Feeling Overwhelmed?

If so, you're not alone. We all feel overwhelmed at times.

When you're feeling overwhelmed, it's important to have strategies that help you cope and feel more on top of things. Here are some tips that might help.

Take deep breaths. When you're feeling stressed out or overwhelmed, stop, breathe in deeply, count to four, and exhale. Do this for two minutes.

Take a time out. Do something that has nothing to do with school, work, or any of your obligations—read a book, listen to music, go for a walk, take a hot bath.

Learn to say no. Don't be afraid to turn down requests and say no to invitations.

Look at all you're doing. You may have taken on more than you can handle. If this is the case, try to simplify your life. Look for activities or obligations you can eliminate, shorten, or postpone. *Do not sacrifice sleep to get everything done.*

74% of people report feeling overwhelmed from time to time.

Get organized. Sometimes things feel chaotic because our space feels chaotic. Take time to clean and organize your living space, study area, and backpack.

Improve your time management. Using the time you have wisely will help you feel less stressed and overwhelmed. Here are some time-management tips.

- ▶ **Make To Do Lists.** Having a To Do list allows you to focus on what you need to do, instead of wasting time worrying about how you're going to get everything done—and wondering what you forgot.

- ▶ **Create routines.** A good morning and nighttime routine will save you time, and help your day run more smoothly.

- ▶ **Control time wasters.** Social media, TV, and video games can all be huge time wasters. Schedule short periods for these activities and stick to your schedule.

- ▶ **Look for chunks of time that are wasted.** Think about how you can use these times more effectively. For example, review your notes while waiting for a ride.

- ▶ **Plan out the week.** Each Sunday night, plan out the coming week. Make sure you have enough time to do everything scheduled.

- ▶ **Take time to relax.** Set aside time to rest, relax, and recharge your batteries.

Sometimes, the most important thing you can do when you are feeling overwhelmed is to ask for help.

Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Feeling Lonely?

Everyone feels lonely sometimes. It's normal. But feeling lonely is no fun, particularly when it lasts for an extended period of time. When that happens, know that there are ways to feel better.

Common Reasons People Feel Lonely

▶ You're in an unfamiliar situation (e.g., living in a new city, going to a new school, in a new job).

▶ You feel different, like no one shares your interests, values, or personality.

▶ You feel like no one has time for you, whether it's family or friends.

▶ There is, or was, someone important in your life who is no longer there.

▶ You don't have the kinds of strong relationships you would like to have, like a best friend or a romantic relationship.

Maybe you're feeling lonely for one of these reasons, maybe it's something else, or maybe you don't know why you feel lonely, you just do.

Know that dealing with loneliness is temporary, and it's something that everyone goes through at some point in their lives. Also know that there are things you can do to change how you're feeling.

Keep reading to learn how you can feel more connected and less alone.

Ways to Deal with Loneliness

Plan ahead. Keep track of when you feel most lonely (weekends, holidays). Plan to do something you enjoy during those times. Have a hobby or project to work on. Plan a movie night.

Help someone else. Helping others can make you feel good about yourself and lessen feelings of loneliness. Look for opportunities to volunteer in your community (e.g., at an animal shelter or nursing home).

Use positive self-talk. If you have thoughts that are negative or critical, choose to think differently. Fill your thoughts with encouraging, positive messages. (Maybe even write these messages down to read later.)

Join a group. Your school has clubs, teams, and organizations you can join—these are great ways to meet students with similar interests. Also consider getting involved in community activities, youth groups, etc.

Push yourself a little. When you're feeling lonely, sometimes it's hard to motivate yourself to do anything. Know that you have a lot to offer, and make the effort to reach out, get involved, and connect with others!

If you ever feel like you need to talk to someone but don't know where to turn, call 1-800-273-8255 or text "START" to 741741.

ANXIETY

Information and Coping Tips

Occasional anxiety is a part of life—it's a natural reaction to events or situations that are frightening or stressful.

The start of a new school year...waiting to hear if you passed the test, made the team, or got the job. All of these things can make us feel nervous and anxious.

When we feel anxious, our bodies often react by releasing adrenaline, which can increase our heart rate and breathing. For most people, the feelings of anxiety go away when the situation that caused it is over or the problem is resolved.

OVERLY ANXIOUS?

Some people suffer from anxiety that's persistent. Their anxiety affects their well-being, and interferes with their day-to-day lives. These people often:

- ▶ worry excessively and become fearful
- ▶ have difficulty sleeping and concentrating
- ▶ feel irritable, restless, and on edge

If this sounds like you, talk to a counselor or doctor. They can help you explore ways to lessen your anxiety.

WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK?

A panic attack is a sudden feeling of severe fear and distress. Individuals suffering from a panic attack may feel chest pains, nausea, sweating, shaking, intense feelings of fear—and feel like something is physically wrong. *If you experience a panic attack, take deep breaths and get to a safe place until it passes.*

WAYS TO COPE WITH ANXIETY

The following calming techniques can help with anxiety symptoms, including panic attacks.

Take deep breaths

Close your eyes and relax all of your muscles. Take a deep cleansing breath, slowly count to four, and then slowly release your breath—blowing away the anxiety and stress. Repeat. *Deep breathing is very effective in helping you feel calm and relaxed.*

Practice mindfulness

Notice everything around you. Make note of the sights, smells, and textures around you—and of how you're feeling. Throughout the day, remind yourself to be fully present and focus on the "now."

Get plenty of sleep

Getting adequate sleep is extremely important. Unplug and relax an hour before bedtime – read a book, take a bath, meditate.

