

START HERE

Tesla STEM Student Support Toolkit

When stress, anxiety, relationships, or life feel like a lot.

URGENT / SOMEONE MAY NOT BE SAFE If you or someone else may not be safe, or you need immediate emotional/crisis support, [call or text 988](#) (24/7). You do not have to be suicidal to contact 988.

If there is immediate physical danger, call 911.

You do not need to diagnose yourself or read this in order. Start with what sounds closest and try one next step.

If nothing here fits, you can still talk to someone. You do not need a label or a reason that feels "serious enough."

1. Start Here

Pick the row that sounds closest. You can always change course after the first step.

WHAT IS HAPPENING?	START HERE
I need to calm down right now	Go to p. 2: Reset first. Get steady enough for the next step - you do not have to solve everything.
My brain will not stop / I am spiraling	Go to p. 2: Check the thought. A thought can feel true without being the whole story.
I am overwhelmed, burned out, or cannot start	Go to p. 2: Do one small thing. Shrink the task until starting feels possible.
Nothing I do feels good enough	Go to p. 3: Perfectionism. Decide what "good enough" means before you keep fixing.
Friends, dating, loneliness, or home stuff is weighing on me	Go to p. 3: When the problem involves other people. Ask for listening, advice, repair, a boundary, or help with safety.
I am worried about someone	Go to p. 4: I am worried about a friend. You do not need perfect words to check in or get another adult involved.
I think I need more support	Go to p. 4: Getting support. You do not need to know exactly what is wrong before you ask for help.

Mostly schoolwork? [Use Tesla STEM Academic Resources](#) for studying, tests, procrastination, time management, and academic support.

TOOLS FOR RIGHT NOW

2. Tools for Right Now

Pick one tool. Try it briefly. Then decide what you need next. You do not have to do all of them.

1. RESET FIRST - when your body is on high alert

Before solving the whole problem, help your body settle a little.

- Put both feet on the floor or feel the chair supporting you.
- Drop your shoulders. Breathe slowly and comfortably. If focusing on breathing makes you more uncomfortable, skip it and use the sights, sounds, and physical-feeling step instead.
- Look around and name a few things you can see, hear, or physically feel.
- Then ask: What do I need to do next - not everything, just next?

2. CHECK THE THOUGHT - when your brain is spiraling

Try four questions:

- What is my brain telling me?
- What do I actually know?
- Is there another explanation - or am I treating a fear like a fact?
- What is a more useful thought right now?

Example: "I ruined everything" -> "That did not go how I wanted. I can still decide what I do next." If arguing with the thought makes it louder, try: "I am having the thought that ____." A thought is not an instruction.

3. DO ONE SMALL THING - when you are stuck

Make the next step almost ridiculously small. Do not wait for motivation to arrive first:

- School: open the assignment, write the title, send one email, or work for five minutes.
- Body: eat something, drink water, shower, move, or step outside.
- Connection: text one person back, sit near someone, or ask for company.
- Relief: do something you normally enjoy for ten minutes - even if you are not very excited about it yet.

Afterward, reassess. One small action can change what feels possible next.

4. SOLVE THE PART YOU CAN - when everything is tangled together

- Name the actual problem in one sentence.
- Circle the part you can influence.
- List 2-3 possible next moves.
- Choose one you can do today.

If the part you cannot control is the biggest part, that may be a sign to bring in another person rather than carrying it alone.

Want a short video version of these skills? [Child Mind Institute - Healthy Minds, Thriving Kids \(High School\)](#)

COMMON STUCK POINTS

3. When Your Brain Is Making a Hard Thing Harder

These are common patterns - not diagnoses. Use the part that fits and skip the rest.

PERFECTIONISM - when "better" has turned into "never done"

- What does good enough actually look like for this task?
- Am I improving this - or mostly checking, rechecking, and fixing tiny things?
- What would I expect from a friend in the same situation?
- Set a stopping point before you keep working.

Try this experiment: Finish the essential parts, stop at the time you chose, and see what actually happens.

BURNOUT / OVERLOAD - when your brain says "I cannot do any of it"

- Reduce the next step until it feels almost too small.
- Protect basics that make everything harder when they disappear: food, water, sleep, movement, connection.
- Choose what matters most today. Some things may need to be delayed, shortened, or asked for help with.

If this keeps happening, do not make "try harder" your only plan - talk to someone.

WHEN THE PROBLEM INVOLVES OTHER PEOPLE

Before the conversation, decide what you want most: listening, advice, repair, a boundary, or help staying safe.

- "Can I tell you what happened? I mostly need you to listen."
- "I want to fix this. Can we talk about what happened?"
- "That does not feel okay to me. I need ____."
- "I do not want to handle this by myself. Can you help me figure out what to do?"

If someone is hurting, threatening, controlling, pressuring, or frightening you, involve a trusted adult.

For dating/relationship concerns: [love is respect](#)

SLEEP IS A MESS?

- Teens generally need about 8-10 hours of sleep each night.
- Keep your wake time reasonably consistent when you can.
- Give yourself some wind-down time when you can. If schoolwork or scrolling regularly pushes sleep later than you want, experiment with a stopping time.
- If sleep problems keep happening, or you are exhausted despite having enough opportunity to sleep, tell a parent/caregiver or health professional.

If the main problem is academic workload or study habits: [Tesla STEM Academic Resources](#)

GETTING SUPPORT

4. Getting Support

You do not have to handle this alone.

IT MAY BE TIME TO TALK TO SOMEONE IF...

- this keeps happening or is getting worse
 - it is affecting school, sleep, eating, relationships, or things you normally enjoy
 - you are avoiding more and more because of it
 - what you have tried is not helping, or someone who knows you is worried
- You do not have to wait until things are "really bad" to ask for help.

I WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE, BUT I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO SAY

Any of these is enough to start:

- "I have been having a hard time lately. Can I talk to you?"
- "I do not really know how to explain it, but I think I need some help."
- "Something is going on and I do not want to handle it by myself."

Not sure what will stay private? Ask before you share: "Before I tell you, can you explain what you would need to share with someone else?"

At school: start with your Tesla school counselor or another trusted adult. [Tesla STEM counselor contacts](#) | [Youth Eastside Services at Tesla](#)

I AM WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND

- Notice: "You have seemed really overwhelmed lately."
 - Ask: "Are you doing okay?"
 - Listen: You do not need to fix everything.
 - Connect: "Who could we talk to about this?"
 - If you are worried about safety, involve a trusted adult - even if your friend asks you to keep it secret.
- You can also contact 988 yourself if you are worried about someone else and need help deciding what to do.
More conversation help: [Seize the Awkward](#)

Choose the kind of support you need

I NEED...	START HERE
Talk with another teen	Teen Link: call/text/chat with trained teen volunteers, 6-10 p.m. daily. 866-833-6546. Teen Link
Find ongoing/outside care	Care Solace: free, confidential care coordination for LWSD students and families; support available 24/7/365. Care Solace
Learn more about mental health	JED: student-friendly information about stress, anxiety, relationships, getting help, and helping a friend. JED Mental Health Resource Center
Find broader teen/community resources	Where to Turn for Teens: searchable Washington resources for mental health, food/housing, substance use, abuse, health, legal support, and more. Where to Turn for Teens

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