

2025



Mental Health and Wellness Toolkit:
Resources for Student Success

Contents

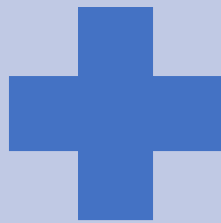
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INTRODUCTION

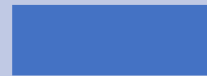
This toolkit is intended to be used as a resource. This is not a tool that allows you to diagnose or treat a mental health condition or issue. This Toolkit will serve as a living, central document for students, as well as for KC faculty and staff members to access, should a student need assistance. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide everyone on campus with information regarding mental health services and resources pertaining to education, advocacy and support of mental health.

Mental Health IS:



- Important
- Real
- Complex
- Linked to physical health
- On a continuum
- Changeable
- Part of being human
- Something we need to look after
- Positive & negative
- Worth making time for

Mental Health is NOT:



- A sign of weakness
- All in your mind
- Shameful
- Always negative
- Something to think about only when it feels broken
- Feeling good all the time
- Something you can snap out of
- Fixed
- Fake

Statistics

College Students are among the most vulnerable groups when it comes to mental health. Many are away from home for the first time, struggling to balance school, work, family, social, and financial pressures.

According to the most recent Healthy Minds Report, college students reported:

- 38% reported moderate or severe symptoms of depression
- 34% reported moderate or severe symptoms of anxiety
- 13% reported symptoms of an eating disorder
- 26% reported non-suicidal self-injury in the past year
- 13% reported suicidal ideation in the past year
- 50% reported that they have been diagnosed with a mental health diagnosis over their lifetime
- 31% have been prescribed psychiatric medication in the past year
- 36% have sought counseling in the past year

If those percentages are applied to Kilgore College's recent enrollment record of 7,288:

- 1,020 KC students experienced suicidal ideation in the past year
- 2,769 experienced moderate or severe depressive symptoms
- 2,478 experienced moderate or severe anxiety symptoms
- 1,895 experienced non-suicidal self-injury in the past year
- 3,644 have been diagnosed with a mental disorder at some time during their lifetime
- 2,259 have been prescribed with psychiatric medications in the past year

If you are struggling with mental health, you are not alone.

THE KC COUNSELING CENTER

We're here for you. The quality of your mental health affects not only your academic performance, but every aspect of your life as a student. If you're going through a tough time or have an immediate crisis, get help today with the Kilgore College Counseling Center.

Location: Devall Student Center (Building 1), 2nd floor, room 245



**Appointments are also available for the Longview campus and virtually by phone or Zoom*

Hours:

- August/January: Monday through Thursday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 8:00 am to 3:45pm
- All other months: Monday through Thursday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. The front desk is also staffed on Friday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Contact us:

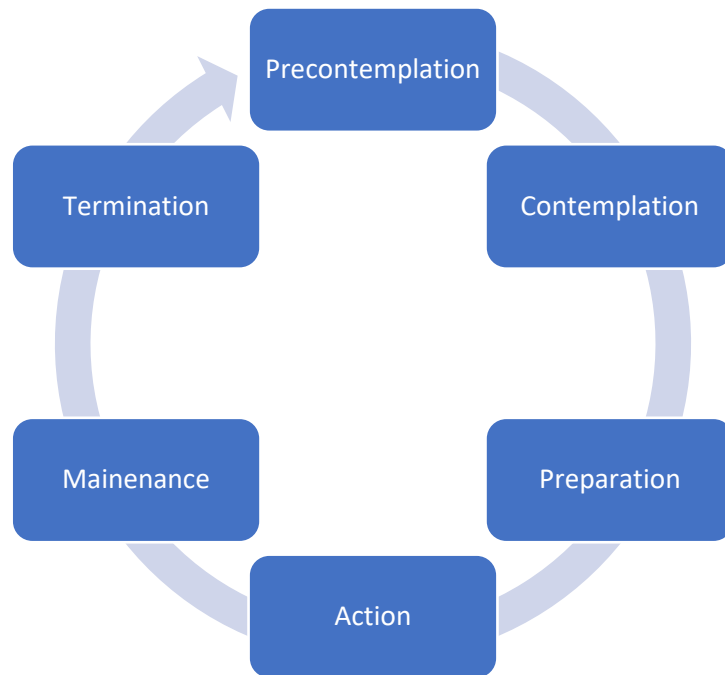
- Front desk: 903.983.8206
- Coordinator of Counseling: 903.988.7585
- Website: Kilgore.edu/counseling
- Student Request for Counseling: <https://www.kilgore.edu/counseling-appointment-request/>
- Schedule an appointment on Calendly: <https://calendly.com/counselingservices-kilgore>

About KC Counseling Services:

- Free for currently enrolled students, voluntary, and confidential
- Services include individual counseling, crisis intervention, educational workshops, group counseling, pet therapy visits
- Check out our selection of self-help e-books available for check out at the KC library: <https://search.worldcat.org/lists/a8773901-c067-4b63-853f-4ccfb07c32f4>

Stages of Change

In order to address mental health concerns, you must also be ready and willing to make changes.



What stage of change are you in?

1. Precontemplation ("not ready") – "People are not intending to take action in the foreseeable future, and can be unaware that their behavior is problematic"
2. Contemplation ("getting ready") – "People are beginning to recognize that their behavior is problematic, and start to look at the pros and cons of their continued actions"
3. Preparation ("ready") – "People are intending to take action in the immediate future, and may begin taking small steps toward behavior change"
4. Action – "People have made specific overt modifications in modifying their problem behavior or in acquiring new healthy behaviors"
5. Maintenance – "People have been able to sustain action for at least six months and are working to prevent relapse"
6. Termination – "Individuals have zero temptation and they are sure they will not return to their old unhealthy habit as a way of coping."

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

I'm feeling angry

We all get angry. It's a normal, natural response to feeling hurt or threatened by situations, other people, and sometimes even ourselves. Anger isn't always bad. It can motivate us to solve problems, make changes and improve our lives. While we can't always predict or control our emotional reactions, we can manage our response.

Meditation: Cool down and get peace of mind:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZJAsW_5SRA

Breathe: A reactive state can make it tough to make sound decisions. The best thing to do is to breathe, and if possible, step away from the cause of our anger. That's how we gain perspective and start to find solutions.

Reflect: There are two things we should never do in a moment of anger: lash out at the source of that anger or hold it in without examining it. Our emotions often tell us something important, so take the time to ask a few important questions:

- Why am I really angry? Is the anger you're feeling really about the "thing" that triggered it or is there something bigger going on with our state of mind or other issues in our lives? Understanding the root of our anger can help us figure out how to best cope with it.
- Is something going on with the person(s) I'm angry with? We all have bad days, and there's always the chance that the people who contributed to our anger are actually going through something themselves. Often, being supportive and understanding works better than lashing out.
- What have I learned from my past reactions to anger? Acting on anger in the moment rarely leads to a good outcome, but sometimes it's hard to see that when we're dealing with intense feelings. Think about a past reaction that led to negative consequences and how can you avoid that outcome now. Or remember a time when you dealt with anger constructively, leading to a positive outcome. Can that approach help you deal with current feelings?
- How can I prevent, lessen or best cope with anger? We often have no control over what makes us angry. But regardless of the source of our anger, it's important to develop ways of coping. Other times, we need to make positive changes in our lives and routines

to lessen or prevent situations that contribute to our anger. Learn about coping skills here: <https://www.apa.org/topics/anger/control>.

- Is anger interfering with my work, school, relationships or quality of life? If you're feeling angry more frequently, or reactions to that anger are impacting your quality of life, it's important to reach out for help. Anger can be a symptom of mental health conditions like depression or anxiety disorders that are best managed with the support of a mental health professional. Learn more about these conditions here: <https://www.healthline.com/health/anger-issues#causes>.

Learn: Thanks to research, we now know a lot about anger, what causes it, how it impacts us physically and emotionally, and how we can manage it. Learning about anger can help us better understand its role in our own lives.

Videos:

- Why we get mad, and why it's healthy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rAngiiXBAC>
- Anger management techniques: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsVq5R_F6RA

Act: The best strategies for managing anger and preventing its negative consequences can differ from person to person. Try different approaches to see what works best for you.

- Anger, Compassion, and what it means to be strong: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QG4Z185MBJE&t=467s>
- Anger management at work: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/melodywilding/2016/06/01/5-ways-to-stay-cool-when-work-is-making-you-angry/?sh=5596ba5c7865>

Connect: Talking about anger helps. You can start the conversation with a friend or family member, or access one of the resources below.

I'm feeling anxious

Anxiety is a normal emotion that evolved as an age-old survival instinct from when humans faced frequent threats. That response to stressful situations still exists inside all of us, and it can be overwhelming. If anxiety starts to interfere with our ability to enjoy life, it's time to manage those feelings in a healthy way.

Breathe: Anxiety has physical side effects like chest tightness and shallow breathing, which can make it hard to think clearly and feel calmer. Breathing exercises can alleviate that physical reaction and help us cope in the moment.

- Breathe and Let Go of Stress: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1Ndym-lsQg>

Reflect: Distracting ourselves to anxious feelings may provide temporary relief, but when it's not addressed directly, anxiety can come back with a vengeance. Leaning into anxious feelings can help us identify coping strategies to use. Start by asking these questions.

- What triggered an anxiety spike? Anxiety can be disorienting because we don't always know what caused it. If you are able to pinpoint the source of your anxiety, that can be a helpful first step toward addressing it. Is there a particular person or situation that is causing those anxious feelings?
- Have you felt this way before? Thinking back to other times we have felt anxious can help identify triggers—especially those that are less obvious. Journaling is a great way to discover those patterns. Maybe you feel more anxious when your morning routine is rushed or after interactions with certain people.
- Can you change it? If you are able to pinpoint triggers for your anxiety, think about ways you can make changes to lessen those feelings. This can include limiting contact with a specific person, adjusting your schedule, having a conversation you've been avoiding, or asking for help.
- Can you accept it? Sometimes, we can't change the things that contribute to our anxiety. For instance, if we are struggling with an illness or a dynamic at work or school, we may need to accept a certain level of anxiety and find ways to cope with those feelings.

