



Moving Forward: A Mental Wellness Guide for 2026 Seniors



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Transitioning into your next stage of life is a big change and can cause a lot of feelings to surface, like feelings of loss, excitement and uncertainty. If these feelings become intense it is important to reach out for help. Remember that therapists are available.

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Self-Care, Resiliency and Sleep Tips

Self-care refers to the activities and routines practiced to benefit your mental, physical, spiritual and social well-being. Self-care activities should be practiced on a regular basis. These activities help reduce stress, increase productivity, improve health, achieve work-life balance and prevent burnout. For more details and information about self-care, visit the [MindPeace Self-Care Toolkit](#). Senior year can be a very stressful time with applications and deadlines approaching. Be sure to take care of your mental health during this time.

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

- Spending time in nature can lower stress. As little as 10 minutes of sitting or walking in a natural setting can lower your heart rate and blood pressure while also increasing feelings of calmness and comfort.
- Drink water! Dehydration is one of the major causes of headaches.
- Exercise or dance to get out extra energy and relax. This helps to release endorphins (a chemical in your brain) that makes a person feel good.
- Eat three well-balanced meals containing protein, fruits and vegetables.

MENTAL SELF-CARE

- Keep a journal. Evidence shows that writing about stressful events helps come to terms with them, reducing the impact they have on your life (Psych Central, 2016).
- Take a break from television, social media and the internet to avoid overexposure to negative information.
- Express emotional healing practices of crying, laughing, or story-telling.
- Read books or listen to podcasts. Check out the *Eternal Sunshine* app for ideas.
- Participate in activities that make you happy, feel good and are empowering.
- Plan ahead, stay organized and set time to relax. Consider using a planner or scheduling app like *TickTick*.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.
- See a therapist or participate in support groups during times of high stress.

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

Spiritual self-care involves caring for your soul. It can help you find peace between your emotions and the stressors of your life. Spiritual wellness involves seeking a purpose and meaning in your life.

- Consider finding a sacred space of silence and solitude.
- Try meditation, mindfulness, or yoga.
- Pray or attend a religious service.
- Express gratitude and positive affirmations. Think of 3 different things you're grateful for every day.
- Reflect on personal growth and set intentions. Consider writing them down in a journal.
- Express yourself with art, music, writing or connecting with like-minded people.

Mindfulness Exercise Example: "5-4-3-2-1"

Focus on the world around you.

What are:

- 5 Things you see
- 4 Things you hear
- 3 Things you can touch
- 2 Things you can smell
- 1 Thing you can taste

Check out these apps:



Better Sleep



Fabulous



Mindshift
CBT

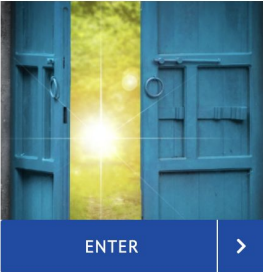


My Fitness
Pal

SOCIAL SELF-CARE

Social self-care is having fun with the people you love. It could mean making time to meet for lunch or simply having a video call. Socializing and connecting with people lift up our emotional mental health with feelings of love, empathy and acceptance.

- Spend quality time with friends and family and share how your days are going. Don't be afraid to seek support from others, and to ask for help.
- Be an active member of the community by joining an organization or volunteering at the local food banks, recreation centers, schools, etc.



Jr. High and High
School
(7-12th grade)

Open the Virtual Door to Self-Care!

For calming, refocusing, exercise, self-awareness and mindfulness tools to help in your self-care process, visit our Virtual MindPeace Room®.

<https://mindpeacecincinnati.com/virtual-mindpeace-rooms/>

RESILIENCY

Resiliency is the ability to adjust to circumstances and keep going during tough times, whether it's a minor hassle or a major life event. Resilience helps you take on challenges, form stronger relationships and embrace new experiences. A lack of resilience can lead to anxiety, poor self-care, depression and risky behaviors, such as substance abuse. We can't always control events, but we can control our responses.

Manage Stress

Identify your sources of stress and how they affect you. Once you understand how your behavior changes in response to stress (e.g., your health suffers or you isolate yourself from others), you can modify unhealthy reactions and develop coping strategies for your vulnerable areas. Self-Care kits can aid in immediate relief when you're feeling overwhelmed (see example on the next page).

