Unload Your 'Problem Backpack'

What to Know

Sometimes you might carry problems and worries around with you. You fill an Problem Backpack and eventually it becomes too heavy for you to carry. Unresolved problems and worries can get worse, and when you are faced with another difficult situation, your backpack becomes even more overloaded!

Learning and practicing strategies to regularly empty your Problem Backpack helps you find ways to improve your mood, problem-solve, increase your ability to remain calm, think through challenging situations, and reduce anxious feelings. Once helpful strategies become part of your routine, they will become a habit and your backpack will rarely become overloaded.

The most helpful strategies may be doing activities you enjoy, like sports, art, music, hanging out with friends, time with pets, or writing. What else can you do?

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This activity will help you imagine you're carrying a backpack that's filled with different objects. The heavier objects (worries or problems, and emotions like anger and shame) weigh you down and make it uncomfortable to carry your backpack.

What to Do

On the next page, inside the backpack write down worries, problems, or upsetting emotions that are weighing you down. Fill your backpack and then color it with markers or colored pencils. Be as descriptive as you can. Really fill up your backpack!
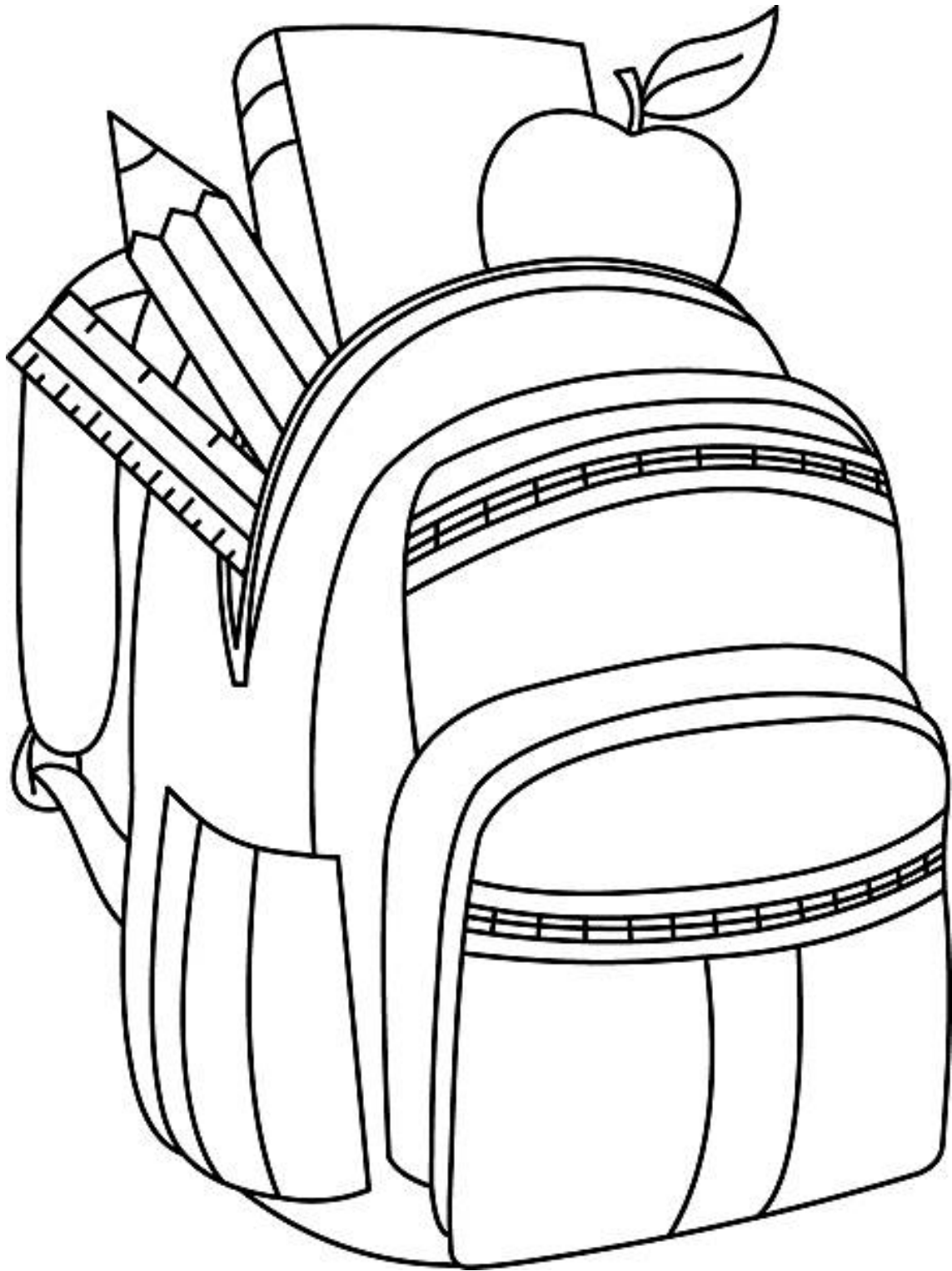
_____'s Overloaded Backpack

Imagine you are carrying the backpack. How do you feel? What do you notice?

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_____

Is the backpack too heavy? What's making the backpack uncomfortable? Be specific.

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Are you ready to unpack the backpack? Why or why not?

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Who can help you unpack it? _____

What can you do with the emotions or problems that weigh down your backpack?

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Is there anything you want to keep in your backpack? Explain.

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Does your backpack feel light and manageable now? Why or why not?

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What are some strategies you can use to make sure your backpack doesn't become overloaded?

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