

Feeling Overwhelmed?

If so, you're not alone. We all feel overwhelmed at times.



When you're feeling overwhelmed, it's important to have strategies that help you cope and feel more on top of things. Here are some tips that might help.

Take deep breaths. When you're feeling stressed out or overwhelmed, stop, breathe in deeply, count to four, and exhale. Do this for two minutes.

Take a time out. Do something that has nothing to do with school, work, or any of your obligations—read a book, listen to music, go for a walk, take a hot bath.

Learn to say no. Don't be afraid to turn down requests and say no to invitations.

Look at all you're doing. You may have taken on more than you can handle. If this is the case, try to simplify your life. Look for activities or obligations you can eliminate, shorten, or postpone. Do not sacrifice sleep or exercise to get everything done.

74% of people report feeling overwhelmed at times.



VIDEO

Also feeling stressed out? For tips on dealing with stress, watch this video.

Depression

Information and Coping Tips

We all go through times when we feel down or unhappy. For most of us, these periods are temporary and we soon feel better.

People who suffer from depression, however, have persistent, overwhelming feelings of sadness and hopelessness. These feelings affect their schoolwork, relationships, and overall well-being.

Symptoms of Depression

- ▶ feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- ▶ lack of energy
- ▶ feeling empty or numb
- ▶ loss of interest in activities and hobbies
- ▶ difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- ▶ trouble concentrating
- ▶ lack of appetite or eating too much
- ▶ thoughts of suicide

Depression is caused by a number of things, including an imbalance of brain chemicals, illness, genetics, substance abuse, and stressful life events. Individuals with depression can't just snap out of it. *People suffering from depression have nothing to be embarrassed about or to feel ashamed of.*

If you're suffering from depression, or just feeling down, there are things you can do to feel better.

Depression and anxiety often go hand-in-hand. For more on anxiety, watch this quick video.



VIDEO



SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide is, and continues to be, a major issue that touches the lives of millions of people around the world.

With knowledge and resources, we can work together to save lives and prevent suicide.

Factors that contribute to suicide risk

There is no single "cause" of suicide. The following, however, can be considered risk factors:

- ▶ mental disorder, like depression
- ▶ chronic pain or physical illness
- ▶ alcohol and/or drug abuse
- ▶ family history of suicide
- ▶ past or present trauma

Warning Signs

- ▶ talking about suicide, expressing feelings of hopelessness, and/or making comments like "nothing matters"
- ▶ making preparations, like giving away belongings or saying goodbye to family and friends
- ▶ physical changes, like sleeping more or less, eating more or less, or changes in hygiene
- ▶ signs of depression, such as withdrawing from others, or losing interest in hobbies and other parts of life
- ▶ reckless or dangerous behavior

Dealing with Trauma

Trauma is the emotional response to a frightening, stressful, and/or upsetting event.

Trauma can be a temporary reaction, or it can result in a prolonged condition, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Trauma can be caused by surviving a dangerous situation, such as a physical or sexual assault, or military combat. It can also be caused by other frightening events, such as a car accident, natural disaster, or pandemic. Regardless of the cause, feeling traumatized is not a sign of weakness, and you should not downplay it or pretend it doesn't exist.

The following are some of the symptoms associated with trauma:

- ▶ stress, anxiety, or fear that the traumatic event will happen again
- ▶ avoiding situations associated with the event
- ▶ flashbacks in response to "triggers" (reminders of the event) and/or sensory cues (smells, sights, or sounds)
- ▶ being startled by loud noises or sudden movements
- ▶ trouble focusing or thinking clearly
- ▶ depression-like symptoms, such as feelings of sadness, loneliness, and/or loss of interest
- ▶ physical symptoms, such as fatigue, sweating, and/or shaking
- ▶ forgetting things / brain fog
- ▶ nightmares
- ▶ irritability

Anger Management

Everyone gets angry from time to time. But if your anger is affecting your relationships and the quality of your life, then perhaps you should think about what you can do to manage your anger.

Are you wondering if you have an anger problem? Answer the following questions to see how many of them you answer "Yes."