Rising Leaders is a local organization that helps young adults with financial, emotional, spiritual, vocational and physical needs. Visit their website at www.RisingLeadersCincy.org.

Examine your thoughts. Negative thoughts about yourself, others, or the future can lead to unhelpful feelings and actions. Pay attention to how you see and explain events. This will help you question and change thoughts that don't help, and build a more positive way of thinking.

Build a support network. Positive social connections provide assistance, guidance and comfort during difficult times. Strengthen your relationships with family, friends and trusted others to form a support network. The quality of these relationships is more important than quantity. Consider scheduling a weekly or monthly chat or call with these people.

SELF-CARE KIT EXAMPLES

Self-care kits should contain some of your favorite ways to de-stress. Suggested items to include could be a stress ball, journal, blanket, earbuds, essential oils, or a favorite book. See examples below.



Sample Kit Contents: Various snacks, a puzzle, refillable water bottle, tea, stress ball, a fidget, a journal and pen and a coloring book with fun markers.

Put together a self-care kit with items in your home. Think about these questions and fill an empty shopping bag or box with your favorite items.

- What do you do to distract yourself? Is there a craft you do, a show you watch or an activity you enjoy?
- What makes your body feel good? Do you have a favorite pair of sweatpants or a cozy t-shirt?
- Think about your five senses (taste, smell, touch, sight and sound). What can you do to appeal to all these senses?
- What's a way you can express yourself? Art, journaling poetry, music or something else? Consider creating a playlist of songs that make you happy.

SCREENS

Did you know that youth ages 8-18 spend an average of 7.5 hours a day in front of a screen? Whether it's scrolling through your phone, tablet or sitting in front of the TV, too much screen time has been linked to sleep problems, poor grades and a greater risk of obesity. Being in front of screens for long amounts of time can also lead to mood problems, a lack of physical activity and poor self-image (aacap.org, 2020). What can you do in place of screens? Read a book, journal, exercise, get outdoors, cook or bake, meditate, draw or play a board game or puzzle.

Tips

- Turn off notifications.
- Set a timer to turn off your technology.
- Turn your phone on do not disturb.
- Set screen time limits under your phone settings.

FACT:

Light from televisions, cell phones and other electronics negatively impacts your sleep. This type of light is often called "blue light" and can impact your circadian rhythm which helps your body and mind know what time of day you're supposed to be awake or sleeping.

SLEEP

Young adults need 7+ hours of sleep every night. Not getting enough sleep has adverse effects on a person's cognitive thinking and processing skills. Sleep deprivation has a big impact on the hippocampus which controls the brain's memory. When the amount and quality of sleep is impacted your memory also suffers. A lack of sleep can also have physical consequences. Not enough sleep can make you sick, leading to more colds, flu, coughs and sniffles, and can be associated with weight gain.

Tips

- Avoid caffeine at night and limit it during the day.
- Create a sleep schedule and stick to it.
- Don't sleep in on weekends or days when you have time off. Wake up close to the same time every day.
- Put books and technology away at least 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime.
- Exercise earlier in the day, never just before bed.
- Sleep with earplugs and use an eye pillow to drown out any bright lights and loud noise.
- Turn off the lights when it's time to go to bed. If you fall asleep to a TV, put it on a sleep timer!
- Stop eating 3 hours before you plan to go to bed.
- Create a sleep environment and only use your bed for sleep. Don't use a computer or phone in bed.
- Try watching a YouTube bedtime story or listen to sounds on an app like *Better Sleep* if you're having difficulty sleeping.

TIP:

Try blue light glasses! Blue light has a high energy frequency that can delay the body's release of melatonin, which can result in having a hard time falling asleep. Wearing these glasses can reduce the impact of blue light which can result in improved sleeping patterns (Barnes, 2020).

MANAGING STRESS

When there is a lot going on it is easy to be overwhelmed and stressed out. Take extra steps to take care of your mind during these times. Make a detailed list of deadlines and due dates and work backwards.

