

Positive Affirmations

What is a positive affirmation?

A positive affirmation is simply a short phrase you repeat to yourself that brings you to a place of calm. You can use your affirmation when you're feeling stressed, upset, distracted, or when you're meditating or practicing mindfulness. Here are some examples. Circle the ones that resonate with you.

I am enough. I am doing my best. I can do this.

I am grateful. I believe in me. I am loved.

I am in charge. I am calm. I am strong.

I am proud of myself. Today will be great.

I am not afraid. I can take care of myself.

I am beautiful. I can rise above. I am blessed.

Which of these affirmations resonate with you?

Choose at least one affirmation that is meaningful to you. Write it below, say it in your mind, and keep it with you. If none of the above affirmations speak to you, write one of your own.

“Make your heart like a lake with a calm, still surface and great depths of kindness.” Lao Tzu

Improving your mental health

While you will never be able to avoid stress and anxiety completely, you can work on improving your mental health so that you feel stronger and more confident—and are better able to manage stressful and anxious feelings and situations.

Here are some ways that you can improve your mental health.

1. Be grateful

Research shows that people who make an effort to be grateful are less stressed, sleep better, and experience fewer health problems. Taking small moments every day to be grateful can go a long way in improving your mood and overall well-being.

Who is someone you are thankful for?

What is a place you are thankful for?

What is something you love about yourself?

2. Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness is simply making the effort to notice things that you wouldn't normally pay attention to. It means being aware of the sights, sounds, smells, and textures around you. *Being mindful is also about paying attention to yourself and how you feel.*

Try this. Clear your mind, take several deep breaths, and focus on your environment. Focus on what you see, hear, smell, and feel.

Practicing mindfulness is a great way to find calm. For additional calming techniques, watch this short video.

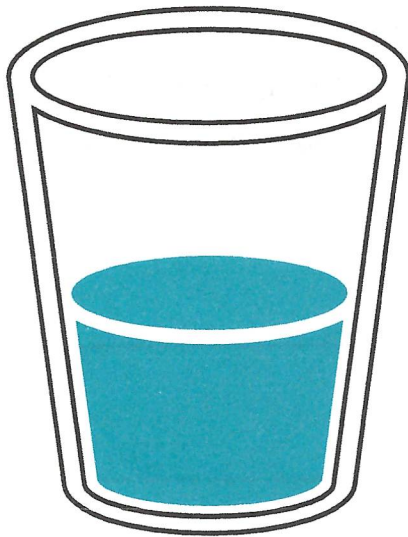


3. Do what “fills your cup”

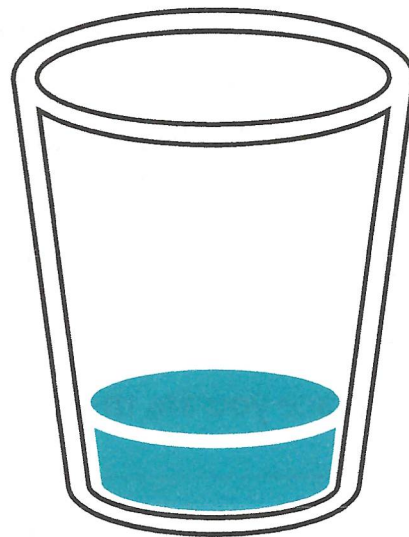
Imagine your mental health and wellness as a cup. When you do what makes you feel calm and happy, your cup is full. People or situations that cause you stress and anxiety can empty your cup. To improve your mental health, focus on the people, places, and things that fill your cup.

Write what fills and empties your cup.

Things that fill my cup



Things that empty my cup



4. Take care of yourself

When you get enough sleep, eat healthy food, exercise regularly, and do things you enjoy, you're better able to cope with stress and anxiety.

Do you get enough sleep each night? ☐ yes ☐ sometimes ☐ hardly ever

How healthy is your diet? ☐ I eat healthy. ☐ It's ok. ☐ It's not healthy.

