

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.

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5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1

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:

- 5 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...”*
- 4 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...”*
- 3 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”*
- 2 Describe TWO things you can smell.
- 1 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.

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

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Well-respected practices that offer services:

Northside of Chicago:

<https://www.pinnaclecounselingchicago.com/>
<http://www.amandaatkinschicago.com/>
<https://liveoakchicago.com/>
<https://www.introspectivefamilytherapy.com/>
<https://www.fpschicago.com/>
<https://www.centeredtherapychicago.com/>

Loop:

<https://flemingfamilytherapy.com/>
<https://www.skylightcounselingcenter.com/>
<https://www.chicagoinstituteforchange.com>
<https://watchhilltherapy.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.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists?>

Family Therapy service referrals:

Augustyn Family Services, <https://www.augustynfamilyservices.com/>, 773-355-8617
Bridgepoint Psychology Center , <https://www.bridgepointpsychology.com/>, 773-349-2466
Kate Kadleck, MSMFT, at Rose Family Therapy, <http://www.rosefamilytherapy.com/kate-kadleck>
The Family Institute at Northwestern University, <https://www.family-institute.org/>
Center for Comprehensive Neurobehavioral Care , <https://www.ccnchicago.com/>, 312-285-2323
Chicago Psychological Health Center, <https://www.chicagophc.com/staff>, 773-469-6675
Formative Psychological Services, <https://www.fpschicago.com/>, 872-241-9337
Head/Heart Therapy, <https://headhearttherapy.com/>, 773.892.1933
Lakeview Center for Psychotherapy, <https://www.lakeviewtherapy.com/>, 773-525-3322
LifeWorks Psychotherapy Center, <https://www.lifeworkspsychotherapy.com/>, 847-568-1100
Pinnacle Counseling, <https://www.pinnaclecounselingchicago.com/>, 3122989846
Rea, Nicole, LCSW, <https://ccptherapists.com/nicole-rea>, 708-996-0699
Resilience Psychological Services, <https://www.resiliencechicago.com/>, 312-600-3935
Rimma Isaac LCPC, <https://www.symmetrycounseling.com/rimma-isaac/>, 773 930 9968
Solway Psychology, <http://solwaypsychology.com/our-therapists/>, 678-765-9294
Wildflower Center for Emotional Health, <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)