- Schedule breaks from doing work.
- Make time for physical activities.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Reach out for help and support from counselors, family and friends.
- Ask for help where and when you need it.

RESOURCES

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. (Feb, 2020). *Screen Time and Children*.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx.

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Everyday Health. (2010, March 17). 10 Tips for Better Sleep at College.

Harvard Health Publishing. (2019, September 24). *Blue light has a dark side*. Harvard Health. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/blue-light-has-a-dark-side>.

Minimum Time Dose in Nature to Positively Impact the Mental Health of College-Aged Students, and How to Measure It: A Scoping Review. (n.d.). *Frontiers*.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02942/full>.

National Sleep Foundation. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>.

Navigating Alcohol and Drug Decisions

ALCOHOL and DRUG USE

Being an upperclassman in high school brings a new sense of independence and ability to make your own decisions. Periods of wanting to experiment with new ideas and experiences are normal. This is also often a time of self-discovery and vulnerability to peer influence.

Underage Drinking

Underage drinking can have some serious consequences. If you ever find yourself in a situation where you are presented alcohol underage, consider the following information.

- You can always say no! It's common to feel pressure to drink in social situations but always know you have a choice.
- Underage drinking and using fake identification are illegal and could have legal consequences such as fines, misdemeanor charges or jail time.

Statistics to Consider

- Research shows that young people's brains keep developing well into their 20s. Alcohol can alter this development, potentially affecting both brain structure and function. This may cause cognitive or learning problems and/or increase vulnerability for alcohol use disorder, especially when people start drinking at a young age and drink heavily.
- Alcohol is a significant factor in the deaths of people younger than age 21 in the United States each year. This includes deaths from motor vehicle crashes, homicides, alcohol overdoses, falls, burns, drowning and suicides.
- More than 90 percent of all alcoholic drinks consumed by young people are consumed through binge drinking. Binge drinking often can lead to alcohol dependence, addiction and internal damage, especially to the liver.

Addiction is considered a chronic brain disease and changes in the body or mind can last a lifetime. Certain factors make you more likely to become addicted to drugs, including:

- Trouble in school or with making friends. Using drugs as a way to cope with stress is a maladaptive strategy and not recommended.
- Hanging around other people who use drugs. They might encourage you to try drugs.
- Starting drug use when you're young. The younger you start using drugs the more it can affect your body and mind while your brain is still developing. This increases your chances of becoming addicted as an adult.
- Your body. Everyone reacts to drugs differently. Some people hate how it makes them feel and never try it again. Others like the feeling the first time and want more.
- Mental health. Individuals with mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and ADHD are at a higher risk of becoming addicted.

90% of adults with a substance abuse problem started using alcohol, smoking, or other drugs before they were 18 years old.

PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure is present when an individual feels it's important to be accepted by their peers. In late childhood and young adulthood, peers become more important in people's lives. You're trying to build your own identity and gain independence and acceptance in the world. Peer pressure can look different in certain social situations.

- **Environmental norms.** Feeling the need to act like everyone else around you because it is considered "normal".
- **Direct pressure.** Peers directly urging you to do something by either threatening, saying it will be fun, or telling you to do it because you can.
- **Indirect pressure.** When peers indirectly influence your behavior, maybe just by association.

How to resist peer pressure

- Choose peers that share the same values and opinions as you.
- Practice saying no to peers.
- Seek help with certain issues.

SEXUAL CONSENT

Consent (permission for something to happen) is never implied. It is always clear and fully communicated.

What Does Consent Look Like?

- Saying "yes" and confirming reciprocal interest in physicality.
- Letting them know they can stop at any time.
- Checking in with your partner.

Sexual Consent is Not Found:

- Under coercion.
- Under the influence.
- When underage.
- In power dynamics.

**National Sexual Assault
Hotline:**

1-800-656-4673

Available 24/7

If you have been sexually assaulted know that it is **NEVER** Your Fault. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at (800) 656-HOPE (4673). You'll be connected to a trained staff member from a local sexual assault service provider in your area.

RESOURCES

Substance abuse in college students: Statistics & Rehab treatment. American Addiction Centers.