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you get angry easily? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have trouble controlling your emotions? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a hard time with forgiveness? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do everyday situations (e.g., waiting in line) make you angry? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you feel bad about yourself after getting angry? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do other people often irritate you? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are others afraid of your temper? |

How many did you check "Yes?" _____

Each of the above can be an indicator that anger might be an issue for you.

For some ideas on how to manage and reduce your anger, check out the back of this card.

SELF-HARM

INFORMATION & COPING STRATEGIES

Self-harm means intentionally injuring yourself (e.g., cutting, burning, scratching) as a way to release emotional pain, stress, or feelings you can't deal with. Self-harm can also include risky behavior, such as driving recklessly, drinking, or using drugs.

CONSEQUENCES OF SELF-HARM

Self-harm can result in a temporary feeling of relief from emotional pain; however, self-harm can be very dangerous.

Here are just a few consequences of self-harm.

Continued emotional pain. The emotional relief from self-harm doesn't last, which can make the emotional pain seem even worse.

Unintentional injury. A minor injury can unintentionally turn into a major injury.

Isolation. Those who self-harm often go to great lengths to hide it. This can increase feelings of isolation and make emotional issues worse.

Risk of addiction. Like many dangerous behaviors, self-harm can become addictive. Doing it once in a while can turn into a frequent behavior, especially if the main cause of the emotional distress is not addressed.

If you have self-harmed or are aware of someone who has, know that there are ways to stop, and more effective ways to cope with emotional stress.

Feeling Lonely?

Everyone feels lonely sometimes. It's normal. But feeling lonely is no fun, particularly when it lasts for an extended period of time. When that happens, know that there are ways to feel better.



Common Reasons People Feel Lonely

- ▶ You're in an unfamiliar situation—living in a new city, going to a new school, in a new job.
- ▶ You feel different, like no one shares your interests, values, or personality.
- ▶ You feel like no one has time for you, whether it's family or friends.
- ▶ There is, or was, someone important in your life who is no longer there.
- ▶ You don't have the kinds of strong relationships you would like to have, like a best friend or a romantic relationship.

Maybe you're feeling lonely for one of these reasons, maybe it's something else, or maybe you don't know why you feel lonely, you just do.

Know that dealing with loneliness is temporary, and it's something that everyone goes through at some point. Also know that there are things you can do to change how you're feeling.

Keep reading to learn how you can feel more connected and less alone.

For ways to improve your mental health, watch this quick video.



VIDEO

ANXIETY

Information and Coping Tips

Occasional anxiety is a part of life—it's a natural reaction to events or situations that are frightening or stressful.

The start of a new school year, waiting to hear if you passed the test, made the team, or got the job—all of these things can make us feel nervous and anxious.

When we feel anxious, our bodies often react by releasing adrenaline, which can increase our heart rate and breathing. For most people, the feelings of anxiety go away when the situation that caused it is over, or the problem is resolved.

OVERLY ANXIOUS?

Some people suffer from anxiety that's persistent. Their anxiety affects their well-being and interferes with their day-to-day lives. These people often:

- ▶ worry excessively and become fearful.
- ▶ have difficulty sleeping and concentrating.
- ▶ feel irritable, restless, and on edge.

If this sounds like you, talk to a counselor or doctor. They can help you explore ways to lessen your anxiety.

WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK?

A panic attack is a sudden feeling of severe fear and distress. A person who is having a panic attack may have chest pains, nausea, sweating, shaking—and feel like something is physically wrong.

If you experience a panic attack, take deep breaths and get to a safe place until it passes.

Coping with Substance Abuse at Home

If you're dealing with substance abuse at home, you aren't alone. Over 12% of children in the U.S. are impacted by the substance abuse of a parent or guardian.

When someone you love is dealing with drug and/or alcohol addiction, it can have a huge impact on you. The following are common feelings individuals have when coping with substance abuse at home.

- ▶ embarrassed, sad, and/or angry
- ▶ feeling scared or unsafe at home
- ▶ continuously worrying about a parent or family member's safety and health
- ▶ feeling like you have to be an adult before you're ready
- ▶ having a hard time relaxing or trusting others
- ▶ feeling depressed or anxious
- ▶ thinking that it's somehow your fault, or that it's your responsibility to fix it
- ▶ feeling like you have to hide what's happening at home

You don't have to deal with the substance abuse of a loved one by yourself. There is help available. Keep reading to learn how you can cope with substance abuse at home.

