

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.



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

VIDEO

10 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS



These 10 tips will help you manage stress, find your calm, and get more enjoyment out of life.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR STRESSORS. Make a list of the things that are stressing you out and determine how each can be dealt with. Having a plan will help you feel less overwhelmed and more empowered.

2. TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF. Do something that has made you feel calm and relaxed in the past. Listen to music, go for a walk, or spend time in nature.

3. IF IT'S BEYOND YOUR CONTROL, LET IT GO. If you're stressed about things you can't change, let those worries go completely.

4. RELAX. Close your eyes and imagine a relaxing scene. Breathe in slowly and slowly exhale. Repeat.

5. EAT HEALTHY. Having a healthy diet improves your mood, motivation, and mental health.

6. GET ENOUGH SLEEP. The amount of sleep you get affects your mood and your ability to tackle problems. Never sacrifice sleep to get everything done.

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.

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.

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

1. Do you acknowledge both your strengths and weaknesses?
2. Are you able to confidently say "no" when you don't want to do something?
3. Do you accept feedback easily?
4. Are you able to express your needs to others?
5. Do you feel confident most of the time?
6. Do your positive experiences outshine your negative ones?
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.



VIDEO

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

ABUSE, ASSAULT & MENTAL HEALTH

On average, over 800,000 people are victims of violent assault each year. Over 650,000 people each year are sexually assaulted, with the highest percentage of victims being under the age of 25—specifically ages 14–17.

If you've experienced any kind of assault, know that you are not alone, and that it is not your fault. Also know there are ways to move forward and to heal—and that you deserve to heal.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

You did nothing to deserve this. No one deserves to be harmed in any way. Even if you feel guilty or angry at yourself, remember, this is *not your fault*.

You are not alone. You might feel isolated or ashamed and feel apprehensive about telling someone what's happened to you. This is normal. Just know that you have nothing to be ashamed of, you are not alone, and there is support available.

Give yourself time. Know that the negative feelings you're experiencing are temporary, and you *will* feel better. Don't get frustrated if you think you can't feel or act normal right away. Give yourself time and get support.

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

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



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 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?

Do you have trouble sleeping?

Do you often feel frustrated, nervous, or angry?

Do you get a lot of headaches and/or stomachaches?

Do you have a hard time relaxing?

Do you eat too much or too little?

Do you feel dread or panic when thinking about everything you need to do?

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.

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

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 | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you often have a hard time talking to other people, even people you know? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Are you afraid to speak in front of people? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Do you have a difficult time saying no? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Do you experience physical symptoms like blushing, shaking, or dizziness in social situations? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you frequently leave social events early or avoid them altogether? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do you try not to make eye contact with others? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 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.

Top 10 Ways to Overcome Test Anxiety

A little nervousness before a test is normal, but if you're overly anxious, it's hard to do your best. The good news? There are ways to overcome test anxiety.



1. Start studying early

Have all reading done early, spread your studying out, and give yourself enough time to prepare. Cramming the night before a test or exam only increases anxiety.

2. Be prepared

Study enough to feel confident you know the material. Being well prepared increases confidence and helps reduce test anxiety.

3. Visualize taking the test

The day before the test, visualize yourself confidently walking into the classroom, taking the test, and correctly answering the questions.

4. Use relaxation techniques

Before you begin a test, take a deep breath. Breathe in, count to four, and breathe out. Repeat. This will help you calm down and relax. For more calming techniques, watch this short video.



VIDEO



Mental Health Help & Resources

We all go through difficult times in our lives. If you are struggling or going through a tough time now, just know that help is available!

You don't need to go it alone

There are many people who care about you and want to help you—you just need to reach out and talk to them. Talk to a parent or relative, your school counselor, a trusted teacher, or your doctor. If you reach out for help, you *will* feel better.

Know that you are strong

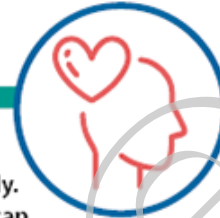
Reaching out for help is *not* a sign of weakness. It is a sign of strength and perseverance.

That said, asking for help is not always easy. Here is some advice on how to reach out when you're unable to cope on your own.