<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/college>

National Institutes of Health. (2023, December 15). Drug use and addiction. MedlinePlus. <https://medlineplus.gov/druguseandaddiction.html>

Peer pressure and drugs: Definition, risk factors, and addiction. Medical News Today. Villines, Z. (2022, February 23). Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/peer-pressure-drugs#resisting-peer-pressure>

Risky business: Exercise extremes. Mental Health America. (n.d.). Retrieved November 2, 2022

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021, May). Underage drinking. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Retrieved from <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/underage-drinking>

Underage Drinking. (2020, January 17) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mental Health Support

Feeling overwhelmed, experiencing stress or having difficulty coping can be normal. When symptoms begin to impact functioning in daily life (school, home, social life) getting help as early as possible is the BEST thing that can be done!

Ask Yourself...

DO I HAVE MILD SYMPTOMS THAT HAVE LASTED FOR LESS THAN 2 WEEKS?

Symptoms may include: feeling a bit down; feeling low but still able to manage work, school, or household tasks; having some trouble sleeping; or feeling down while still caring for yourself and others.

- Talk with family or a trusted adult.
- Review self-help or coping strategies such as exercising, mindfulness, and journaling.
- Reach out to your support team.
- Speak with your therapist (if one is in place). If a therapist is needed see Finding Care on the next page.
- Review resources at <https://mindpeacecincinnati.com/resources-for-families>.

DO I HAVE SEVERE SYMPTOMS THAT HAVE LASTED FOR 2 WEEKS OR MORE?

Symptoms may include: Difficulty sleeping, appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes, struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of my mood, difficulty concentrating, loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable, unable to perform usual daily functions, thoughts of death or self-harm.

- Seek professional help.
- Discuss symptoms with family or a trusted adult.
- Contact your care team (medical/primary care and/or psychiatric).
- Schedule an appointment to be seen earlier for therapy. If a therapist is needed visit www.MindPeaceCincinnati.com for help.
- Assess severity and contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 as needed.

IF SYMPTOMS ARE NOW UNCONTROLLABLE, INCLUDING SELF-HARM, THREATS TO OTHERS, ESCALATIONS OF SUICIDAL OR HOMICIDAL THOUGHTS OR MAKING A PLAN TO DIE.

Consider which of these services are best based on your needs:

- Contact your therapist if connected (use the after-hours number if needed).
- Call or text the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 for 24/7 support.
- Contact 988 for your local mobile crisis unit, or crisis stabilization service.
- Visit the Mental Health Urgent Care by Best Point for crisis intervention and safety planning (ages 3-21). Open Monday-Friday 3-10 p.m. 5051 Duck Creek Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227. For questions call (513) 527-3040.
- If under 18, contact Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) at Cincinnati Children's by calling (513) 636-4124 to discuss an emergency psychiatric evaluation, crisis stabilization, and recommendation for further treatment.
- If 18 or older contact the UC Psychiatric Emergency Services at (513) 584-8577 or your local hospital depending on your location.
- If life threatening, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

RESOURCES

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?*. National Institute of Mental Health.
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/my-mental-health-do-i-need-help>.

What's Next: Thinking about the Future

DECIDING WHAT'S NEXT

Talk to Your Family

What if your post-graduation plans differ from what your family has in mind? Talk openly with your family about your plans — both for the short term (what you want to do next year) and the long term (what you think you'd like to do in life). If your family wants you to go to college, but you don't feel you're ready or that college isn't right for you, explain why.

Get Advice

Having multiple opinions can be helpful. For school and career guidance, visit your school counselor and talk with adult friends (for example, godparents or friends of the family). Make an effort to talk to people in the areas that interest you. If you think you want to be an accountant, call some accountants and ask them about their work and/or ask to shadow them for a day. Most people are flattered to get calls like this, and they'll usually take the time to talk.

Still don't know what you want to do after graduation? Consider taking a career aptitude test to help you understand what major or job might be best for you.