Learn: If you're anxious a lot, it can help to explore what's known about anxiety and how to effectively manage it.

- Understanding Stress and Anxiety: <https://activeminds.org/resource/understanding-anxiety-stress/>
- Not Another Anxiety Show Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/not-another-anxiety-show/id1175495815>

Act: Effective coping strategies are a powerful tool that anyone struggling with anxiety can access at any time. What works can differ from person to person, so try out different methods until you land on strategies that are right for you.

- The Anxiety and Depression Association has put together a list of tips and coping strategies: <https://adaa.org/tips>

- A list of 8 apps recommended by mental health professionals:
<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/wellness/g27128259/best-anxiety-apps/>
- Meditation tips: Dealing with Anxiety:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzNSgdV9qYU>
- What to tell myself when I'm feeling anxious:
 - This feeling won't last forever.
 - Thoughts and emotions aren't facts.
 - I can feel anxious and still handle this.
 - My bravery is stronger than my fear.
 - I am safe right now.
 - Anxiety is reminding me to slow down my breathing.
 - I've survived other tough times before, and I will be resilient this time too.
 - This feeling is a normal reaction. I will use my coping tools to respond with thoughtfulness and self-compassion.
 - I don't have to figure this all out right now; I will trust the process.
 - Thank you, anxiety, for always trying to look out for me, but it's okay now; I got this!

Connect: Bottling up anxiety can make it worse. Talking about it often makes it better. If anxiety is interfering with school, work, or relationships, it's wise to reach out for support from a professional before things get worse.

I'm feeling homesick

Going away to college is a big life transition, and it can also be hard to leave home. However, it's important to remember that you haven't left for good. You can always go home for a visit or to stay if you really want to. But while you're away at college, you have a whole new world of people and fun opening up to you! Enjoy this exciting time of growth and adventure by getting involved in campus activities and meeting new people. When homesickness hits you hard, allow yourself to feel it and seek help if you are struggling. As you continue your college journey, maintain your connections to home with regular phone calls, visits, and decorative touches.

Staying Connected to Home

- Talk to people at home via weekly phone calls. Don't rely on social media, text, or emails alone to stay connected. Make sure that you call home once per week or more if needed to maintain your connections. You could even try video chatting with friends and family back home to feel even more connected.

- Try scheduling a weekly phone call home when you have time to sit and chat for a while, such as on a Saturday morning or on a weeknight evening when you don't have anything planned.
- Plan a visit home so you'll have something to look forward to. Most colleges give students a long weekend and a week-long break at some point during the semester, which is the perfect opportunity to head home for a visit. Plan out your visit in advance by securing transportation and making plans with friends and family back home. You may want to mark the visit on your calendar and count down the days if it makes you feel better.
- Decorate your room with things that remind you of home. Your dorm room or college apartment is your home away from home, so you can decorate it however you want. Try decorating it with a few items from your bedroom at home to help make it seem more inviting. You could even maintain the same color scheme and theme as your bedroom back home if you'd like.

Coping with Your Feelings

- Acknowledge your feelings and allow yourself to experience them. If you notice that you're feeling homesick, don't try to ignore how you're feeling. Acknowledge that you're experiencing homesickness and allow yourself to feel sad for a while, such as by crying or just being quiet and noticing how you feel. However, try to make sure to limit how long you spend feeling sad, such as keeping it to a 1–2-hour window. You might also benefit from writing about your feelings. This can help you to understand your feelings better and give you time to experience them.
- Talk to a friend or family member about how you're feeling. Once you have given yourself permission and time to experience your feelings, talk to someone you trust about what you're going through. Try calling up a friend, parent, or sibling and telling them how you feel. For example, you might say something like, "I'm feeling really sad and I think it's because I'm homesick." Let them know how being homesick is affecting you, such as if it's making it hard to concentrate or enjoy fun things.
- Keep in mind that homesickness may continue for a while, or it may come and go throughout your college years. This is perfectly normal. Be patient with yourself and don't try to force yourself to feel better.
- Visit the KC counseling center if you're struggling. It's especially important to talk with a counselor if your homesickness is interfering with your ability to succeed in your courses or engage in everyday activities. Also, make sure to talk to someone right away if you've lost interest in things you used to enjoy.

Get Involved in Campus Life

- Join a club or special interest group on campus. This is a great way to fill your time, meet new friends, and have fun while you're in college.
- Attend your classes even if you're feeling down. Regular attendance is important for doing well in college and it's also a great way to distract yourself if you're feeling homesick. Don't skip class because you're feeling sad about missing home. Go to class, learn as much as you can, and talk to people!
- Take advantage of campus amenities. If you don't have anything going on, use the time to explore a new part of your campus, like the gym or library.
- Introduce yourself to classmates and others. It can be a little scary to be in a new place with all new people, but it's also very exciting! Take the opportunity to make new friends. Introduce yourself to the person or people sitting next to you in each of your classes. Ask them where they're from, what their major is, and how they're liking college so far.
- Many instructors include an icebreaker activity on the first day of classes to help students get to know each other. Try to remember the names of each of the people you meet during this activity. Then, greet them by their name if you happen to bump into them later in the day.
- Make plans to do things with the people you meet. Look for opportunities to invite people to do things with you and accept invitations from people that you want to get to know better.

Remember that you're not alone in how you're feeling. Your classmates, roommates, and other people you encounter around campus are likely missing home, too.

I'm feeling hopeless

Many of us experience hopelessness from time to time. It's a false feeling that tells us that the future looks bleak and there's no way past the hurt we're experiencing. The good news is we can break the negative cycle of hopelessness and regain our sense of optimism, even if it doesn't feel like that right now.

Breathe: Hopelessness can make our proverbial glass seem more than just half empty. So, let's start filling it back up with optimism, hope, and a restorative deep breath:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/NmLa7KF1MQ>

Reflect: When we're having a tough time, we tend to find reasons to support the false perception that there's no way out. The following questions can help us shift focus and feel better.

- Have I felt like this before? Most of us have had moments or situations in our past where we've felt hopeless, stuck or trapped. Think about one of those times when you really felt like there was no solution or way past the pain. Remember that you figured out a way to get through it before and tell yourself, you can do it again.
- Are these negative thoughts untrue? We've all faced rejection. Maybe from a job opportunity that seemed so perfect but fell through, or a first date that left you feeling ecstatic but never texted you back. Suddenly we're convinced that we'll never land that dream job or ever fall in love, but there's no real truth to that negative thinking. And so often in life, rejection and failure is part of the journey to success. Don't just accept the lies told to you by that negative voice inside your head—challenge them.
- What's something I can do? It's not always easy to focus on solutions when we're feeling overwhelmed, but try to think of one thing you could do to feel better or improve things. Hopelessness is a place that we move out of one step at a time. Just remember, there's always a next step to take.
- What are you grateful for? Gratitude can help combat feelings of hopelessness. So, grab a pen and paper and write down at least three things you appreciate in your life. The simple act of switching focus from all of the things that are wrong to the things we are grateful for can help shift our perspective.

Learn: One of the most powerful ways to see past our own feelings of hopelessness is to hear stories from people who have been hopeless and found a way to cope and move forward.

- Overcoming Hopelessness: Born with a rare disorder, Nick shares the powerful role that his support system played in helping him overcome hopelessness. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6P2nPI6CTlc>
- Finding Hope in Hopelessness: Peta Murchinson and her family's extraordinary story is both sad and inspiring as tragedy forced them to connect with others in ways they could never have expected. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGQbWJbi3hg>

Act: When we're feeling down or hopeless, it can be hard to get motivated to do anything. Feeling the pressure to fix everything at once only weighs us down more.

- Move: The simple act of getting up, going outside and taking a walk can help shift perspectives.

- Talk about it: Lots of us have experienced hopeless feelings, and it helps to talk about them with someone you trust.
- Practice self-care: Instead of judging yourself for feeling down or hopeless, be empathetic and take care of yourself.
- Help someone else: Volunteering or helping someone else boosts our mental health and helps

Connect: Hopelessness can be a sign of mental health conditions like depression or anxiety disorders. Working with a mental health professional on a treatment plan can prevent a lot of suffering.

I'm feeling lonely

Loneliness isn't always about being alone. It's actually a state of mind where the human contact we crave seems out of reach, leaving us feeling empty and disconnected. The causes and solutions for loneliness can differ from person to person, and when left unaddressed, it can negatively impact our physical and mental health.

Breathe: Loneliness can leave us feeling sad, stressed, tired and apathetic. It can also interfere with sleep and weaken our immune systems, so it's important to take care of ourselves when we're feeling lonely.

- This meditation teaches us small ways to practice self-care during difficult times: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mqgxi8mt4t0>
- This simple video from Yoga with Adrienne is designed for anyone who is lonely or has felt alone. Spend 20 minutes filling the body with breath and shaking off anxiety and apathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFVzpvz0FgQ>
- The process of learning about the causes and cures of our loneliness may feel overwhelming. Try this quick 4-7-8 breathing exercise to help calm the mind and body: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Dv-lIdGLnIY>

Reflect: Understanding what's going inside can help us address feelings of loneliness. Focusing on the aspects of our lives that help us feel more connected can also help us cope with and overcome lonely feelings.

- What contributes to your loneliness? It's important to explore what makes us lonely and what situations intensify those feelings. Sometimes our instinct is to conclude that we're

lonely because we're unlikable, unappreciated or simply unwanted. Don't be so hard on yourself and instead look inside. Often, the reality is that we create walls, obstacles or situations that contribute to feeling lonely. So, dig deeper. Are there any controllable aspects of your life that are making you feel lonely?

