Supporting our Shamrocks

Mental Health Awareness

Reality: everyone has been through a 2-year global pandemic. Everyone’s lives have changed. Everyone is dealing with stress and uncertainty, adults included. You are not alone. Brotherhood.

Things can be especially difficult when you are going through a major life transition: freshmen and sophomores starting at a new school, juniors and seniors transitioning to college, jobs, careers, etc. Be aware of this.

Strategies for dealing with stress, anxiety, uncertainty:

1. Take 5 slow, deep stomach breaths, in through your nose and into your stomach. Focus on your breath, especially the exhale. Relax your body on the exhale. Count out 5 of these deep breaths. This resets your system. Do this over and over throughout your day. Count out 5 breaths while walking down the hall, while driving home, before class. Practice this. When you feel stressed or anxious, take 5 breaths.

2. 5-4-3-2-1 (see page 2)

3. Explore how you feel and label it. “This is me feeling irritated.” “This is what my anxiety feels like.” “This is how I feel when I’m overwhelmed.” Where is it in your body? What does it feel like? Sit with it. “I feel ______ when ______ happens.” Recognizing and labelling the feeling takes away some of its power.

4. Get up and get out. Do something physical. Get your heart pumping and blood flowing. Go for a walk, a run, workout, do some jumping jacks, sit-ups, anything physical. Don’t isolate. Do something else. Find other people: go to a store, a library, take a train or a bus somewhere. Develop your resiliencies (#6)

5. Start a journal. Write about your day. What did you do, what did you think, how did you feel? What happened today and how did you respond? Writing about our experiences is often therapeutic.

6. Connect with someone. Tell a friend/parent what you’re going through and how you’re feeling. Explain your struggle to someone else. And, listen to others’ experiences. Get out of your head by helping someone else.

7. Recognize your resiliencies. You have strengths and interests and abilities. This is a great time to develop them. Pursue your interests and passions. Redirect your energy towards whatever engages you in a healthy way. Do you: run, lift, workout, meditate, pray, write, perform, act, sing, dance, draw, paint, read, listen, tell stories, make people laugh, love music, build things, cook, clean,…? Do more of it. Get better at it. Change your focus.

8. Step back to gain some perspective. The 4 years of high school go by fast. “This too shall pass.” You will get through this difficult period.

9. Take a break from screens. Turn off your phone. Be aware of time spent on social media.

If negative feelings persist, make sure to tell an adult. Tell your parents, a teacher, a counselor, or coach that you’re struggling and might need some help.

If you are concerned about a friend or other student, try to connect with them. Ask them how they’re doing. If your concerns persist, tell an adult about it. Has their behavior or attitude changed significantly?

The holidays. There is added pressure to be happy. Family time can be difficult.
Before starting this exercise, pay attention to your breathing. Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and into your stomach. Slowly exhale through your nose. Relax on the exhale. Let go of any tension you feel in your body.

Count out 5 of these slow, deep breaths. Then:

- Describe FIVE things you see around you. It could be a chair, a rug, anything you can see nearby. Briefly describe it. “I see a brown rug with squares”, “I see a couch with three large cushions” “I see...”

- Describe FOUR things you can touch. It could be your fingertips, your pantleg, a pillow, or the ground under your feet. Become aware of it. “I feel my fingers rubbing together”, “I feel my feet in my shoes” “I feel...”

- Describe THREE things you hear. This could be any external sound. Name it: “I hear the lights humming…”, “I hear cars out in the street”

- Describe TWO things you can smell.

- Describe ONE thing you can taste. What does the inside of your mouth taste like—gum, coffee, something you ate for lunch?

This exercise gets you in touch with your immediate environment and can help redirect your awareness away from your anxiety.

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Teen depression links:

https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/teen-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20350985
https://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/teen-depression

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available 24 hours: 800–273–8255
Well-respected practices that offer services:

**Northside of Chicago:**
- [https://www.pinnaclecounselingchicago.com/](https://www.pinnaclecounselingchicago.com/)
- [https://liveoakchicago.com/](https://liveoakchicago.com/)
- [https://www.introspectivefamilytherapy.com/](https://www.introspectivefamilytherapy.com/)
- [https://www.fpschicago.com/](https://www.fpschicago.com/)
- [https://www.centeredtherapychicago.com/](https://www.centeredtherapychicago.com/)

**Loop:**
- [https://flemingfamilytherapy.com/](https://flemingfamilytherapy.com/)
- [https://www.skylightcounselingcenter.com/](https://www.skylightcounselingcenter.com/)
- [https://www.chicagoinstituteforchange.com](https://www.chicagoinstituteforchange.com)
- [https://watchhilltherapy.com/](https://watchhilltherapy.com/)
- [https://www.core-chicago.com/](https://www.core-chicago.com/)

Psychology Today and Therapy Den websites have a "therapist finder" where you are able to search for a therapist in your zip code: [https://www.therapyden.com/](https://www.therapyden.com/)  

**Family Therapy service referrals:**

- Augustyn Family Services, [https://www.augustynfamilyservices.com/](https://www.augustynfamilyservices.com/), 773-355-8617  
- Bridgepoint Psychology Center, [https://www.bridgepointpsychology.com/](https://www.bridgepointpsychology.com/), 773-349-2466  
- Kate Kadleck, MSMT, at Rose Family Therapy, [http://www.rosefamilytherapy.com/kate-kadleck](http://www.rosefamilytherapy.com/kate-kadleck)  
- The Family Institute at Northwestern University, [https://www.family-institute.org/](https://www.family-institute.org/)  
- Center for Comprehensive Neurobehavioral Care, [https://www.ccncchicago.com/](https://www.ccncchicago.com/), 312-285-2323  
- Chicago Psychological Health Center, [https://www.chicagophc.com/staff](https://www.chicagophc.com/staff), 773-469-6675  
- Formative Psychological Services, [https://www.fpschicago.com/](https://www.fpschicago.com/), 872-241-9337  
- Head/Heart Therapy, [https://headhearttherapy.com/](https://headhearttherapy.com/), 773.892.1933  
- Lakeview Center for Psychotherapy, [https://www.lakeviewtherapy.com/](https://www.lakeviewtherapy.com/), 773-525-3322  
- LifeWorks Psychotherapy Center, [https://www.lifeworkspsychotherapy.com/](https://www.lifeworkspsychotherapy.com/), 847-568-1100  
- Pinnacle Counseling, [https://www.pinnaclecounselingchicago.com/](https://www.pinnaclecounselingchicago.com/), 3122989846  
- Rea, Nicole, LCSW, [https://ccptherapists.com/nicole-rea](https://ccptherapists.com/nicole-rea), 708-996-0699  
- Resilience Psychological Services, [https://www.resiliencechicago.com/](https://www.resiliencechicago.com/), 312-600-3935  
- Wildflower Center for Emotional Health, [https://wildflowerllc.com/](https://wildflowerllc.com/), 312-809-0298

**Recommended local psychiatrists:**

- **Marc Sandrolini** (Oak Park) 312/492-4540  
- **Susan Scherrer** (River Forest) 708/366-0300  
- **Ralph Cusick** (Hinsdale) 630/325-8893  
- **Dan Martinez** (Lombard) 630/261-1210  
- **Maria Ponton** (Berwyn– Filmore Center)