- **Meyers-Briggs**- a personality test that measures psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions. (www.16personalities.com)
- **MAPP Career Assessment Test** measures your temperament, aptitude, how you get along with people and the top careers that match your needs. (<http://www.assessment.com/TakeMAPP>)
- **Care Fitter**- designed to help identify the strengths of your work personality and the jobs that will fit you best. (<https://www.careerfitter.com/>)
- **Truity**- Find a job you'll love by matching your personality and interests to real-world careers. This free 15-minute career test measures key personality factors to show you the exact careers that suit your strengths. (<https://www.truity.com/test/career-personality-profiler-test>)

RESOURCES

CareerOneStop. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.careeronestop.org/FindTraining/Ty pes/apprenticeships.aspx?frd=true>

Chen, G. (2008, February 08). The Top 7 Community College Myths. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <https://www.communitycollegereview.com/blog/the-top-7-community-college-myths>

The Best Health Insurance for Young Adults - [7 Options to Consider]. (2018, September 5). Retrieved from <https://www.healthdeals.com/blog/save/young-adult-health-insurance/>



GOING TO COLLEGE?

Narrowing Down Your College Options:

- **Distance from home.** Ask yourself if you feel more supported and grounded closer to family and familiarity or are you excited about the idea of independence and starting fresh? There is no right answer, pick what feels right for you.
- **Campus size.** Consider your personality. Are you more introverted and might prefer smaller colleges and quieter campuses, or are you more extroverted who might enjoy large campuses, energetic social scenes and big cities.
- **Virtual or In-person learning.** Do you prefer face-to-face environments or the flexibility of online classes.
- **Match with your future career goals.** Does the school offer strong programs in your field of interest?

College Visits: What to look for?

- Are there easily accessible mental health services?
- Are there quiet spaces for alone time?
- Are students talking well about the social scene and living environment?
- Will my mental wellbeing be supported at this college?

Taking the ACT and SAT:

Studying and test days can be stressful. Here is how to care for your mind and body during this time.

- **Prepare.** Stick to a schedule that includes breaks and days off.
- **Get plenty of sleep the night before.** Cramming does not make you perform better.
- **Fuel your body.** Eat a hearty healthy breakfast and stay hydrated.
- **Use calming tools when needed.** These may include deep breaths, grounding techniques or stress toys.
- **Remind yourself this is just one piece of the application process and you are way more than a score on a test.**
- **Check whether the schools you're interested in require ACT or SAT scores.** Some colleges are test-optional, while others use them for admissions and scholarships.

TIP:

Make a College research chart to organize information. Include location, size, application deadline, financial aid apps and services. Planning ahead can reduce stress when it's time to apply!

Explore colleges through College Board.

(<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>)

Consider Your Top Priorities. Do You Want...

- To be in a (big/medium/small) school
- To be (close to home/in a new place)
- Strong mental health support
- Career support
- Financial affordability
- Social life/clubs
- Strong academics in _____

College Decisions and School Burnout

ACCEPTANCES, REJECTIONS AND SELF-WORTH

It is so important to remember that college decisions do not define your value. Your worth is not attached to a college decision. Those decisions are made based on so many factors and not necessarily your capabilities. Here are some tips to deal with emotions surrounding college during this time:

- Open acceptance/rejection emails in a safe, private space.
- Prepare mentally for all outcomes, No matter what the email says, be proud of who you've become!
- Talk about your feelings, find a trusted family member or friend or reach out to a counselor.
- Avoid social comparison to classmates and peers, remember you are on your own individual life journey.
- Rejection is not failure, simply a redirection of what is meant for you!

SCHOOL BURNOUT

Know the signs of burnout:

- Constant fatigue, even after sleep
- Lack of motivation to do schoolwork or show up
- Feeling emotionally numb and detached
- Headaches, stomach aches, or frequent illnesses
- Negative self-talk
- Procrastination

Burnout prevention tips:

- Set small manageable goals
- Take regular breaks
- Stay socially connected
- Practice self-kindness



RESOURCES

Burnout: Symptoms, treatment, and coping strategy tips (2025) [HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org).