- When and where do you feel lonely? When we're lonely, it's easy to succumb to unhelpful blanket statements like, "I'm unlovable." But if we start examining what's really going on inside, we'll make important discoveries about the situations that trigger loneliness. Maybe it's after spending a lot of time scrolling through social media or hanging out with certain friends. The more you understand about what contributes to your loneliness, the more you can change routines or interactions to help lessen negative feelings.
- What makes you feel less lonely? As you identify what makes you feel more alone, it's also important to explore the parts of your life that make you feel more connected. Does talking to a certain friend or family member make you feel less lonely? Does taking a group exercise class or volunteering make you feel more like you belong? When we identify the people and things that add value to our lives, we can focus our energies on feeling better.

Learn: This episode of Glad You Asked explores what causes loneliness, how it affects our health and what we can do to address it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EidKI1Bdons>

Act: If you're experiencing loneliness, try these ways to feel better.

- Redefine what it means to be connected: Social media has many of us so focused on followers and likes that we lose touch with what relationships are all about. Connection isn't about the quantity of "friends" we have, it's about that small group of people who really know us and support us.
- Focus on important relationships: It might feel like combating loneliness means adding more people or activities to our lives, but sometimes it's more about appreciating and deepening relationships with friends and family members who are already in our lives.
- Talk about it: Talking more openly about lonely feelings can help. But if you're in one of those phases of your life where you don't have someone to talk to, that's okay. Don't be afraid or ashamed to find a therapist or counselor using the resources below.
- Remove obstacles: Maybe you work from home and have trouble getting motivated to go out, or you struggle with confidence or self-esteem. These obstacles can contribute to feelings of loneliness, but it helps to identify the ones that you can move out of your way and make a plan to overcome them.

- Meet people with shared interests: Look for opportunities to do things with people who have similar interests. Take classes, join local organizations, or connect with an online or community group. Putting the emphasis on shared interests helps break the ice, creates instant bonds, and gives everyone something in common.
- Doing good does us good: Volunteering is a chance to work alongside like-minded people. But more than just the opportunity to meet new people, the very act of giving back also supports our mental health by making us feel more connected to our community.
- There's more to college than attending classes, studying and taking exams. Have fun and learn valuable life skills by getting involved on campus. Whether you want to meet up with friends over food, join a club, work out, attend or participate in performances, sporting events or workshops, you'll find what you need on campus. Check out the KC student clubs and organizations here: <https://www.kilgore.edu/campus-life/student-clubs-organizations/> and learn more about campus life here: <https://www.kilgore.edu/campus-life/office-of-campus-life/>.

Connect: If feelings of loneliness last an extended period of time, it's important to reach out for support to prevent further impact on our well-being. Mental health professionals can help us explore the causes of loneliness and ways to overcome it.

I'm feeling sad

We all feel sad sometimes, whether we're going through a break-up, receiving bad news, or simply watching a really heartbreaking movie. Sadness isn't necessarily a "bad" thing — it can make us more empathetic and resilient, and sad feelings can be reduced or managed. Sadness is different from the medical condition depression, which you can learn about here.

Breathe and let go of sadness with this mini meditation from Headspace:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEqZthCaMpo>

Reflect: Too often our response to challenging emotions is to just push through them, and sadness is one of those feelings that's often seen as something to avoid. Instead, try leaning into those feelings instead of ignoring or outrunning them.

- Name Your Feelings: Part of reflecting on difficult feelings is naming them. There's actually science that proves it.
- Write About Them: Journaling is a powerful way to lean into sadness. Spend a few minutes each day writing about how you're feeling.

- **Accept Them:** Acknowledge that it's okay to feel sad. Remind yourself that these feelings will lessen over time.

Learn: It's important to understand the difference between sadness — which is often in response to a difficult experience and subsides naturally over time — and the signs of clinical depression.

- Learn more about what happens when we deny or push away our feelings:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5tjjHoXoEI>
- Take a journey through “a brief history of melancholy”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8li-3pRrA5Y>
- Dig deeper into the differences between sadness and depression:
<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2019/10/the-difference-between-feeling-sad-and-having-depression/>

Act: The best strategies for dealing with sadness can differ from person to person. Try different approaches to see what works best for you.

- Tips from a psychotherapist on how to manage sadness and pain:
<https://greatist.com/health/list-of-emotions#1>
- Being grateful is a powerful way to cope with sadness and other difficult feelings. Check out this gratitude experiment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg&t=10s>
- Watch cute animal videos: While it's important for our emotional health to lean into our difficult feelings, sometimes we need laughter and warm, fuzzy feelings:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkD2nN5275c>

Connect: Talking about sadness can help you feel better. Start the conversation using one of the resources below.

I'm feeling stressed

We often talk about stress as a bad thing, but in small doses, stress can motivate us to finish tasks more efficiently, reach goals and find creative solutions to problems. While it's true that chronic stress can harm our well-being, there are strategies and resources to help us handle stress in healthy and even beneficial ways.

Breathe: Stress can trigger a fight or flight response in our body, an evolutionary function where muscles tense up and our heart rate increases in response to a perceived threat to our

survival. When this happens, deep breaths can help you find a calmer state.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1Ndym-lsQg>

Reflect: Stress can be overwhelming in the moment, but writing in a journal can help us reflect on what happens to us during stressful situations in our lives. This article from VeryWellMind walks through the benefits of journaling and suggests ways to get started:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-journaling-for-stress-management-3144611>

Learn: Over the last few decades, we've learned a lot about stress—what causes it, how we can prevent its negative impact, and ways it can have value in our lives.

Stress 101:

- Five things to know about stress: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>
- Are you stressed or anxious? <https://activeminds.org/resource/understanding-anxiety-stress/>
- How stress affects our bodies:
https://www.ted.com/talks/sharon_horesh_bergquist_how_stress_affects_your_body
- How stress affects our brains:
https://www.ted.com/talks/madhumita_murgia_how_stress_affects_your_brain
- Everything you need to know about stress:
<https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/stress>

Act: These stress management strategies from the Mayo Clinic are easy to incorporate into our lives starting today.

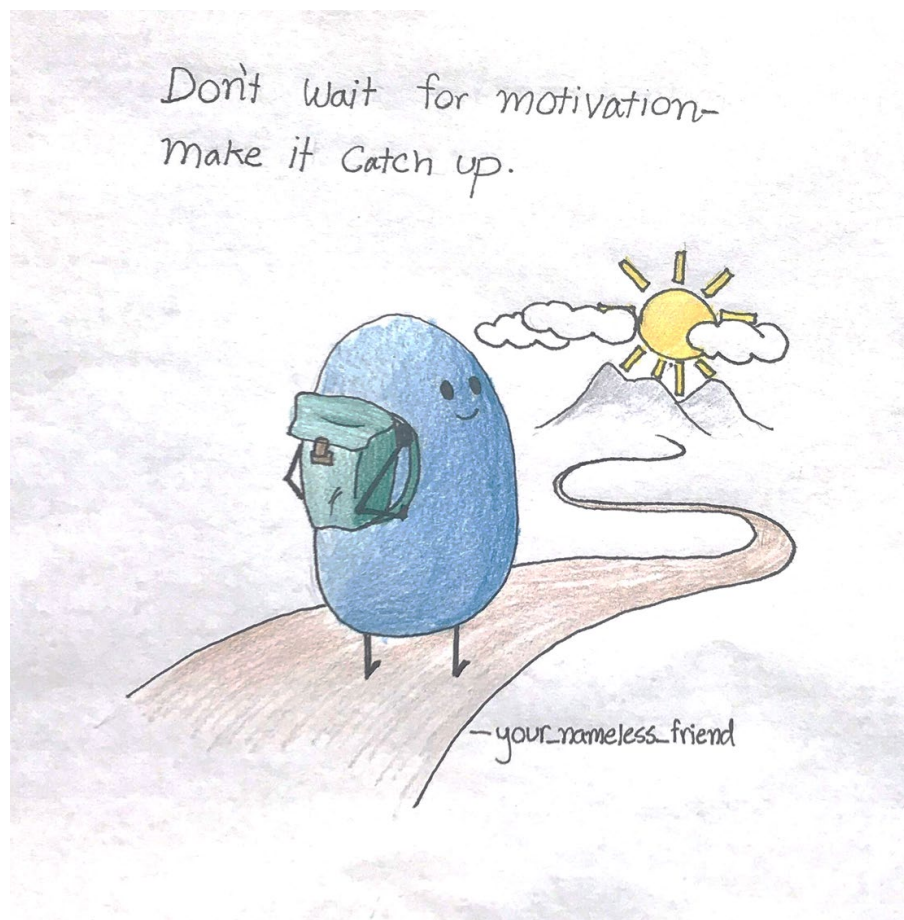
- **Avoid:** By simply planning ahead, being realistic about our workloads, and saying “no” when we need to, we can avoid a lot of stress.
- **Alter:** Reflecting during stressful moments can help us better understand what causes our stress, so we can alter our behaviors or surroundings to improve the situation.
- **Accept:** Sometimes we can't avoid or alter a stressful situation and, in those cases, it's best to talk about it and find effective ways to cope with it.
- **Adapt:** A lot of stress is the product of our inner dialogue and perspective on the situation. By reframing the issue and adjusting our viewpoint, we can stop that stress right where it started...in our own minds.

Resources:

- Book: The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Workbook: Evidence-Based CBT Skills to Help You Manage Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and More (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1417196700>)
- Video: Bilateral Music to Calm Fight-or-Flight | Ease Panic, PTSD & Stress
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgMH89btVQA>

Connect: Talking about your stress and getting advice on how to manage it can help a lot. Start the conversation with a friend or family member or reach out to a local mental health professional.

I'm feeling unmotivated



Do you ever procrastinate to avoid unpleasant tasks or assignments? Do you find it hard to get started? Do you struggle to stay focused and on task when working from your dorm room,

house, or apartment? Motivating yourself to go to class, complete assignments, study, and do all the other things required of you in college can be difficult—but it's crucial to your college success. Research shows that students can learn how to become better learners by using effective motivation strategies. Successful students know how to self-regulate (control) their own learning and the factors that impact their learning. Fortunately, there are strategies for increasing motivation and self-efficacy, which can in turn increase chances of academic success and well-being.