Visualize

Close your eyes and imagine a relaxing scene, adding as many details as you can. Even better, pair your visualization with deep breathing.

Exercise

Physical exercise reduces stress and releases chemicals that makes you feel better. Do yoga, ride a bike, shoot hoops, or take a long walk.

Try guided meditation

With guided meditation, a voice helps you relax your body and focus your thoughts. Guided meditations are available on streaming services like **Spotify**, and on apps like **Meditation Studio** or **Calm**.

If anxiety is affecting your schoolwork or causing you problems, confide in someone you trust. Talk to a family member, counselor, or doctor and ask for their help.

Dealing with Stress

What is Stress?

Stress is your body's reaction to change, demands, or difficult situations.

Stress is a part of everyday life, but too much stress can have a negative impact on your life.

Are You Stressed?

	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 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 have to do?	▢	▢

How many did you check "Yes?" _____

Each of the above can be an indicator of stress. If you feel that stress may be a problem for you, see the back of this card for some ideas on how to reduce the stress in your life.

How to Handle Stress

▶ **Relax/Meditate.** Close your eyes, imagine a relaxing scene, and breathe deeply. Breathe in, count to four, exhale. Repeat. You might also try a guided meditation app like **Calm** or **Meditation Studio**.

▶ **Take care of mind and body.** Get plenty of sleep, eat healthy, and exercise. (Physical activity is a great way to reduce stress.)

▶ **Take time for yourself.** Do something that has made you feel calm or happy in the past. Listen to music, go for a walk, play with a pet, spend time in nature.

▶ **Get support.** Confide in others when you're feeling stressed. Whether it's a friend, family member, spiritual leader, or counselor, it's much healthier to share your concerns than it is to go it alone.

▶ **If it's beyond your control, let it go.** If you are stressed over things you can't change, let those worries go completely.

▶ **Confront your stressors.** Make a list of the things that are stressing you out and determine how each can be dealt with. Coming up with a plan will also help you feel empowered and less overwhelmed.

Resources

If you're experiencing a lot of stress, know that there are resources available to help you.

▶ **Crisis Text Line:** Text "START" to 741741

▶ **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call 1-800-273-8255 or chat online at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Top 10 Ways to Improve Mental Health

Maintaining your mental health is just as important as maintaining your physical health. Here are 10 ways to improve your mental health.

1. Get enough sleep

The amount of sleep you get impacts your mood. Go to bed at a regular time each night and make sure you get at least eight hours of sleep.

2. Exercise

Your body releases mood-improving chemicals when you exercise. Look for ways to integrate physical activity into your daily routine.

3. Open up to someone

Talking about your feelings is a great way to process them. Talk to a friend or family member when you have a problem or something is bothering you.

4. Be grateful

Notice the things you are thankful for in your everyday life. Regularly reflect on, and feel grateful for, each of these things.

5. Help someone else

Helping others has been shown to reduce stress and improve your mental health. It also just makes you feel good.

6. Be mindful

Mindfulness is being aware of the world around you and focusing on what you are experiencing. Throughout your day, remind yourself to be fully present, and to focus on the "now."

7. Eat healthy

Food fuels your body's health, including your brain. Research shows that nutrients found in health foods like fish, fruits, and vegetables can improve your brain function.

8. Deal with stress

Stress can really take a toll on your mental health. To feel more empowered and less overwhelmed, make a list of the things that stress you out and come up with a plan for dealing with them.

9. Reflect

Put the phone way, turn off the TV, and take some time every day to rest, relax, and reflect. You might also try writing your thoughts in a journal.

10. Reach out for help

Just like with physical health, we sometimes need the help of a professional to be at our best. If you'd like to feel better, talk to a counselor, advisor, or your family doctor.

Taking care of your mental health is important, and needing help is not a sign of weakness. If you need help or just need to talk, contact the Crisis Text line by texting START to 741741.

CALMING TECHNIQUES

Tips for Staying Calm and Relaxed

We all feel stressed, anxious, or angry at times. When you feel this way, it's important to have a toolbox of calming techniques to help you relax. Here are some quick and easy calming techniques.

Breathe

Breathing is the best way to feel calmer. Take a deep breath, count to four, and slowly exhale. Repeat.

Relax your body

Drop your shoulders, then flex and release all the muscles in your body, from top to bottom.

Change your thoughts

To help refocus your thoughts, visualize a bright red stop sign, say STOP, and visualize something positive.

Visualize calm

Close your eyes and visualize yourself in a peaceful setting, feeling calm, relaxed, and stress-free.

Try guided meditations

With guided meditation, a voice helps you relax your body and focus your thoughts. Guided meditations are available on **Spotify**, and on apps like **Meditation Studio** or **Calm**.

Go outside

If you're feeling stressed or anxious, going outside for some air and a short walk can help.

Do physical activity

Take a run or brisk walk, kick a ball, do jumping jacks— any physical activity that helps you release negative feelings.

Listen to music

If you aren't able to listen to music to calm you down, try singing a song in your head while taking deep breaths.

Keep a centering object

A centering object is any object (e.g., a stone, necklace, stress ball) that you can turn your attention to when you need to feel calm.

Challenge negative thoughts

Question stressful thoughts with, *"Is that likely to happen?"* or think, *"Even if that happens, I can handle it."*

Not all calming techniques will work for you all the time. But if you have a toolbox of calming techniques, you can feel confident in your ability to handle stressful situations.

And remember, you can always ask for help if you need it!