<https://www.helpguide.org/mental-health/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery>

Gleicher, J. (n.d.). *Surviving College Rejection*. <https://hartsteinpsychological.com/surviving-college-rejection>

College Counseling Services

Important considerations when deciding on a college are understanding how their mental health system works. Each school has a slightly different system, with differing processes and specifications for care. Be sure to research the mental health or counseling services at your college of choice when making your college decisions. Here are some questions to consider asking:

- Can the school counseling office offer ongoing therapy? If not, do you have transportation to get to appointments?
- Is there an on-site psychiatric nurse practitioner or psychiatrist available to help with medication management?
- What support is available to students in crisis?
- Are mental health services included with tuition or are they an additional charge?

Community providers are also available in Greater Cincinnati. Search the database at:

www.MindPeaceCincinnati.com/search



Scan the QR Code or go to <https://www.mhanational.org/preparing-appointments> to help understand and prepare for mental health therapy. Remember, all treatment and therapy services are confidential under HIPAA Law.



COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF COUNSELING SERVICES	WEBSITE	REQUESTING APPOINTMENTS
Bowling Green State University	https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html	Call (419) 372-2081 Mon-Fri 8-5
Cincinnati State	https://www.cincinnati-state.edu/counseling/	Call (513) 569-5779 Mon-Fri 9-5
College of Mount St. Joseph	https://www.msj.edu/student-life/wellness-health-resources/index.html	Call (513) 244-4949 Mon-Fri 8-5
Indiana University Southeast	https://www.ius.edu/personal-counseling/index.php	call (812) 941-2244 or email sepersco@ius.edu
Miami University	http://miamioh.edu/student-life/student-counseling-service	Call (513) 529-4634 Mon-Fri 8-5
Northern Kentucky University	https://inside.nku.edu/studentaffairs/departments/counseling-services.html	Call (859) 572-5650 Mon- Fri 8:15-4:30
Ohio State University	https://ccs.osu.edu/	Call (614) 292-5766 Mon-Fri 8-5
Ohio University	https://www.ohio.edu/student-affairs/counseling	Call (740) 593-1616 Mon-Fri 8-5
University of Cincinnati – Blue Ash	https://www.ucblueash.edu/students/services/counseling-services	Call (513) 556-0648 and indicate you are a Blue Ash student Mon-Fri 8:30-5
University of Cincinnati –Main Campus	www.uc.edu/counseling	Call (513) 556-0648 Mon-Fri 8:30-5
University of Dayton	https://udayton.edu/studev/health_wellness/counselingcenter/index.php	Call (937) 229-3141 Mon-Fri 8:30-4:30
University of Kentucky	https://www.uky.edu/counselingcenter/	Call (859) 257-8701 Mon-Fri 8-4:30
University of Louisville	http://louisville.edu/counseling	Call (502) 852-6585 or email coping@louisville.edu Mon-Fri 9-5
Wright State University	www.wright.edu/counseling	Call (937) 775-3407 Mon-Fri 8:30-5
Xavier University	www.xavier.edu/health-wellness/counseling	Call (513) 745-3022 Mon-Fri 8:30-5

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	SESSION CHARGE	SESSION LIMIT	MEDICATION MANAGEMENT*	HOURS	SUPPORT NETWORK	CAMPUS CRISIS SUPPORT*
Bowling Green State University	No Charge	May refer out	Refer Out	Mon-Fri 8-5	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(419) 502-4673 Wood County Crisis Line
Cincinnati State - Clifton Campus Only	No Charge	No session limit	Refer out	Mon-Fri 8-5	Cincinnati State Recovery Community	Call or Text 988
College of Mount St. Joseph	No Charge	No session limit	Refer out	Mon-Fri 8-5	None	(833) 646-1526 UWill Mental Health Crisis Line
Indiana University Southeast	No Charge	No session limit	Refer out	Mon-Fri 9-5	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(800) 221-0446 Regional Crisis Line
Miami University	3 free sessions per year, \$25/therapist. Group therapy at no charge	No session limit, free sessions reset every year. May refer out.	Yes, through the student health center	Mon-Fri 8-5	Yes, many offered here	(855) 249-5649 HOPE Line that can contact On-Call Counselor
Northern Kentucky University	No Charge	10 free sessions per academic year	Refer to St.Elizabeth Healthcare	Mon-Fri 8:15-4:30	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(859) 572-7777 Campus Police, ask for On-Call Counselor
Ohio State University	No Charge	10 sessions per calendar year, may refer out after	Yes	Mon-Fri 8-5	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(614) 292-5766 After Hours
Ohio University	No Charge	No session limit	Yes	Drop-in Mon-Fri 9:45-3:15	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(740) 593-1616 24/7 University Crisis Line
University of Cincinnati– Blue Ash	3 free sessions per semester, \$35/therapist. No charge for group therapy	May refer out after so many sessions	Refer out	Mon-Fri 8:30-5	Bearcat Support Network www.ucincybsn.org	(513) 556-0648 Crisis Counseling 24/7