Effort over ability

One of the key differences between people who do and don't succeed is not their ability level but their effort and motivation levels. Few people wake up wanting to do unpleasant or boring tasks. The ones who do them and succeed in them are the ones who believe they can and motivate themselves to do them even when they don't feel like it. Here are some specific strategies you can use to develop your self-motivation and improve your overall success.

Motivational strategies to set yourself up for success

- Set clear goals. Include daily, weekly, semester, and long-term goals. Write them down somewhere easily visible. Use SMART goals to be specific and create a plan: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound. For example: Instead of saying, "I want to get better grades," say something like, "I want to get at least an 85% on my BIO exam on March 5." Even better, set up concrete goals (e.g., increased study hours, peer tutoring) that help you track your progress toward that long-term goal. For example, instead of saying, "I want to do well in my online classes," say something like, "I want to devote thirty minutes tomorrow to taking notes on my Spanish textbook before starting my online homework."
- Help yourself focus. Eliminate or limit things that are distracting and cause you to procrastinate. Take distracting apps off your phone, turn off the TV, study outside of your dorm room, keep your phone/laptop away during class or study times, create a designated study space in your bedroom or home, block Netflix, clear out the junk food, etc. If you know you struggle with something, make it more difficult for you to indulge in that temptation.
- Pace yourself. Chunk your study, work, and reading times into small sections (30-60 minutes) with breaks in between. Breaks are important for your focus, health, and motivation and should be worked into any study time. If you are going to be studying or working for longer, go back and forth between one task or class and another.
- Prioritize. Study early in the day and do the most challenging or unpleasant tasks first. Research shows that tackling difficult tasks first thing in the day can make you feel better throughout the rest of the day and be more productive. Doing so keeps you from procrastinating all day and having that dreaded feeling of knowing that you need to do something unpleasant.

- Location, location, location. Think about where you work best and where you will be most motivated to get to work and stay working. For most people, their dorm room or bed are not ideal, as they come with many distractions. Some students focus better in a public place like the library or a coffee shop, while others prefer silence and isolation, like a quiet and secluded room on campus. Some students benefit from blocking off an area in their home that they use exclusively for studying and working on projects.

Self-care strategies

- Get enough sleep. Aim for at least 7 hours a night. Sleep is important to motivation. If you aren't well-rested and are running on fumes, it's a lot more difficult to be productive, stay focused, and motivate yourself.
- Build a routine and healthy habits. Structure healthy habits like meals, sleep, exercise, and study times into your daily schedule and then stick with it. Motivating yourself to accomplish tasks becomes easier when you make it a part of your regular routine.
- Eat and drink healthily. Drink enough water—your body needs water to function and improve energy. Eat regularly, don't skip meals, and try to eat healthy foods. You need energy to complete tasks, and it's much easier to get started and stay focused on work if you are well fed.

Metacognitive strategies

- Reflect on what makes you happy, what fulfills you, and what you are passionate about. Try to align what you do with things that make you happy and fulfill you. If you spend all of your time doing or pursuing things that you do not like or care about, you may never be fully motivated. Choosing pathways and activities that interest you is one of the biggest ways to better motivate yourself.
- Give yourself rewards for accomplishing difficult tasks and identify strategies that help keep you accountable.
- Think about what support you need in order to achieve your goals and then get the support you need. This could include investing in a new planner, attending peer tutoring, or making an appointment with an academic coach at the Learning Center.
- Accept that you aren't perfect. Many students lack motivation because they are afraid of not performing as well as they would like. Combat your fear of failure by telling yourself that your self-worth does not depend on your ability to perform. Include your image of success to include personal and social success and growth.

- Write a letter to your future self to remind yourself of your goals. Read this message when you find yourself feeling unmotivated.
- Reflect. When you have a task to accomplish, reflect before, during, and after. Think about your feelings towards the task, what you need to do to accomplish it, and how you feel when you are done.
- Talk to yourself out loud about your dreams and goals and speak encouraging, positive words to yourself. Compliment yourself and tell yourself you can do it.
- List out what is preventing you from doing what you need to do, then find ways to tackle those things. Be specific.
- Think long-term. Keep focused on your long-term goals and think about them when you're feeling unmotivated. Remind yourself of how this task or step gets you closer to your big goals. Print out a picture of where you want to be in the future and post it on your wall or mirror.
- If you're feeling stuck, visualize yourself as you want to be in the future. Picture yourself in your future career or situation and remind yourself of what you are working for.
- Stay positive and optimistic. Avoid complaining or commiserating at times when you planned to make progress towards your goals. If the problems or obstacles can be set aside till later, it may help to write them down to ensure you get back to them. If there's a problem that cannot be set aside, seek out resources and support to help you address what's wrong.
- Think about consequences. Sometimes thinking about the negative consequences of not doing a particular task you might be stuck on can be motivating. Alternatively, think about the reward of accomplishing the goal (or at least the feeling of being getting it over with) as a motivator.

Accountability strategies

- Set visual reminders and alarms on your phone and laptop to remind and encourage yourself of your goal. Consider changing the background of your phone and laptop to a motivational quote or simply to saying the goal that you want to reach. Create positive and encouraging visual reminders and motivators to hang on your bedroom wall or mirror.
- Share your goals with a friend, classmate, or someone in your life. Reach out to someone and ask them to help keep you accountable with your work and goals. Check in with this person face-to-face or online regularly to discuss your progress.

- Attend office hours to discuss the class with your professor and gain specific tips and suggestions.

Resources:

- Video: Why You Procrastinate - and How to Stop it for Good
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctyqx6trUmo&t=451s>
- Book: The 5 Second Rule: Transform your Life, Work, and Confidence with Everyday Courage by Mel Robbins: The 5 Second Rule is the secret to changing anything about your life. You can use the Rule and its countdown method to break any bad habit, interrupt self-doubt and negative self-talk, and push yourself to take the actions that will change your life. If you struggle with motivation...If you are tired of doubting yourself... If you know what you want but can't make yourself go get it...You NEED The 5 Second Rule. The secret to changing your life isn't knowing what to do--it's knowing how to make yourself do it. It's a simple tool, backed by research, and it has changed the lives of millions. It will work for you too. Using the science of habits, riveting stories, and surprising facts from some of the most famous moments in history, Mel Robbins will explain the power of a five second decision. You'll also meet and inspired by hundreds of people around the world who are using the Rule to achieve their goals, reach their potential, and chase their dreams.
- How to stay motivated in college: <https://www.excelsior.edu/article/how-to-stay-motivated-in-college/>
- How to find the motivation to study: <https://www.vu.edu.au/about-vu/news-events/vu-blog/how-to-find-the-motivation-to-study>
- Video: Realistic Advice for Unmotivated College Students:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP8B6SMwNSg>

I'm feeling unprepared

Starting college is a major milestone, marking your official entry into adulthood. You're not just a student anymore; you're learning to handle real-life responsibilities while enjoying newfound independence. It's a thrilling, yet sometimes overwhelming, experience. Balancing your social life, health, and studies can be a challenge, but don't worry—you're not alone in figuring this out!

Resources:

- Mastering adulthood: go beyond adulting to become an emotional grown-up (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1043958780>)
- Life Skills Every Adult Should Have: <https://www.moneycrashers.com/adulting-life-skills-grown-up/>
- Understanding your Finances: A Guide for College Students: <https://upgradedpoints.com/credit-cards/students-guide-to-credit/>

I'm feeling weird

Sometimes it's easy to describe how we're feeling inside. Other times, we just feel "off," different or overwhelmed and can't really pinpoint what's going on. Even when we can't exactly name the emotion or what's causing it, we can still take actions to improve the way we feel and take care of ourselves.

Breathe: Feeling weird or "off" emotionally can be confusing. But it's hard to make good decisions when we're overwhelmed or scattered. These breathing exercises can help us quiet some of that noise so we can feel calmer and think more clearly:

- Breathing for difficult emotions—this short breathing exercise was designed to help us cope with sadness, depression, or anxiety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybl3Cou9pTc>
- Mini-breathing meditation—A one-minute breathing meditation to help us feel more present and centered: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEqZthCaMpo&feature=youtu.be>
- Feeling Off—this article helps us dig into reasons we might not feel like ourselves some days or weeks: <https://psychcentral.com/blog/when-you-dont-feel-like-yourself#1>

Reflect: Journaling helps us reflect on difficult thoughts and feelings, so we can better understand and address what we're going through. This article from VeryWellMind is a good place to start: <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-journaling-for-stress-management-3144611>

Learn: Feeling "weird" often involves emotions we can't name, an overall foggy feeling or an inability to focus. These videos can help us learn about those feelings, dig deeper and help manage them.

- Unexplainable Emotions--This video from Psych2Go walks us through 12 emotions that we might feel, but can't explain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bny9YViO15o>
- Feeling Lonely and Odd--This video from The School of Life emphasizes that feeling odd isn't actually that unusual: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypXwioZXUrE>
- Brain in a Fog--The Mighty created a video to help us better understand what brain fog feels like: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJZpwwUsQYY>

Act: Headspace features video experiences to help us manage difficult emotions. Learn breathing techniques and meditation to unwind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldFD-L-Csz0>

Connect: Feeling “weird” can be unsettling and your inclination may be to ignore those feelings and hope they go away. But when things don't feel right, we need to explore those feelings and talk about them.

[I'm experiencing abuse \(dating/domestic violence, sexual assault/harassment/trafficking\)](#)

People often equate the term “abuse” with physical violence, but abuse is actually any pattern of behavior used to harm, belittle or gain control over another person. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, digital or financial. No one deserves to be treated that way, so it's critical to speak up at the first signs of abuse.

Learn more about the different types of abuse, the warning signs and how to get help. If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse and you aren't sure what actions to take, please contact one of the resources below.