DEALING WITH STRESS

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is your body's reaction to change, demands, or difficult situations.

Stress is a part of everyday life, but too much stress can have a negative impact on your life.



ARE YOU STRESSED?

	Yes	No
Do you often feel overwhelmed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have trouble sleeping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you often feel frustrated, nervous, or angry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you get a lot of headaches and/or stomachaches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a hard time relaxing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you eat too much or too little?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you feel dread or panic when thinking about everything you need to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many did you check "Yes?" _____

Each of the above can be an indicator of stress. If you feel that stress may be a problem for you, read on for some ideas on how you can reduce the stress in your life.

Top 10

Ways to Improve Mental Health

Maintaining your mental health is just as important as maintaining your physical health. Here are 10 ways to improve your mental health!

1. Get enough sleep.

The amount of sleep you get impacts your mood. Go to bed at a regular time each night and make sure you get at least eight hours of sleep.

2. Exercise.

Your body releases mood-improving chemicals when you exercise. Look for ways to integrate physical activity into your daily routine.

3. Open up to someone.

Talking about your feelings is a great way to process them. Talk to a friend or family member when you have a problem or something is bothering you.

4. Be mindful.

Mindfulness is being aware of the world around you and focusing on what you are experiencing. Throughout your day, remind yourself to be fully present, and to focus on the "now."

5. Deal with stress.

Stress can really take a toll on your mental health. To feel more empowered and less overwhelmed, make a list of the things that stress you out and come up with a plan for dealing with them.

Coping with Grief

Grief is a natural emotional reaction to loss. We generally think of grief as a reaction to the death of a loved one; however, it can also be an emotional reaction to a divorce, illness, or other significant life change.

Symptoms of Grief

Everyone experiences grief differently. The following are all normal emotional reactions to loss.

- ▶ feelings of shock, anger, guilt, and intense sadness, sometimes all at once
- ▶ difficulty eating, sleeping, and focusing
- ▶ fear and anxiousness
- ▶ physical symptoms, such as fatigue, nausea, aches and pains, weight loss or gain

Myths About Grief

Myth: There are concrete stages of grief.

You may have heard about the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and, finally, acceptance. People often feel that they must go through each of these steps in order to reach acceptance; however, everyone processes grief differently. Some people may "skip" steps, or linger on one for a long while. That's normal.

Myth: If you don't cry, you aren't grieving.

Again, grief is different for everyone, and the way people outwardly express their grief varies.

Myth: Moving on means forgetting or ignoring the loss and pain. Moving on means accepting the loss and accompanying pain, not getting rid of it. Grieving people learn to live with loss, not ignore it.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

While social media can add a lot to your life, it can also have some negative effects on your mental health. Here are some examples.

EDITED LIVES

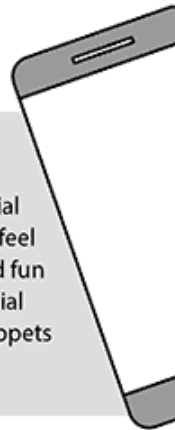
Everyone puts their best selves on social media. Sometimes, this can make you feel like everyone's life is more exciting and fun than yours. Just remember that on social media, you're only seeing selected snippets of someone's life.

SOCIAL MEDIA OBSESSION

Being obsessed with social media can make you anxious and angry when you can't use it. Social media can also take up so much of your time that your schoolwork and relationships suffer. If you are overly involved with social media, ask yourself if it is making your life better or worse.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is taking a huge toll on the mental health of so many young people today. If you are being bullied online, know that it's not your fault. Stay strong, tell someone, and ask for help. If you are someone who has been mean to others online, try to put yourself in their shoes. Think about what you're doing, and about the pain you're causing.



Understanding Mental Health

Mental health refers to your social, emotional, and psychological well-being.

While your mental health can be impacted by things you can't control, you can control how well you look after your mental health.



Why take care of your mental health?