Are you physically active? ☐ yes ☐ sometimes ☐ hardly ever

What can you do to take better care of your mind and body?

Focus on what you can control

When you figure out how to focus on the things you can control—and let go of the things you can't control—you will feel calmer and more at peace.

In the box, write down some things you can't control or change. In the circle, write down some things you can control. A couple of each have been done for you.

Things I can't control

what other people do
what others think

Things I can control

my attitude
how I treat others

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



If stress or anxiety is affecting your schoolwork or disrupting your life in other ways, confide in someone you trust and ask for help. To connect with a crisis counselor, text HOME to 741741 or dial 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

There are a number of mental health issues that cause young people to feel less than their best; however, the two that are the most common are stress and anxiety.

We all experience stress and anxiety from time to time—it's part of life. However, if we have too much stress or feel overly anxious, it can interfere with our day-to-day lives.

The tips and suggestions in this booklet will show you ways to deal with stress and anxiety—so that you can enjoy life more.

Understanding stress

Do you often feel stressed?

Stress is your body's reaction to change, demands, and difficult situations. Difficulties with friends...pressure to achieve...problems at home. These are just a few of the many things causing young people stress today.

Below are some common symptoms of stress. Read each question and mark it Yes or No.

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?

Answering Yes to most or all of these questions could indicate that stress is an issue for you.

Reducing stress

It's impossible to avoid stress completely, but developing healthy coping strategies will help you manage, and reduce, the stress you have.

- 1. Identify your stressors and make a plan.** The first step to managing stress is to identify your stressors. *What stresses you out?*

Once you identify your stressors, you can come up with a plan to deal with them. For example, if math tests are a stressor, you can make a plan to spread your studying out over several days and meet with your teacher for a help session. *Choose one of the stressors you listed above. Then write out a simple plan that will help you feel less stressed.*

- 2. Ask yourself if you are doing too much.** Many young people feel stressed because they have too much to do—schoolwork, after-school activities, family obligations, and perhaps a part-time job. *If you feel that you've taken on too much, what is something you can eliminate, shorten, or postpone?*

- 3. Get support.** Confide in others when you're feeling stressed. Talk to a parent or family member, your counselor, or a favorite teacher. Talking helps you sort things out, and getting another's perspective can help you come up with solutions to problems. *It's much healthier to share your concerns than it is to go it alone!*

Name _____

Coping with Change

Changes in our lives, like starting new classes or moving on to high school, can be scary. But change is a part of life. The tips here will help you learn how to cope with change, and thrive!

Tips for coping with change

- ▶ **Understand that feeling discomfort in a new situation is normal.** Ignoring or pushing away your discomfort often makes you feel worse. Allow yourself to feel, and acknowledge, any apprehensions or fears you may have.
- ▶ **Figure out exactly what is making you uncomfortable.** Think about what it is that's bothering you or that you are concerned about. Then think of ways you can deal with the situation, or change it in some way.
- ▶ **Find a new normal.** Establish new routines and find comfort in things that are new. For example, if you've just moved to a new area, try taking a walk around your new neighborhood every day. If you're in a new class, get to know someone you sit by.
- ▶ **Think about all the changes in your life.** From the new look of your favorite social media app to dealing with new teachers, you experience change all the time, and you've always adapted. Have confidence in your ability to cope with change!

Think about it

Think about a change you've had to deal with and answer the following questions.

What was the change? _____

What about this change was difficult to deal with? _____

What did you do to help you deal with the change? _____

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 how you can manage your anger.

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

Yes **No**

☐☐

Do you get angry easily?

☐☐

Do you have trouble controlling your emotions?

☐☐

Do you have a hard time with forgiveness?

☐☐

Do everyday situations (e.g., waiting in line) make you angry?

☐☐

Do you feel bad about yourself after getting angry?

☐☐

Do other people often irritate you?

☐☐

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. Do you think you have an issue with anger? If so, what can you do to work on it?