- ▶ **Decide who can best help you.** Sometimes you just need someone to talk to, and other times you may need more advanced mental health care. Whether it's a parent, friend, counselor, or other professional, think about who is in the best position to help you feel better.
- ▶ **Be direct.** When you need help, get right to the point. A good place to start is, "I'm having trouble with something and I'm hoping you can help me."

Know that difficult times will pass and that things will get better.

Having a Healthy Body Image



Body image is the way you think and feel about your body. These thoughts and feelings can be positive or negative—and they can change from day to day. Here is how you can learn to love what you see in the mirror.

Accept yourself

Self-acceptance means becoming comfortable with all parts of yourself, even the parts you don't like or fear that others won't like. When you accept yourself, you can be more authentic and you just feel good about who you are.

If this sounds hard to do, you're right. It's not easy to accept the things we'd like to change about ourselves. We all have flaws, faults, and failures, and we all struggle to accept certain things about ourselves. Self-acceptance takes work, but it's the first step to learning to love your body.

Take care of your body

When you take care of your body, you feel better inside and out.

Personal hygiene. Good personal hygiene improves your appearance and helps you feel more confident.

Healthy habits. A healthy diet, plenty of sleep, and regular exercise all contribute to your health and well-being—and help you feel good about your body.

ACCEPTING YOURSELF

No one loves everything about themselves all of the time. It's normal to feel insecure at times about things like your looks or abilities, or perhaps just who you.

Self-acceptance is a lifelong journey—a journey that will lead to a happier, healthier life.

WHAT IS SELF-ACCEPTANCE?

Self-acceptance means being able to accept all parts of yourself, even the parts you don't like, or fear others won't like or understand. When you accept yourself, you can present your authentic self to the world and feel good about who you are.

If this sounds hard to do, you're right. It's not easy to accept the things we'd like to change about ourselves. We all have flaws, faults, and failures, and we all struggle to varying degrees to accept certain things about ourselves. Self-acceptance takes work.

People who have trouble accepting themselves unconditionally often find that this affects their relationships, schoolwork, and mental health. If you struggle with self-acceptance, know that there are things you can do to feel better.

Self-acceptance doesn't mean that you don't try to improve yourself. While you are who you are, you want to work to create the best version of you.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

When we think about our health, we most often think of diet and exercise. However, having positive connections with others is very important for our health and well-being.



CONNECTING WITH OTHERS IS IMPORTANT

Studies show that people who have positive, healthy relationships have less stress and fewer illnesses. They also recover from injuries and illnesses more quickly. Because social connections are vital to our physical and mental health, it's important to take the time to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING TIPS

Some people connect easily with others. Most of us, however, have to work at developing and maintaining relationships. *Here are some tips for strengthening and improving your relationships.*

- ▶ Be a good listener. Regardless of what's going on around you, give the person you are with your complete attention.
- ▶ Make time for the people who are important to you, regardless of how busy you are.
- ▶ Be supportive, loyal, and trustworthy. Stand up for those you care about, and never betray their trust.
- ▶ Let others know how important they are to you.



Healthy Relationships

Having positive relationships with others is tremendously important to our health and well-being. Relationships can make a huge difference in the quality of our day-to-day lives.

Here are some tips for making sure your relationships are happy and healthy—and making your life better.

Healthy Friendships

Friends are some of the most important people in our lives. They support us, make life more fun, and help us grow.

So how do you know if someone is a good fit for you as a friend? Ask yourself these questions.

- ▶ Do we share similar interests?
- ▶ Do we laugh and have fun together?
- ▶ Do we agree on what's right and wrong?
- ▶ Do we respect and trust each other?
- ▶ Can I be my true self around this person?

Of course, friendships aren't easy and fun all the time. Disagreements happen. But if a friend...

- ▶ tells you to do things you don't want to do
- ▶ is mean to you
- ▶ brings a lot of drama into your life
- ▶ makes you feel bad about yourself
- ▶ talks about you behind your back

...then it's probably time to rethink that friendship.

Friends who consistently upset you or make you feel bad are not worthy of your friendship.