- Physical abuse—this is what most people think of when they hear the word “abuse.” It includes punching, hitting, slapping, kicking, strangling, or physically restraining someone against their will. It can also include putting someone at risk of harm by driving recklessly. <https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/>
- Emotional abuse—Words and manipulation can be just as painful and damaging as physical abuse. Verbal abuse involves name-calling, threats, criticism, gaslighting, and other emotional ways to control someone, make them feel weak, small, and unable to stand up for themselves. <https://www.joinonelove.org/learn/emotional-abuse-really-means/>
- Sexual violence is a broad term that includes sexual assault, rape, and sexual abuse. It affects hundreds of thousands of Americans each year and is most often perpetrated by

someone the victim knows or is in a relationship with. <https://rainn.org/about-sexual-assault>

- Financial abuse can involve concealing information, limiting the victim's access to assets, or reducing access to family finances. Like other types of abuse, it is meant to intimidate, threaten, or manipulate someone to keep them trapped in a relationship. <https://nnedv.org/content/about-financial-abuse/>
- Digital abuse is the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk, or intimidate someone. Basically, it is emotional or verbal abuse perpetrated online.

Act: Regardless of where you are in your treatment journey, there are simple strategies for coping in those moments when the effects of trauma feel overwhelming. These resources are a great place to start to help yourself or support a friend.

- Recognize the Abuse: The first step is to acknowledge the abuse and call it what it is. While physical abuse has clear warning signs, emotional and verbal abuse can be harder to spot. Healthline put together these warning signs to help.
- Make a Plan: Before taking any action, it's important to make a plan that helps keep yourself, and any children or pets, safe. The Hotline put together a guide and you can contact them directly for a confidential conversation and help in creating your safety plan. <https://www.thehotline.org/plan-for-safety/create-your-personal-safety-plan/>
- Report the Abuse: Intervention can be lifesaving, but people may be afraid to contact the police about abuse because they're worried, they may not be believed or they're concerned it will lead to conflict with officers. The Hotline put together some tips and information to help when considering how and when to report abuse. <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/reporting-to-police-options-tips-for-being-prepared/>
- Support a Friend: Abuse is a sensitive and dangerous issue. If you're concerned about friends, trust your instincts and show them support. Huffington Post put together some tips to help in supporting a loved one. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/5-ways-to-help-someone-wh_b_6064438

Title IX:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 protects individuals from discrimination and harassment based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination and is therefore prohibited under Title IX. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

constitute sexual harassment when this conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or educational performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile work or educational environment.

Kilgore College is committed to providing an environment of academic study and employment free from harassment or discrimination to all segments of its community; its faculty, staff, students, guests and vendors; and will promptly address all complaints of discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

Students may also contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (800-421-3481) to complain of sex discrimination or sexual harassment including sexual violence.

Members of the Kilgore College community, students, employees, and guests have the right to be free from discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault. All members of the campus community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others. The College believes in a zero-tolerance policy for gender-based misconduct. When an allegation of misconduct is brought to an appropriate administrator's attention, and a respondent is found to have violated this policy, sanctions will be used to reasonably ensure that such actions are never repeated.

File a Title ix Complaint

Whether you are a student, faculty, staff member or visitor, you have the right to file a complaint. Complaints or reports of sexual misconduct should be submitted to the Kilgore College Title IX Coordinator. In an emergency, please call 911, Kilgore College Police at (903) 983-8650, or your local Police Department.

Title IX Incident Report Form: <https://www.kilgore.edu/additional-resources/title-ix/title-ix-incident-report/>

For more information or questions, contact the Title IX Officer at (903) 983-8682.

Connect: Abuse puts survivors at greater risk of mental health conditions, substance misuse and suicide, so it's important to never ignore the warning signs. If you feel hopeless or like you can't go on, contact one of the resources below as soon as possible.

Women's Center of East Texas

- Crisis hotline: 800.441.5555
- <https://www.wc-et.org/>
- Serving survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking Crisis hotline, emergency shelter, counseling, support groups, legal support and advocacy, accompaniment to legal and medical appointments, information and referrals, community education
- Gregg, Harrison, Upshur, Marion, Rusk, and Panola Counties

East Texas Crisis Center

- Office: (903) 509-2526
- Hotline: 800-333-0358
- <https://etcc.org/>
- Counseling, emergency shelter, Crisis Intervention, Advocacy therapy, and support groups for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault. Violence intervention program, family protective orders
- Smith, Henderson, Van Zandt, Wood Counties

Crisis Center of Anderson and Cherokee Counties

- Hotline: (800) 232-8519
- <https://www.mycrisiscenter.com/>
- Serving survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, child abuse and neglect. Offers emergency shelter, advocacy, counseling, community education, and crisis hotline.
- Anderson & Cherokee Counties

Rahab's Retreat and Ranch

- 903.218.4985
- <https://www.rahabsretreatandranch.com/>
- Rahab's Retreat & Ranch is a voluntary, faith-based program serving victims of sex trafficking and women in the sex industry free of charge. Women who have been physically, emotionally and sexually abused as well as those coming from jail will find a safe haven at Rahab's Retreat & Ranch.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- 800.799.SAFE (7233)
- <https://www.thehotline.org/>
- Get help, identify abuse, plan for safety call/chat/text hotline

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

- <https://www.ncdsv.org/>
- A college student's guide to safety planning:
https://www.ncdsv.org/uploads/1/4/2/2/142238266/lir_acollegestudentsguidetosafetyplanning.pdf
- Safety planning: <https://www.ncdsv.org/safety-planning.html>

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

- 800.656.HOPE
- <https://rainn.org/>
- RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline. RAINN partners with more than 1,000

local sexual assault service providers across the country and operates the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

National Human Trafficking Hotline

- National Trafficking Hotline: 888.373.7888 (TTY: 711)
- Text: 233733
- <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en>
- If you or someone you know needs help, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline toll-free hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-888-373-7888 to speak with a specially trained Anti-Trafficking Hotline Advocate. Support is provided in more than 200 languages. We are here to listen and connect you with the help you need to stay safe.

Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC)

- <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/>
- Campus stalking fact sheet: <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Campus-Stalking-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Campus stalking infographic: <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Campus-Stalking-Infographic.pdf>
- Stalking log: https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SPARC_StalkingLogInstructions_2018_FINAL.pdf
- Handbook: <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SPARC-Stalking-Victim-Handbook.pdf>
- Safety planning: <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Safety-Strategies.pdf>
- Stalking laws in Texas: <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/map/?j=Texas>

Texas Council on Family Violence

- Honoring Texas Victims 2023 fact sheet: <https://tcfv.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet-English-HTV-2023.pdf>

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

- https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp
- 800.252.5400
- Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, people with disabilities, or elderly

I'm experiencing ADHD

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a disorder that begins in childhood, but it can continue throughout the lifetime (National Institute of Mental Health, 2008). It can be linked to a genetic disorder that can occur in families. There are three different subtypes of ADHD: predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive/impulsive, or a combination of

inattention and hyperactivity. There can be several different kinds of symptoms that are seen in ADHD.

Because ADHD treatment for adults is not available at our local mental health authority, Community Healthcore, please consult with your primary care physician for medication and treatment options.

Signs and symptoms of ADHD:

- Difficulty concentrating or keeping attention
- Being Easily Distracted
- Irresponsibility
- Difficulty in social situations
- Being hyperactive
- Trouble listening to instructions

National Institute of Mental Health (2008). *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*. Retrieved May 29, 2012, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/complete-index.shtml>

Self-Assessment for ADHD

1. Do you feel that you have more difficulty keeping attention than others do?
2. Has there been a pattern of hyperactivity or impulsivity since your childhood?
3. Have you noticed obstacles in academic, social, or occupational performance?
4. Do you have trouble completing activities or tasks?
5. Do you often avoid tasks that involve a certain amount of mental effort?
6. Do you have difficulty following through on instructions?
7. Does the environment around you easily distract you?
8. Do you interrupt others or have a challenging time awaiting your turn?

If you answered yes to at least three of these questions, then it may benefit you to come to the KC Counseling Center.

Links for Additional Information on ADHD

- ADHDNews.com
- What is ADHD? <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/what-is-add>
- Study tips: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/study-tips>
- Focus plan: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/adhd-focus-plan>
- Tips for managing ADHD: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/tips-for-managing-adhd>
- Managing ADHD: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/managing-adhd>
- Dopamine menu template for ADHD brains: https://www.additudemag.com/download/dopamine-menu-template-adhd/?srltid=AfmBOopiGEVwQD5IST7fqOg7Z0a_hDZ5N_GXB_uOAXOmPBb96FmcQ0p
- ADHD for adults: <https://www.additudemag.com/category/manage-adhd-life/>

- ADHD resources: <https://www.additudemag.com/tag/download/>
- Book: Teaching Superman How to Fly: Making ADHD a Gift – Robert Everett Cimera
- Book: You mean I’m not Lazy, Stupid, or Crazy? A Self-Help Book for Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder – Kate Kelly & Peggy Ramundo
- Book: Adventures in Fast Forward: Life, Love and Work for the ADD Adult – Kathleen G. Nadeau
- Book: The Disorganized Mind: Coaching Your ADHD Brain to Take Control of Your Time, Tasks, & Talents – Nancy A. Ratey

I’m experiencing addiction

The terms substance abuse, addiction and dependence are often used interchangeably to describe unwanted symptoms and behavioral problems that come from the use of a substance or other habit. It is helpful, however, to distinguish between these terms.