Mental health affects how you feel day to day. When you're feeling calm, happy, and confident, you get more joy out of life. On the other hand, if you're feeling sad, angry, or anxious, regular day-to-day life can be a struggle.

Mental health affects your relationships. Your relationships with family, friends, and classmates are all impacted by how you feel. If you're unhappy, upset, or feeling down, building and maintaining relationships is much more difficult.

Mental health affects your success. Whether it's success in school, your career, or achieving a goal you've set, you're more likely to succeed when you're in a good place mentally.

Just as you take care of your physical health, you also need to take care of your mental health.

Have healthy ways to deal with stress, and talk to those you trust about any problems you have. Also understand that we all go through times when we're not feeling our best—and know that those times don't last.

Improving Your Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is your perception of your own worth. It's how you feel about yourself, positively or negatively. When you have low self-esteem, it can feel like you're not good enough, or that you don't measure up—even though that's not true.

There are many things that make you valuable, amazing, and most importantly, you. Improving your self-esteem can help you see that!

Self-Esteem Survey

How strong is your self-esteem?

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you acknowledge both your strengths and weaknesses? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Are you able to confidently say "no" when you don't want to do something? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Do you accept feedback easily? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Are you able to express your needs to others? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you feel confident most of the time? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do your positive experiences outshine your negative ones? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Do you have a positive outlook overall? |

The more "Yes" boxes you checked, the better your self-esteem likely is. If you checked several "No" boxes, or you'd just like to feel better about yourself, read on for some things you can do that may help.



For tips on building confidence, watch this quick video.

Eating Disorders

Information and Resources

People with eating disorders have an obsession with food, weight, and/or body shape.

Eating disorders tend to develop in adolescence and affect both males and females, although they are more common in females.

Common Eating Disorders

Anorexia. One of the most recognizable eating disorders, the following are characteristics of someone with anorexia:

- ▶ greatly restricts the amount of food they eat
- ▶ is underweight, often severely
- ▶ avoids eating in front of others
- ▶ is very fearful of gaining weight

Bulimia. Individuals with bulimia eat unusually large amounts of food in a short period of time and then purge (vomit, use laxatives, and/or exercise excessively).

Binge-eating disorder. This is one of the most common eating disorders. Those who binge-eat often do the following:

- ▶ eat excessive amounts of food to the point of being painfully full
- ▶ lack self-control when it comes to eating
- ▶ feel shame and guilt following eating
- ▶ eat alone or in secret

CALMING TECHNIQUES

Tips for Staying Calm and Relaxed

We all feel stressed, anxious, or angry at times. When you feel this way, it's important to have a toolbox of calming techniques to help you relax. Here are some quick and easy calming techniques.



Breathe

Breathing is the best way to feel calmer. Take a deep breath, count to four, and slowly exhale. Repeat.



Relax your body

Drop your shoulders, then flex and release all the muscles in your body, from top to bottom.



Change your thoughts

To help refocus your thoughts, visualize a bright red stop sign, say STOP, and visualize something positive.



Visualize calm

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a peaceful setting, feeling calm, relaxed, and stress-free.



Try guided meditations

With guided meditation, a voice helps you relax your body and focus your thoughts. Guided meditations are available on Spotify, and on apps like Meditation Studio and Calm.

Social Anxiety

Many people are shy—it's just a part of who they are. People who are shy often feel uncomfortable in social situations and are less likely to speak up.

Some people, however, are more than shy. They have social anxiety. These people find social situations very difficult, and they often have an intense fear of being ridiculed, judged, or rejected. Those with social anxiety may experience symptoms such as sweating, nausea, or feelings of panic in social situations.



Social Anxiety Survey

How many of the following questions will you answer "Yes"?

Yes No

1. Do you often have a hard time talking to other people, even people you know?
2. Are you afraid to speak in front of people?
3. Do you have a difficult time saying no?
4. Do you experience physical symptoms like blushing, shaking, or dizziness in social situations?
5. Do you frequently leave social events early or avoid them altogether?
6. Do you try not to make eye contact with others?
7. Do you worry about being judged or made fun of in social situations?

If you checked one or more "Yes" boxes and would like to feel more confident and comfortable in social situations, read on for some helpful tips.