Supporting Others

Most people like helping others when they are in need. But sometimes we don't know how to help, or we feel like it's too much for us to handle. Here's how you can offer support to others while protecting your own mental health.

Be calm and non-judgmental

If someone you care about is having a hard time and comes to you for support, listen calmly, and try not to appear surprised, worried, or upset. When people are having a tough time, sometimes they just want someone to listen who they know will not judge them.

Recognize your limits

If you have a lot going on in your own life, you might not be able to take on someone else's struggles—or you might not be comfortable doing more than listening or offering a hug. It's important to remember that while you may want to help, you're not a mental health professional.

Practice self-care

You are only able to help another person with their problems if you're in a strong place mentally. *Your own mental health should always be a priority.* If helping another will cause you stress or anxiety, or cause a problem for you, be honest and help your friend get support from a counselor or another trusted adult.

For tips on ways to relax and take care of your mental health, watch this quick video.



VIDEO

Gratitude

Tips for Feeling More Grateful Every Day

Practicing gratitude can help increase happiness, improve mental health, and get you through the tough times.

Here are some simple tips on how you can practice gratitude in your everyday life.

- 1** **Appreciate the little things.** You don't have to experience huge, amazing things to practice gratitude. Learn to notice and appreciate the little things, like having good weather on a day you're spending outside, your favorite song coming up on shuffle, or a pet doing something cute.
- 2** **Practice mindfulness.** Take a quiet moment to relax your body, breathe deeply, and think about a few of the things you're grateful for. Close your eyes and picture those things in your mind.
- 3** **Keep a gratitude journal.** At the end of each day, write down three things you were thankful for that day.
- 4** **Help others.** Doing things for others helps you be more grateful for what you have. It also makes you feel good.
- 5** **Spend time with loved ones.** Focus on the people in your life who are caring and encouraging. Acknowledge and be thankful for their support.

Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques are simple things you can do to refocus your attention whenever you're feeling anxious, stressed, depressed, or distracted. Grounding techniques bring you back to the present and help you feel calmer and more focused.

You can use grounding techniques almost anywhere. Here are some for you to try.

Breathe deeply

Inhale slowly, and slowly exhale. Think or say aloud the words *in* and *out* as you breathe, or pay attention to your stomach rising and falling with your breath.

Touch items near you

Run your fingers along the surface of your desk, or touch the texture of your clothes. In your mind, try to describe the way they feel. Are they smooth? Cold? Fuzzy? Soft? Challenge yourself to think of as many descriptors as you can.

Eat or drink something

Focus your attention on eating or drinking something, even if you're just chewing a mint or drinking water. Eat or drink slowly, and think about the taste and texture.

Move your body

This is a great way to ground your thoughts and find calm. Try stretching, walking, running, or a quick yoga pose, and focus on the way your muscles feel.

Dealing with Disappointment

Disappointments and setbacks happen to everyone. How you deal with them is what makes the difference.



Here are some tips on how to cope with disappointments and setbacks in a healthy way.

- 1. Accept that disappointments happen.**
No one breezes through life with everything going their way all the time. Disappointments are a part of life, and while dealing with them can be difficult, they often provide the best opportunities for growth.
- 2. Reframe negative situations.**
When there's something in your life that didn't work out as you hoped, make an effort to look for something positive. For example, not getting to hang out with a friend because they got sick might give you a free evening to watch a favorite movie.
- 3. Change your self-talk.**
When a disappointment or setback happens, you can get upset, get angry, or blame others, or you can decide that you're going to accept it and move on. Instead of, "I'll never get over this," tell yourself, "I'm okay. I can handle this."
- 4. Keep it in perspective.**
If you're dealing with a major disappointment, it can feel like it's the end of the world. At these times, it's important to put things in perspective and not let your disappointment become even more important than it is.

GETTING MOTIVATED



We all get stuck sometimes, and it can be hard to keep going when you're feeling stressed out, discouraged, or overwhelmed.

Here are some tips to help you find ways to get, and stay, motivated.

PRACTICE POSITIVE SELF-TALK

We all have an "inner voice," and when things aren't going well, that voice can be negative and critical. You can help yourself stay positive and motivated just by changing your "self-talk."