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	SESSION CHARGE	SESSION LIMIT	MEDICATION MANAGEMENT*	HOURS	SUPPORT NETWORK	CAMPUS CRISIS SUPPORT*
University of Cincinnati– Main Campus	3 Free sessions, \$35/therapist. Or no charge for group therapy	May refer out after many sessions	Refer Out	Mon - Fri 8:30 - 5:00	Bearcat Support Network www.ucincybsn.org	(513) 556-0648 Crisis Counseling 24/7
University of Dayton	No Charge	Will create action plan and may be referred out.	Yes, will refer to psychiatrist	Mon - Fri 8:30 - 4:30 Drop in hours: Mon,Tues, Wed, Fri 9:45-2 Thurs 10:45-2	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(937) 229-3134 On-call Therapist
University of Kentucky	No Charge	Typically 10 sessions over the course of a year, based of needs assessment	Refer Out	Mon-Fri 8-4:30	Yes (through school and counselors)	(859) 257-8701 27/4 University Crisis Line
University of Louisville	No Charge	Typically 10 sessions, then refer out	Refer to Campus Health Services	Mon-Fri 9-5	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(502) 589-4313 24/7 Adult Crisis Line
Wright State University	No charge for students who pay \$20 semester fee; \$20/appt for students who waive fee	No session limit	Yes, psychiatrist on staff	Mon-Fri 8:30-5 Walk In Hours: Mon-Fri 11-3	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(937) 775-4567 Raider Cares 24/7 Line
Xavier University	No Charge	No session limit	Yes (works with Tricare and is able to refer)	Mon-Fri 8:30-5 Walk In Hours Mon-Fri 10-12, 2-4	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(513) 745-3022 Therapist On-Call Crisis hotline: contact XUPD (513) 745-1000

Preparing for the Workforce

JOINING THE WORKFORCE

Many graduating seniors opt to join the workforce after high school.

This is an exciting time to start a career. A job pays the bills, but a career is something you are passionate about, enjoy doing and have room for advancement.

Here's are local organizations that helps youth with this transition.

Ikron Transitional Youth Program- provides a curriculum designed to assist youth in planning a career, completing trial work experience and obtaining and maintaining employment. Call (513) 621-1117 or go to <https://cincinnati.ikron.org> for more information.

Cincinnati Works- provides career and financial coaching, support and counseling and job connections to its members seeking jobs. Call (513) 744-9675 or visit <https://cincinnatiworks.org/job-seekers/> for more information on program eligibility.

Transition Age Youth (TAY) Resources - resources that help gain skills, build connections and plan for the future. Visit the website here:
https://www.hcjfs.org/services/childrens_services/transition_age_youth.php

REMEMBER:

Whatever you choose now does not have to be what you do forever. You can always go back to school or change a career path — lots of people do this every day.

TIP:

Practice Interviewing Skills.

Visit:

<https://www.livecareer.com/resources/interviews/questions>

MILITARY

Entering the military can be an excellent choice for students. Discipline, earning money, saving for college, learning a trade — all of this is possible in the armed forces. Veterans are also entitled to many benefits both while in the service and after.

Speak to a current or former service member if you are unsure if the military is the right choice for you. You should carefully explore all of the pros and cons of a military career. After all, if you don't like the service you can't easily drop out. Those who enlist in the military, whether it's for active duty (full-time) or National Guard/Reserves (part-time) have a minimum service obligation.

