

UNDERSTANDING SELF-CARE



We all feel stressed sometimes. Some stress is normal, but too much isn't good for you, so it's important to know how to take care of yourself and manage the stress you feel.

Try these self-care strategies to help yourself feel better — calmer, happier, more in control — if you are feeling stressed, worried or overwhelmed:

- Talk with a parent or another trusted adult about your feelings.
- Get enough sleep and eat healthy foods.
- Take deep breaths: inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4 and repeat.
- Play your favorite music.
- Write in a journal or draw/sketch.
- Call or text a friend.
- Go for a walk, exercise or dance.
- Laugh — watch a funny video.
- Get absorbed in a good book.
- If there is something you can change about the situation that will help you feel better, take action!
- Break tasks down into smaller, more achievable steps.

If schoolwork is causing you to worry, create a plan or schedule to complete your assignments so that you can map out the time you need. Plan to do your work with a friend who can help you stay on track. And talk with your teachers if you need guidance or have any questions.

Part 1: List three healthy things you do that help when you are feeling worried. How does each self-care strategy help you feel better?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Part 2: Practice using self-care strategies with the situations described below. These are situations that might be stressful or upsetting to you or a friend. For each one, discuss these questions with your group:

- *What feelings might each situation invoke and why?*
 - *Which trusted adult could the person talk with about the situation?*
 - *What are some things the person could do to help cope with their feelings?*
1. Someone posted a rumor about you online and it seems to be spreading fast.
 2. You and your girlfriend/boyfriend have just broken up and you're having a tough time with it.
 3. You are not doing too well in science class and have a mid-term coming up. You need to get a good grade to pass the class.
 4. Your friend has been acting anxious about getting into college and it's all they seem to focus on.
 5. Your friend has seemed sad for several weeks. They've been very emotional recently. They don't want to talk about it.



REMEMBER: If you have a friend who is having a hard time, show empathy and let them know you're there if they want to talk. Don't try to manage their feelings on your own. Anyone can call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by dialing 988. Please reach out to a trusted adult for how to best help your friend.