- Substance abuse generally means using something to excess in a way that interferes with personal responsibilities, relationships or social norms. Substance abuse often leads to dependence or addiction and is defined as a pattern of substance use leading to significant impairment or distress, involving one or more of the following problems over a twelve-month period
 - Failure to fulfil major role obligations at work, school, or home.
 - Frequent use of substances in situations in which it is physically hazardous.
 - Frequent legal problems.
 - Continued use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems.
- Dependence, often describes the chemical and physiological need for a substance to maintain normal physical and psychological functioning. Dependence is defined as significant impairment or distress, involving three or more of the following during a twelve-month period:
 - Tolerance or markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or the desired effect, or markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of substance.
 - Withdrawal symptoms or the use of other substances to avoid withdrawal symptoms.
 - Use of a substance in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.
 - Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use.
 - Involvement in chronic behavior to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects.
 - Reduction or abandonment of social, occupational or recreational activities because of substance use.

- Use of substances even though there is a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance.
- Addiction involves the effect of a substance or habit on normal behavior and motivation. Addictions change the individual's normal behavior, emotional state, rational sense and physical health. We tend to focus on drugs and alcohol when thinking about addictions; however, people can also become addicted to other chemical and non-chemical habits such as food, caffeine, gambling and porn.

What are you consuming? How noticing can help make decisions: Do you notice that you take on the energy of your environment? Do you notice that you can get lost when consuming content from your phone, whether scrolling online, or using apps or games? Do you notice that you are easily distracted when consuming food? Being thoughtful when consuming anything can help you make better decisions.

Here are strategies to bring awareness into daily living: https://youtu.be/I6EDliJluDI?si=bo-9PZlvx_1QdpZI

Resources:

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

- 800.861.9372
- <https://www.narcotics.com/narcotics-anonymous/>
- NA and other 12-step programs offer regularly scheduled meetings for people who want to quit using substances. When coming together, often weekly, NA members share their drug-related experiences and provide one another with support, encouragement, and guidance

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

- <https://sober.com/aa-meetings/texas/>
- Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problem. It doesn't cost anything to attend A.A. meetings. There are no age or education requirements to participate. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem. A.A.'s primary purpose is to help alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Al-Anon

- <https://al-anon.org/>
- Al-Anon members are people, just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem.

East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ETCADA)

- 903-753-7633
- <https://www.etcada.com/>
- Education, prevention, screening & assessment, recovery support, support groups, classes

Special Health Resources of East Texas

- **Phone: (903) 234-8808**
- <https://www.specialhealth.org/jim-meyer/services/behavioral-health-substance-abuse>
- Screening, counseling, and medication

Community Healthcore

- <https://communityhealthcore.com/service-cat/substance-use/>
- The Beginning outpatient treatment center in Longview and Texarkana, comprehensive continue of care for women, youth program, community health worker, and co-occurring psychiatric/substance use disorder program

Pornography Addiction

Pornography addiction, intrusive mental fantasies, and compulsive sexual activities are all unwanted sexual behaviors that leave us frustrated and stuck. We don't want to be stuck with these unhealthy sexual patterns, but we don't know how to walk towards healing. The solution to unwanted sexual behaviors has been tainted with a list of dos and don'ts, leaving us with an unclear road to recovery. Accountability, reading books, and devotionals are all markers of this unclear road—and in many respects these resources can help—but they don't give space for each individual to tend to the specific needs necessary for their healing.

A resource page isn't going to offer full healing either, but here are some practical steps to get you started:

- Unwanted sexual behaviors typically follow particular patterns. Unpack your story and identify unhealthy sexual patterns with a Licensed Counselor at the KC Counseling Center.
- Join a support group. We need non-judgmental and kind people to help us be gentle with ourselves in the midst of our shame and struggles. A good support group gives you the space to do this. You can check out a local [Celebrate Recovery](#) group.
- Establish new disciplines that engage your mind, body, and soul.
 - While pornography doesn't encompass *all* unwanted sexual behavior, it is certainly the most common. Stay educated on the harmful effects of pornography.
 - You don't have to run a marathon, but exercise enough to get your endorphins flowing.

- Eliminate access to pornography. Cutting off access won't help you solve the core issues of unwanted sexual behavior, but not having access will help you have the mental clarity to start processing your unhealthy sexual behaviors.

Additional Resources

- Unwanted by Jay Stringer
- The Porn Myth by Matt Fradd
- Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction by Mark Laaser
- Healing the Wounded Heart by Dan Allender

[I'm experiencing an anxiety or panic attack](#)

Panic attacks result from our body's natural fight-flight-freeze response, and such a response occurs when our brain interprets situations, thoughts, or feelings as threatening. Generally speaking, individuals who experience anxiety/panic attacks may overanalyze threats and interpret them as more severe or threatening than they may really be. You might feel as though you are having a heart attack or dying, with tightness in the chest, rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, and a sense of your heart pounding out of your chests. You may feel numbness in the extremities, trembling hands and legs, the sensation of your throat closing, dizziness or lightheadedness, and so on. Psychological reactions that often accompany these physical sensations include feelings of unreality, an intense desire to run away or escape, fears of "going crazy" or of dying, and fear of doing something uncontrollable. For some people, panic attacks are so intense and initially traumatic to the point of causing anxiety about future panic attacks. Following panic attacks, it's not unusual to feel a 'panic hangover' such as feeling drained or "keyed up" for the remainder of the day.

Anxiety Attacks vs. Panic Attacks

The terms anxiety attack and panic attack are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same.

- Anxiety attacks tend to be less severe and intense than panic attacks, as individuals experiencing anxiety attacks don't usually feel as though they are having a heart attack or dying. Those with panic often feel seized by unexplainable fear and terror.
- Anxiety attacks usually occur in the context of a clear trigger or stressor and build over time, whereas panic attacks can and tend to occur out of the blue and come on suddenly.
- Unlike panic attacks, the symptoms of an anxiety attack may persist for days, as anxiety attacks are more correlated with significant worry and specific stressors.

- What are panic attacks? <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/panic-info-sheet>

There is a six-step approach to self-control when experiencing an anxiety attack:

1. Accept—recognize that you are feeling anxious. Accept your body feelings as a symptom of your anxiety and a sign that something is bothering you.
2. Permission—give yourself permission to feel anxious about whatever it is that is bothering you. “Of course, I feel anxious because...and it’s okay to have anxiety. I know what this is and why I feel this way.”
3. Breathe—first, inhale through your nose slowly for two seconds, mentally counting one-one thousand, two-one thousand. Then exhale through your mouth to a mental count of four seconds. Do this for at least 60 seconds.
4. Inner dialogue—use truthful, positive dialogue to talk yourself through the anxious time. It WILL pass. Examples might be, “It’s just anxiety. It will go away. I will not lose control. I can still go about my business feeling spaced out. It won’t hurt me.”
5. Distract—get busy. Do something to release some of this self-induced stimulation. Your body is like a car in high gear with the brakes on. Don’t just sit there! Walk, job, clean closets—do something. Distract yourself from the way you are feeling.
6. Let time pass—and try to see a little humor in the way you feel. You may feel weird, but you don’t look weird. Give yourself permission to feel weird for a little while. It’s no big deal. Try to figure out what is really bothering you. Is it some type of conflict that you don’t want to deal with? Is it a scary thought? Is it a ridiculous expectation you have about yourself? How about the television program you watched last night? Was it bothering you?

It takes time and lots of lots of practice. But the only way to stop fearing panic and anxiety attacks is to experience them and work your way through them. There is no need to avoid or fight.

Recommended coping skills:

- Affirmations
- Deep breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Grounding techniques

More resources:

- Panic/Anxiety blueprint:
https://thinkcbt.com/images/Downloads/Cognitive_Change_Resources/BUEPRINT-FOR-PANIC-ANXIETY-V-THINK-CBT-04.05.18.pdf
- Panic Thought Record:
https://thinkcbt.com/images/Downloads/Thought_Records/PANIC-THOUGHT-RECORD-THINK-CBT-V-26.06.17.pdf
- Panic assessment: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/panic-assessment>
- Video: Bilateral Music to Calm Fight-or-Flight | Ease Panic, PTSD & Stress
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgMH89btVQA>

Note: if you experience frequent panic or anxiety attacks, write your favorite coping statements on a 3x5 index card and carry it with you. Read it when you feel symptoms coming on.

I'm experiencing anxiety disorder

Colleges are designed to be challenging academically, personally, and socially. Some anxiety is a natural by-product of the accelerated pace of learning and growth. To be sure, everyone feels anxious in certain situations, but anxiety disorders can make it difficult for students to function. Anxiety is a feeling of worry that can be a completely normal response to stress. However, it can also be out of proportion to what is going on or be impossible to control. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health diagnoses in the US. Anxiety can feel so overwhelming that a person's ability to work, study, interact with people, or follow a daily routine is affected. Contrary to what prior generations of your family may have believed, anxiety disorders are not "all in one's head." Anxiety can be a real medical condition, developing from a complex set of biological and environmental factors, including genetics, biochemistry and traumatic life events. Fortunately, it is possible to manage anxiety with counseling and/or medication.

Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders

- Intense episodes of fear or panic
- Recurring nightmares
- Avoidance of social situations
- Difficulty concentrating
- Repeated, unwanted thoughts (obsessions)
- Sleep disturbances
- Upsetting, intrusive memories of a traumatic event

- Physical symptoms such as nausea, stomach pain, rapid heart rate, muscle tension, sweating, shaking, dizziness, numbness, or difficulty breathing

Self-Assessment for Anxiety

1. Have you had extreme worry or anxiety the past few months?
2. Have you had recurrent periods of intense and sudden fear or discomfort that could be classified as a panic attack?
3. Do you have specific fears to an object or situation that create anxiety or distress?
4. Have you had reoccurring obsessions and compulsions that create distress in your life?
5. Have you had continual reoccurring anxieties of a traumatic event that occurred?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, and it has hindered your normal functioning, then it is recommended that you come to the KC Counseling Center.