Replace, "I'm terrible at math. I don't want to do this" with, "I'm smart - I can do this." Changing how you think will change how you feel and act.

SET GOALS

Goals give you direction and purpose. They help you decide where you want to go and what you need to do. Have a list of both short-term goals (such as get a B on Monday's biology test) and long-term goals (such as graduate with a 3.0 GPA).

USE MOTIVATING "SELF-NOTES"

Write motivating words, ideas, and/or quotes on sticky notes. Put these notes anywhere you're likely to see them.

MOVE WITH POSITIVE ENERGY

Stand tall and walk with confidence. If you act positive, you may find that you feel more positive.

TECH ADDICTION

STATS & TIPS FOR TEENS

There is so much to love about technology, but like everything in life, nothing is perfect. While the internet and social media might be important to you, as the following stats from a recent study show, they can also be addictive.

The average smartphone user spends almost **3 hours** a day on their phone.

3 HOURS

56%

56% of teens feel anxious or lonely without their smartphone.

52% of teens use their phones while hanging out with friends.

52%

41%

41% of teens feel overwhelmed by the notifications they receive.

60% of teens would rather communicate with friends online than in person.

60%

52%

52% of teens want to cut their smartphone usage.

TOP 10 MENTAL HEALTH TIPS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

Practices, games, academics, social life—as a student-athlete, you have a lot going on. Here are some tips on how you can enjoy your sport and take care of your mental health.

- 1 HAVE A LIFE BALANCE.** Take time every day to do something you enjoy that doesn't involve school or sports. Take a walk, listen to music, or just relax.
- 2 DEAL WITH STRESS.** Playing a sport can be stressful. You have a lot to keep up with and there can be pressure to do well. Have ways to deal with stress that work for you.
- 3 MANAGE EXPECTATIONS.** Work hard to do your best, but don't expect to be perfect. You will make mistakes and have bad games or matches, and that's okay.
- 4 ASK FOR HELP.** If you're struggling in a class or feeling overwhelmed, get help. There are people available to help you. You just need to ask.

STAYING STRONG



When You're Being Bullied

Everyone has been on the receiving end of a rude comment or mean joke, and it can feel horrible. Being made fun of, excluded, or outright bullied can take a major toll on your self-esteem and mental health.

If you're being bullied, you are not alone, and you are not powerless.

This is not your fault

If you are the target of a bully, it's important to remember that this is not your fault. No one deserves to be bullied, harassed, or intimidated. You deserve to be treated with respect at all times. Never forget that.

Don't take it personally

This is easier said than done, especially if it seems like bullies often target your personal insecurities. Just remember that it's the bully who has the problem, not you. Although it is hard to feel sorry for a bully (and you don't need to), keep in mind that if bullies were truly happy, they wouldn't need to hurt others.

This is temporary

It can seem like bullying is constant and long-lasting, especially if you're being bullied online. Just know that this situation *will* end, these days *will* pass, and things *will* get better.

Your Physical & Mental Health

There is a strong connection between your mind and your body. If you don't feel good physically, your mental health will suffer—and vice versa.



The Mind-Body Connection

Here are just two ways your mind and body can influence each other:

► Your immune system

Studies show that there is a link between your mental health and your immune system. Good mental health means fewer illnesses.

► Fatigue

When you feel good mentally, you have more energy and motivation. When you're feeling down or stressed, you're more likely to feel fatigued and listless.

Caring for Your Physical Health

Doing the following will help keep your body healthy and strong.

► Get enough sleep.

Have a good morning and nighttime routine, and try to get 8–10 hours of sleep a night.

► Have a healthy diet.

Make sure that you eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains.

► Get moving.

Regular exercise is key to a healthy body *and* a healthy mind. Exercise is a natural mood-booster and it helps ensure that your body's systems function at their best.

Being Fit and Active

Tips for Students

Your body is designed to move and be active—to walk, run, work, and play. Having an active lifestyle will improve your physical and mental health, and help you look and feel your best!



Benefits of exercise

Social media, streaming services, and video games provide us with a variety of engaging activities—and while these activities can be fun, they do not promote an active lifestyle.