The federal government as well as other non-profit organizations offer money for schooling to veterans, future military personnel, active-duty military personnel, or those related to veterans or active-duty personnel. The Military's Tuition Assistance program provides service members the chance to enroll in courses at accredited colleges, universities, junior colleges, and vocational-technical schools.

Each Service branch has different programs that can assist with tuition payments. To qualify, there are typically conditional requirements. These may include having a minimum amount of time remaining on your service contract and a cap on credit hours per year.

Explore your options at <http://todaysmilitary.com>.

TIME OFF

Another route that could be taken post-graduation is time off from school. You may consider taking a year off to pause and regroup. This practice is common in some countries, like the United Kingdom, and is called a "gap year" or "growth year". However, make sure you plan out a budget and living situation ahead of time. If you have already applied for college and been accepted, ask for a deferred admission. It can be a great idea to take a year off to try something you may not have an opportunity to do again.

Community service organizations offer a wide variety of choices where students can match their skills and interests. AmeriCorps (<https://americorps.gov/>), for example, offers hundreds of programs across the United States with a small stipend, plus a chance to obtain money for college or vocational training. Many religious organizations provide community service programs as well.



ON-THE-JOB

Careers in a trade or technical skill allow you to specialize in a particular occupation that typically involves working with your hands. Jobs may include carpentry, masonry, electrical work, mechanics, and more. Apprenticeships provide an affordable way to enter these in-demand careers. They provide a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction under supervision. Over 90% of apprentices turn into employment after the program completion. To understand what opportunities are available visit www.Apprenticeship.gov.

TRAINING

Training for a career is also needed in the field of cosmetology, dental assistance, police enforcement, and more. Most of these jobs require enrollment in a program and licensure testing. Certain retail or hospitality industry organizations also offer training programs for high school grads. You may want to consider career options in computing, bookkeeping, and payroll, or sales. Talk to your school counselor or a favorite teacher about the job market in your area and be sure your family and friends know you're looking. Additionally, these websites are a great place to start with your search:

- Cincinnati Job Corps Center- <https://cincinnati.jobcorps.gov/>
- Great Oaks Career Campuses- <https://adults.greatoaks.com/>
- Ohio Means Jobs- <https://ohiomeansjobs.ohio.gov>, for Hamilton County visit: <https://www.omj-cinham.org/>, for Butler County visit: <https://ohiomeansjobs.bcohoio.gov/>
- Workforce Development Center at Cincinnati State- <https://www.cincinnati.state.edu/wdc/>
- The Best Schools' Trade School Resources- <https://thebestschools.org/rankings/trades/>

Moving Forward With Confidence

As you move through senior year and prepare for life after high school, remember that taking care of your mental health, staying connected to your support system, and giving yourself grace are just as important as meeting deadlines and making big decisions. This guide has offered tools to help you manage stress, explore your options, and navigate the emotions that come with this transition. No matter which path you choose—college, work, training, or something still unfolding—you have the strength, resilience, and support to move forward with confidence. Your future is full of possibility, and you deserve to step into it feeling grounded, capable, and hopeful.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Transition Support

- Transition to Adulthood Center for Research (Transitions ACR)- <https://www.umassmed.edu/TransitionsACR/>
- Journey to Successful Living (Hamilton County)- <https://www.hcmhrsb.org/getting-help/journey/>

Mental Health and Wellness

- MindPeace Resources- <https://mindpeacecincinnati.com>
- Finding Therapy Providers- <http://www.mindpeacecincinnati.com>

24/7 Crisis Support

- Call or text 988 for immediate emotional support at any time
- Contact 988 to reach your local mobile crisis unit or crisis stabilization services

Local Crisis Services

- Visit the Mental Health Urgent Care by Best Point for crisis intervention and safety planning (ages 3-21). Open Monday-Friday 3-10 p.m. 5051 Duck Creek Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227. For questions call (513) 527-3040.
- If under 18, contact Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) at Cincinnati Children's by calling (513) 636-4124 to discuss an emergency psychiatric evaluation, crisis stabilization, and recommendation for further treatment.
- If 18 or older, contact the UC Psychiatric Emergency Services at (513) 584-8577 or your local hospital depending on your location.
- If life threatening, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.