Links to Additional Information on Anxiety Disorders:

- Book: The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1151186604>)
- Book: The negative thoughts workbook: CBT skills to overcome the repetitive worry, shame, and rumination that drive anxiety and depression (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1147949939>)
- Book: Don't believe everything you feel: a CBT workbook to identify your emotional schemas and find freedom from anxiety and depression (check out the e-book here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1145906471>)
- Book: The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Workbook: Evidence-Based CBT Skills to Help You Manage Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and More (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1417196700>)
- [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#)
- What is anxiety? <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/what-is-anxiety>
- Introduction to anxiety: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/introduction-to-anxiety>
- Countering anxiety: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/countering-anxiety-thought-log>

- Positive and negative beliefs about worry:
https://thinkcbt.com/images/Downloads/Cognitive_Change_Resources/POSITIVE-AND-NEGATIVE-BELIEFS-ABOUT-WORRY-THINK-CBT-V-16.08.17.pdf
- Challenging anxious thoughts: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/challenging-anxious-thoughts>
- The cycle of avoidance: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cycle-of-anxiety>
- Worry Thought Record:
https://thinkcbt.com/images/Downloads/Thought_Records/GAD-WORRY-THOUGHT-RECORD-THINK-CBT-V-21.06.17.pdf
- Anxiety Toolbox: <https://www.lustudentcounseling.com/images/services/Workshop-PDFs/AT-Student-Manual-2-Thoughts.pdf>
- Exposure therapy: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/exposure-therapy-info-sheet>
- Coping skills for anxiety: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/coping-skills-anxiety>
- Video: 54321 Grounding Method
<https://youtu.be/30VMIEmA114?si=KtiMj2xcEso5s0OA>
- Book: The Anxiety Cure – Dr. Archibald D. Hart
- Book: The 10 Best-Ever Anxiety Management Techniques– Margaret Wehrenberg

Coping Statements for anxiety:

- I can cope with this. I'm stronger than I think.
- It's just anxiety, it's not dangerous. It's just temporarily uncomfortable.
- I've survived other tough times before, and I will be strong this time, too.
- I can move forward, even when I feel anxious.
- I will stay present and ground myself with my 5 senses—What do I see, hear, smell, taste, and feel?
- Worrying is not solving any of my problems. What can I do instead?
- Just focus on the things I can control—forget about the things I can't control.
- Anxiety is a normal emotion—it tells me its' time to use my coping skills.
- This is just a feeling—it will pass.
- These are just my anxious thoughts. I don't have to believe them.
- I'm safe right now.

- This feeling is a reminder to slow down and take some deep breaths.

Anxiety Support Groups:

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America: <https://adaa.org/find-help/support>. ADAA has created four free online peer-to-peer communities for people suffering from mental health disorders to be able to find support, share their stories and connect with others who have had similar experiences. Groups include Anxiety and depression in English and Spanish, major depressive disorder, and PTSD.
- Pathlight Mood and Anxiety Center: <https://www.pathlightbh.com/support-group>. Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Center offers free, virtual, trained facilitator-led, peer support groups for those struggling with anxiety and mood disorders. These groups are open to alumni, families and community members, providing support and resources for mental health recovery. Topics include body image, anxiety and depression, mood and anxiety, LGBTQ mental health, and more.

I'm experiencing autism

About 2% of US college students are estimated to have autism. The transition to college can be particularly challenging due to social, communication, and sensory differences, but with proactive planning and support, these challenges can be overcome.

Social and Communication Differences: Autistic students may find it harder to navigate social situations, understand nonverbal cues, and communicate effectively with peers and professors.

Sensory Sensitivities: Sensory overload from crowded classrooms, loud noises, or bright lights can be overwhelming.

Executive Functioning: Challenges with time management, organization, and planning can make it difficult to keep up with coursework and daily tasks.

Disability Services: Students should register with the college's disability services office to access accommodations like extended time on tests, note-takers, or assistive technology.

Academic Support: Tutoring, academic coaching, and study skills workshops can help students with coursework and organization.

Social Support: Mentorship programs, peer support groups, and social skills training can help students build connections and navigate social situations.

Mental Health Services: Counseling and therapy can address anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns.

Advocacy: Students need to learn to advocate for their needs and communicate with professors and staff.

Resources:

- Book: The unmasking workbook for autistic adults' neurodiversity-affirming skills to help you live authentically, avoid burnout & thrive (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1456756039>)
- Book: Navigating College: A Handbook on Self Advocacy Written for Autistic Students from Autistic Adults (free download: <https://autisticadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/NavcollFinal.pdf>)
- Autism and the college experience: https://sparkforautism.org/discover_article/autism-and-the-college-experience/
- Effective strategies for neurodivergent college students: <https://study.com/resources/effective-strategies-neurodivergent-college-students.html>

I'm experiencing bipolar disorder

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition that causes extreme shifts in mood, energy, and activity levels. These shifts can range from periods of intense elation or irritability (manic episodes) to periods of profound sadness or hopelessness (depressive episodes).

Key Characteristics:

- Mood Swings: The core feature is the experience of distinct mood episodes, alternating between mania (or hypomania) and depression.
- Mania/Hypomania: These episodes involve heightened energy, activity, and mood, sometimes accompanied by racing thoughts, decreased need for sleep, and impulsive behavior. Hypomania is a less severe form of mania.
- Depression: These episodes involve persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, fatigue, and changes in sleep and appetite.
- Mixed Episodes: Some individuals experience both manic and depressive symptoms simultaneously, which is referred to as a mixed episode.
- Psychosis: In severe cases, individuals may experience psychotic symptoms like delusions or hallucinations during manic or depressive episodes.

Types of Bipolar Disorder:

- Bipolar I: Characterized by one or more manic episodes, which may or may not be followed by depressive episodes.

- Bipolar II: Characterized by hypomanic and depressive episodes, with no full-blown manic episodes.
- Cyclothymic Disorder: Characterized by less severe mood swings (hypomania and mild depression) that don't meet the full criteria for bipolar I or II.

Impact: Bipolar disorder can significantly impact a person's ability to function in daily life, affecting relationships, work, and overall well-being.

Treatment: Bipolar disorder is a lifelong condition, but it is treatable. Treatment typically involves a combination of medication (mood stabilizers, antidepressants, etc.) and therapy (psychotherapy).

Resources:

- Book: The bipolar II disorder workbook: managing recurring depression, hypomania & anxiety (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/870994742>)
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: <https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/chapters-and-support-groups/online-support-groups>. DBSA online support groups give people living with depression and bipolar disorder a safe, welcoming place to share experiences, discuss coping skills, and offer each other hope. All DBSA online support groups are free of charge.
- What is Bipolar Disorder? <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/what-is-bipolar>
- Warning Signs: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/bipolar-common-warning-signs>
- Warning Signs Worksheet: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/bipolar-warning-signs>
- Relapse: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/bipolar-relapse-signatures>
- Mood Log: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/bipolar-mood-log>
- Causes of Bipolar Disorder: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/causes-of-bipolar-disorder>

I'm experiencing a breakup

Most of us will face a difficult breakup in our lives. Grieving is natural, and in most cases, the pain heals over time and we move on with the lessons we've learned. But sometimes, breakups can trigger or worsen larger mental health concerns that, unaddressed, can have serious consequences on our health and well-being.

Learn: How can you protect your emotional health during relationship issues and breakups? What are the warning signs that you or a loved one aren't coping well with a breakup? Learn the answers to these questions and more below.

- How to get over a breakup—The end of a relationship can be overwhelming, especially when you don't see it coming. This online resource center can help you navigate relationship breakups: <https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/for-young-people/relationship-breakup/>
- An overview of breakup depression: A breakup can trigger prolonged and severe emotional distress. VeryWellMind gives an overview of post-breakup depression, the warning signs, how to get help and feel better: <https://www.verywellmind.com/breakup-depression-4768558>
- Video: 100 people tell real breakup stories—There's a reason 10 million people have watched this compilation of 100 people talking about their worst breakup. Because sharing and hearing stories makes us feel less alone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfxU4GE4vWM>

Reflect: Dr. Antonio Pascual-Leone speaks about a 3-step process that could help you wrap things up and “finish the feeling”. Antonio is a clinical psychologist and associate professor at the University of Windsor, where he trains psychotherapists and is director of the Emotion Change Lab. Watch the full Tedx talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6BYAjht38>

- Step 1: Untangle and identify your feelings. Anger and sadness are often the dominant feelings after a breakup, but they can all get jumbled together. Pulling feelings apart is an important part of moving past them, so ask yourself questions like “where does it hurt?” and “what's the worst part?”
- Step 2: Understand what you really need. After a breakup, it's easy to focus on what could have been done differently and to self-blame. It's important to switch that up and think about what you need, working toward answers like “I need to feel like I matter.”
- Step 3: Define what was actually lost. A breakup never takes everything away. You may lose mutual friends, the dream of children or someone who gets you, and that's painful,

but you can truly start healing when you look at what's lost straight in the eye and see it for what it is.

Act: It's so easy to get stuck in the mixed emotions of sadness, anger and regret. Here are some actions you can take to help you or someone you know get "unstuck."

- Breathe: This quick video breathing and meditation exercise helps to calm your mind and body so you can focus on next steps: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEqZthCaMpo&feature=youtu.be>
- Reach out: talking about it helps, whether someone you trust or reaching out to a mental health professional. This article helps explain how therapy can help when a relationship ends: <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/issues/breakup>
- Offer support: it's hard to know the right thing to say when a friend is coping with a breakup. This list of dos and don'ts can help: <https://www.self.com/story/women-share-best-worst-responses-to-breakup>

I'm experiencing depression

People often use the word "depression" to refer to general, everyday feelings of sadness or being down. In fact, depression is a condition that can affect a person's ability to work, study, interact with people or take care of themselves. **The symptoms of depression can last months to years if untreated.**

Depression isn't always easy to spot. It may be expressed through the abuse of drugs and alcohol; sexual promiscuity; or hostile, aggressive, and risk-taking behavior. Many factors can contribute to the onset of depression, including the presence of other emotional disorders, stress, poor nutrition, physical illness, personal loss and relationship difficulties.

The good news is that depression is highly treatable. Medication and/or counseling can help. It is not uncommon for people who are depressed to think about suicide, and it is important for someone having these thoughts to seek help immediately.