It's important to spend part of each day being active and to limit the amount of time you spend looking at TV, phone, and computer screens.

When you are active and fit, you...

- have more energy.
- are better able to control your weight.
- have stronger muscles and bones.
- can cope better with stress and anxiety.
- have a healthier heart.
- are able to sleep better.
- have a stronger immune system.

Exercise improves both your physical and mental health. For more ways to improve your mental health, watch this video.



VIDEO



The Importance of Sleep

While getting the right amount of sleep is necessary for people of any age, it is especially important for teens. Your physical, mental, and emotional well-being depend on it. Keep reading to find out why sleep matters, and what you can do to make sure you get enough sleep.

Sleep affects your mental health

There's a reason why you feel grouchy when you're tired. Not getting enough sleep increases instances of irritability, anxiety, moodiness, frustration, and stress. When you get enough sleep, you just feel happier and calmer.

Adequate sleep is particularly important for anyone dealing with a mental health issue such as anxiety or depression.

Sleep affects your schoolwork

Sleep helps the brain function normally. Students who get enough sleep have an easier time paying attention in class, thinking clearly, and focusing on tasks.

Sleep influences decision-making

When teens don't get enough sleep, they are more likely to make poor decisions and engage in risky behaviors. Adequate sleep helps you control your impulses and think more clearly.

Sleep impacts your physical health

Getting enough sleep improves your immune system and helps all of the systems in your body work the way they should.

Healthy Eating

Information for Students

Part of having a healthy mind and body is being careful about what you put into it. In order to feel your best, it's important to pay attention to what you eat.



The benefits of a good diet

There are many benefits to eating a healthy diet. When you choose to fuel your body with healthy foods, you will:

- ▶ have more energy.
- ▶ sleep better.
- ▶ maintain a healthier weight.
- ▶ have better skin, hair, and nails.
- ▶ support your cardiovascular system.
- ▶ have stronger bones and muscles.
- ▶ be more alert and focused.
- ▶ have fewer illnesses.
- ▶ improve your mental health.

When you eat a healthy diet, you feel better, look better, and have the energy you need to make the most of every day.

Stress can lead to unhealthy food choices. For tips on healthy ways to cope with stress, watch this video.



VIDEO

Staying Well

Info & Tips for Students

While your body has amazing powers to heal and keep you safe from disease, it's important that you do whatever you can to keep your body and immune system strong and healthy. Here's what you can do.

Get enough sleep

Teens need 8–9 hours of sleep each night, but with their busy schedules, many do not get the amount of sleep they need.



To help you get to bed on time, try building sleep into your daily schedule, along with all of your other obligations.

Eat well

Eating a balanced diet will provide you with the nutrients you need to stay strong and healthy.



- ▶ Keep healthy snacks at home and in your backpack, such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts.
- ▶ Make sure you drink plenty of water and stay hydrated.
- ▶ If you are someone who pays close attention to their weight, make sure that it doesn't go too far or cause unhealthy eating habits.

For information on eating disorders, watch this quick video.



VIDEO

SAYING NO TO ALCOHOL, DRUGS, & TOBACCO

5 REASONS TO SAY NO

1. YOUR HEALTH

Whether it's a short-term issue like being hungover or a long-term health issue like lung or liver disease, substance abuse can take a toll on your body.

2. CONTROL AND JUDGMENT

Using alcohol or drugs can cause you to lose control and make bad decisions, and possibly do things you know to be wrong or harmful.

3. RISK OF ADDICTION

When you use drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or vapes, you run the risk of becoming addicted. Addiction can be dangerous and expensive. It can also hurt your relationships and your chances for success.

4. CONSEQUENCES

Whether it's getting a DUI, being charged with illegal drug possession, dealing with an addiction, or a drop in grades, there are often negative consequences to using alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.

5. YOUR FUTURE

You have your whole life ahead of you. You don't want anything to get in the way of your goals and the life you want. So do yourself a favor and don't put unnecessary road blocks in your way.

IT ISN'T ALWAYS EASY

Making smart decisions about alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and vaping can be hard—and more complicated than “just saying no.” Keep reading for tips on how you can stay smart and safe.