...**”.
- List concrete and accessible actions that the group can take.

Participants’ answers will be written on the sheet provided in [Annex 2](#). **We suggest hanging it up someplace where the group can refer back to it.** The group is invited to choose where the paper will be displayed, where it can be a daily reminder of possible sources of hope.

Facilitation note *The following questions can support your group reflection. Anyone can take a turn answering them.*

- **What about our time together today felt good to you?**
- **What do we gain by being together?**

Prompt for the group

Our discussions have helped us realize that each of us comes with our own unique burdens to carry. Taking a look at what we’re carrying has helped us connect, share and reflect within a space of mutual care. That is the gift that we gain from being together: building a welcoming community we can rely on as we continue together on our journey towards hope and light.

Let’s End on that Note: Hope and Light!

The group is invited to congratulate one another or celebrate.

Facilitation note *Possible closing gestures: the facilitator should choose what to offer participants beforehand. For example:*

- Playing a song that inspires hope
- Dancing
- Sharing a dessert
- Ending on a round of applause
- Taking a collective bow

Ideas for songs to inspire hope

Étienne Coppée

Demain il fera beau

Zaho de Sagazan

La symphonie des éclairs

Dominique Fils-Aimé

Cheers to new beginnings

Elisapie

Wolves don’t live by the rules

Pierre Kwenders

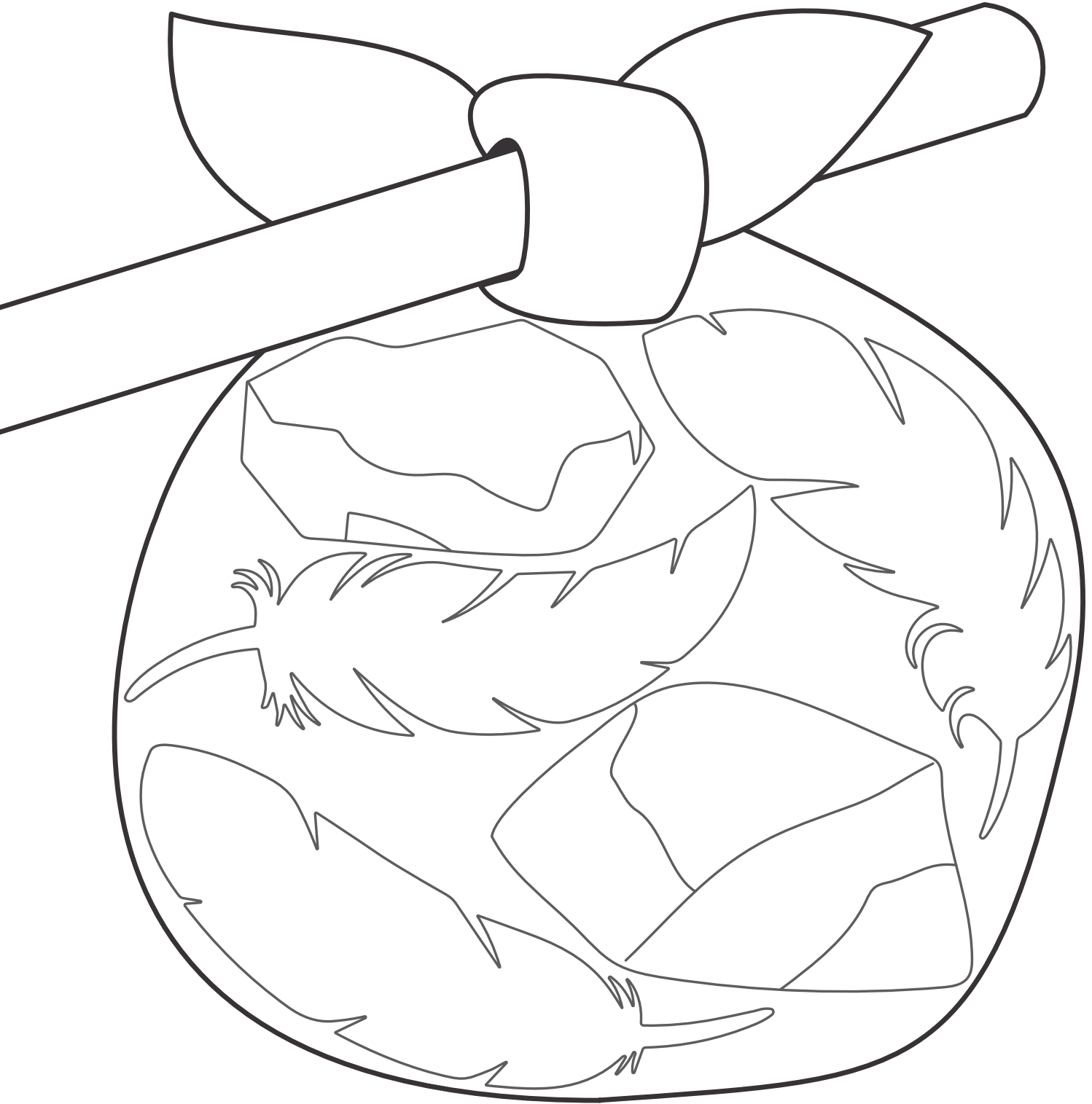
L.E.S. (Liberté Égalité Sagacité)

Émile Bilodeau avec Matiu

Mauat tsham

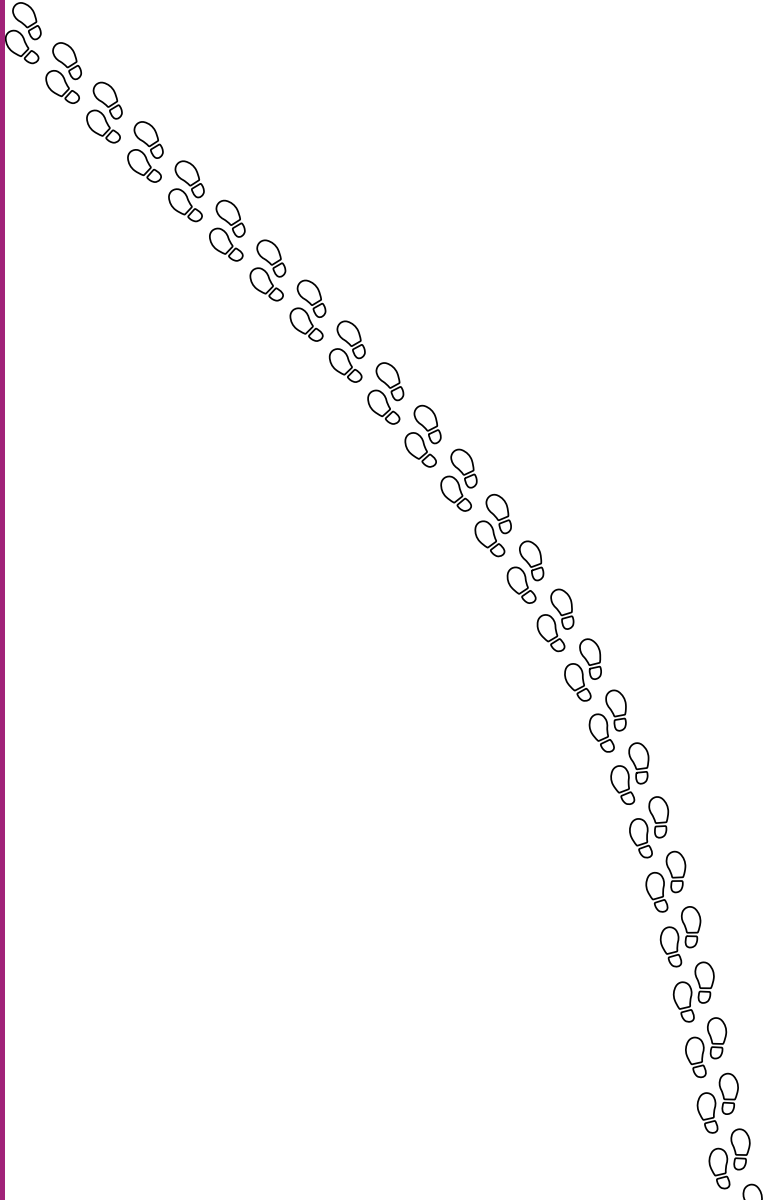
John Lennon & The Plastic Ono Band

Imagine



First step: _____





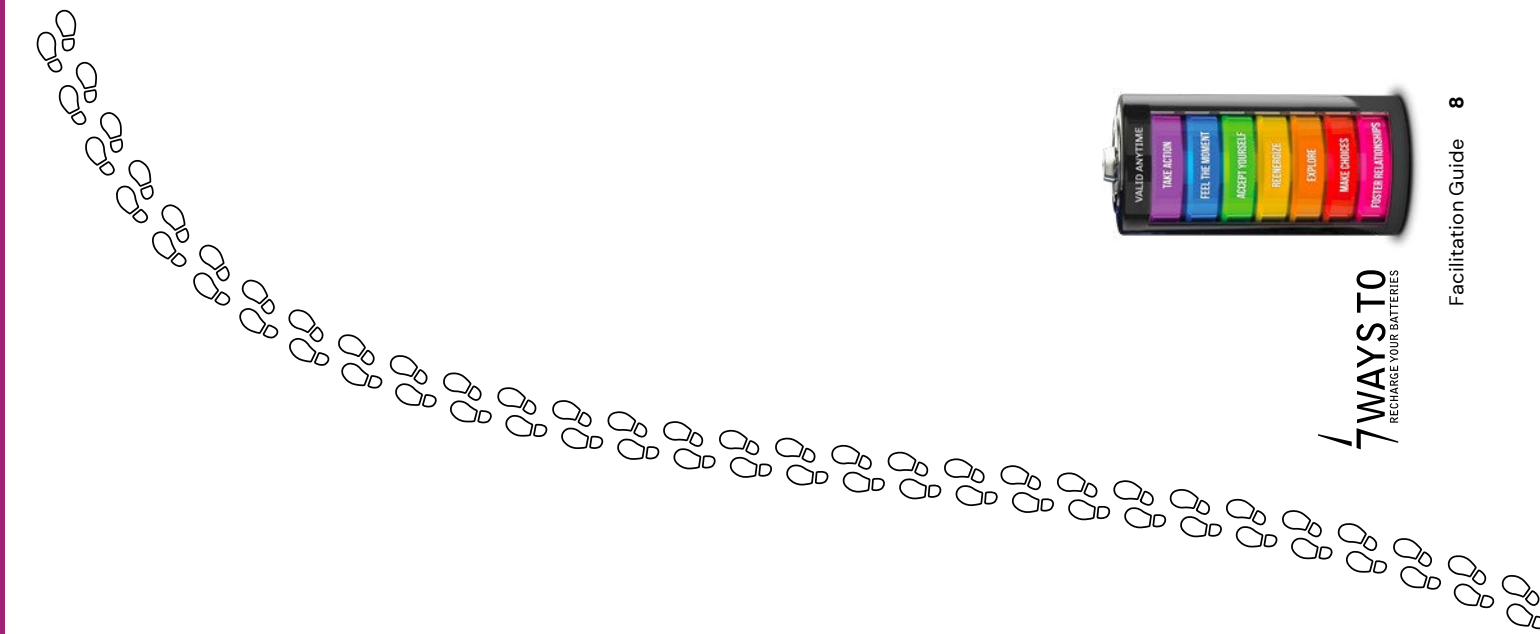
Together, We Are Setting a Course for Hope by...



MOUVEMENT
SANTÉ MENTALE
QUÉBEC
Promouvoir. Soutenir. Outiller.



7WAYS TO
RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES



The Forests Learn to Live with Themselves

Position: Sitting on a chair or standing, leaning against the wall.

Note: (1, 2) is a break time during the reading

I close my eyes. My back is straight; my hands are resting on my thighs, my feet are on the ground. I take a deep breath in (1, 2) and let out a long exhale (1, 2). Inwardly, I ask myself: How do I feel today, at the present moment? I relax my neck, my back, my shoulders and my legs. I inhale slowly and exhale deeply. I let the answer rise, spontaneously. I might feel enthusiastic, tired, at peace, stressed, etc. There is no good or bad answer. I breathe in and accept how I feel just as it is. I inhale (1, 2) and exhale slowly.

I focus on my feet, which are my roots and I anchor them deeply into the ground, the earth. I inhale (1, 2) and exhale slowly. My feet are anchored. Now, I imagine a wire above my head pulling me skyward. I inhale (1, 2) and exhale deeply.

I am now totally straight, anchored between the sky and the ground. Every breath anchors me a little more and each exhalation lifts me a little higher to the sky. I am strong and steady. I am a tree, proud of being myself, among the others surrounding me at the moment. I inhale (1, 2) and exhale (1, 2) while feeling my current inner state and everyone else's. When I feel ready, I open up my eyes and take a little moment to welcome myself entirely and the others surrounding me.