Signs and Symptoms of Depression

- Persistently sad, anxious, irritable or empty mood
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Feeling tired or rundown
- Significant change in appetite and/or weight
- Anger and rage

- Overreaction to criticism
- Feeling unable to meet expectations
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Feeling restless or agitated
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness or guilt
- Persistent physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems or chronic pain that do not respond to routine treatment
- Substance abuse problems
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

Self-assessment for depression

- During the last couple of weeks, have you been sad or depressed most days?
- Have you lost pleasure in your normal activities?
- Have you been eating significantly less food recently?
- Have you been feeling misplaced guilty or worthless?
- Have you had trouble falling asleep most nights or are sleeping more than normal?
- Have you had difficulty concentrating most days?
- Have you been having recurrent suicidal ideation? (please come to the KC Counseling Center or seek help immediately) / 988

If you answered yes to four or more of the questions above, we recommend that you come to see us at the KC Counseling Center.

Resources:

- Book: The Behavioral Activation Workbook for Depression: Powerful Strategies to Boost Your Mood and Build a Better Life (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1420641486>)
- Book: The negative thoughts workbook: CBT skills to overcome the repetitive worry, shame, and rumination that drive anxiety and depression (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1147949939>)
- Book: Don't believe everything you feel: a CBT workbook to identify your emotional schemas and find freedom from anxiety and depression (check out the e-book here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1145906471>)
- Book: The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Workbook: Evidence-Based CBT Skills to Help You Manage Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and More (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1417196700>)
- What is Depression? <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/depression-info-sheet>
- Coping Skills for Depression: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/coping-skills-depression>

- The Cycle of Depression: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cycle-of-depression>
- Video: I had a black dog. His name was Depression: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc>
- Book: The Behavioral Activation Workbook for Depression: Powerful Strategies to Boost Your Mood and Build a Better Life by Nina Josefowitz and Stephen R. Swallow
- Book: Moving Beyond Depression: A Whole-Person Approach to Healing– Gregory L. Jantz and Ann McMurray
- Book: The Mindful Way Through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness– Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal, Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Overcoming Depression Workbook: <https://www.adrian.edu/files/assets/overcomingdepressionworkbook.pdf>

Coping Statements for Depression:

- A bad day or week does not equal a bad life.
- Depression wants me to believe I am worthless, but I know I'm not.
- I can be active even when I don't feel like it.
- I have the power to create change in my life. I will make small changes today.
- I find something to be grateful for each day.
- I belong, I am lovable, and I matter. No matter what.
- It would be good for me to go outside for a walk and get some sun and fresh air.
- I am in charge of how I feel and today I choose happiness.
- I am capable of doing hard things and overcoming challenges.
- I choose optimism over pessimism and positivity over negativity.
- It's okay to ask for help. I can reach out when I need to.
- I can cope with this. I'm stronger than I think.

Depression Support Groups:

- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: <https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/chapters-and-support-groups/online-support-groups>. DBSA online support groups give people living with depression and bipolar disorder a safe, welcoming place to share experiences, discuss coping skills, and offer each other hope. All DBSA online support groups are free of charge.
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America: <https://adaa.org/find-help/support>. ADAA has created four free online peer-to-peer communities for people suffering from mental health disorders to be able to find support, share their stories and connect with

others who have had similar experiences. Groups include Anxiety and depression in English and Spanish, major depressive disorder, and PTSD.

- Pathlight Mood and Anxiety Center: <https://www.pathlightbh.com/support-group>. Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Center offers free, virtual, trained facilitator-led, peer support groups for those struggling with anxiety and mood disorders. These groups are open to alumni, families and community members, providing support and resources for mental health recovery. Topics include body image, anxiety and depression, mood and anxiety, LGBTQ mental health, and more.
- Postpartum Support International: <https://postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings/>. PSI offers over 50+ FREE and virtual support groups for pregnant and postpartum mental health.

I'm experiencing dissociation (zoning out)

Dissociation is being disconnected from the here and now. Everyone occasionally has times of daydreaming or mind wandering, which is normal. Sometimes dissociation is a way of coping by avoiding negative thoughts or feelings related to memories of traumatic events. When people are dissociating, they disconnect from their surroundings, which can stop the trauma memories and lower fear, anxiety and shame. Dissociation can happen during the trauma or later on when thinking about or being reminded of the trauma. When dissociation is connected to trauma memories or reminders, it is considered an avoidance coping strategy. The difference from active avoidance (on purpose avoiding thinking about or doing something) is that dissociation tends to happen without planning or even awareness. Many times, people who are dissociating are not even aware that it is happening, other people notice it.

Just like other types of avoidance, dissociation can interfere with facing up and getting over a trauma or an unrealistic fear. It can also interfere with school or doing other activities that require paying attention and being in the here and now. Dissociation commonly goes along with traumatic events and PTSD.

Signs and Symptoms of Dissociation:

- Spacing out; day dreaming
- Glazed look; staring
- Mind going blank
- Mind wandering
- Sense of world not being real
- Watching self from outside
- Detachment from self or identity
- Out of body experience
- Disconnected from surroundings

Dissociation as avoidance coping usually happens because of a traumatic event. Being powerless to do anything to change or stop a traumatic event may lead people to disconnect from the situation to cope with feelings of helplessness, fear or pain. Dissociation can help people get through to the end of the traumatic experience. People who dissociate during trauma are more likely to develop a pattern of dissociating as a coping strategy.

Since everyone spaces out or day dreams sometimes, it is only when dissociation interferes with everyday life that it is necessary to get help for it. Dissociation may persist because it is a way of not having negative feelings in the moment, but it is never a cure. Too much dissociating can slow or prevent recovery from the impact of trauma or PTSD. Dissociation can become a problem in itself. Blanking out interferes with doing well at school. It can lead to passively going along in risky situations. Facing up to trauma and learning the impact can be handled is the cure for dissociation.

Resources:

- Dissociation: You're Grounded! <https://www.providence.org/-/media/project/psjh/providence/or/files/behavioral-health/dissociation-guide.pdf?rev=017bba411d7c42caba091c77a9e90ffe&hash=0A78BCCB0B9909A2C6177F4F17C87DCF>

I'm experiencing an eating disorder

For many people, college is a time of tremendous transition and change. It provides new freedom and responsibility and offers lessons in life far beyond the classroom. It is a milestone time—and one far too often hijacked by eating disorders.

All types of eating disorders can develop, return, or worsen in young people during their college years. Though these illnesses occur across the lifespan, they are particularly prevalent between the ages of 18 and 21. Research has found that the median age of onset is 18 for anorexia and bulimia and 21 for binge eating disorder, both findings within the age range of the traditional college student.

Eating disorders in college students

A 2013 NEDA survey estimated that between 10% to 20% of women and 4% to 10% of men in college suffer from an eating disorder. Four of ten students have either experienced an eating disorder themselves or know someone who has. Another study of college students identified that 13.5% of women and 3.6% of men showed eating disorder symptoms. Gender minority (GM) students and college student-athletes experience particularly high rates of eating disorders.

Risk factors for college students

All eating disorders are complex conditions that arise from biological, psychological, and social factors. Among the factors that may make college students uniquely susceptible to these illnesses are:

- Newfound independence and increased responsibility
- Unfamiliar environment; loss of personal space and privacy
- Living away from parents, friends, and other support people
- An abundance of food choices and food-centered activities
- Change in routine; loss of structure
- Increased workload
- Academic and financial pressures
- Desire to fit in
- Exposure to drugs and alcohol
- Fear of the “Freshman 15”
- Increased screen time with online classes

When does disordered eating become an eating disorder?

Disordered eating is normalized in our culture, and especially in college. Examples of disordered eating normalized on college campuses include:

“Saving up” calories during the day to justify drinking or partaking in social activities in the evenings and on weekends

Using Adderall, nicotine, energy drinks, and other appetite suppressants in place of meals

Missing meals because of irregular sleeping patterns or feeling “too busy to eat”

Harmful in its own right, disordered eating differs from an eating disorder.

We worry about eating disorders when any of the following are present:

Is there a pattern of behaviors?

Is there a preoccupation with food and body?

Eating disorder signs and symptoms

Signs and symptoms of eating disorders in college students are similar to those in other groups affected by these conditions. They may be subtle and kept hidden, especially in the earlier stages of illness.

Physical

- Unusual and rapid weight fluctuations
- Fainting, fatigue, low energy, interrupted sleep
- GI discomfort, dysregulation, bloating
- Dry hands/hair or poor circulation
- Hair loss or development of lanugo
- Chest pain or heart palpitations

- For females, disruption in menstruation

Behavioral

- Dieting or chaotic food intake
- Preoccupation with food, weight, size, and shape
- Excessive exercise
- Frequent trips to the bathroom
- Change in clothing style (sometimes to hide or to flaunt body)
- Eating in isolation

Emotional

- Severe mood swings
- Increased isolation, irritability, anhedonia
- Low self-esteem; complaints about body
- Perfectionistic tendencies
- Sadness or comments about feelings of worthlessness
- Increase of depression and/or anxiety

Resources:

- Book: The radically open DBT workbook for eating disorders: from overcontrol & loneliness to recovery & connection (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1310764172>)
- National Eating Disorders Association: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>
- Screening tool: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/screening-tool/>
- Eating disorders 101: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Eating-Disorders-101.pdf>
- Sharing concerns about your eating behaviors: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/sharing-concerns-about-your-eating-behaviors/>
- Free and low-cost support: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/free-low-cost-support/>
- Warning signs and symptoms: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/warning-signs-and-symptoms/>
- Risk factors: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/risk-factors/>

- Busting myths about eating disorders: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/busting-myths-about-eating-disorders/>
- Disordered eating vs. eating disorders: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/what-is-the-difference-between-disordered-eating-and-eating-disorders/>
- Body image and eating disorders: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/body-image-and-eating-disorders/>

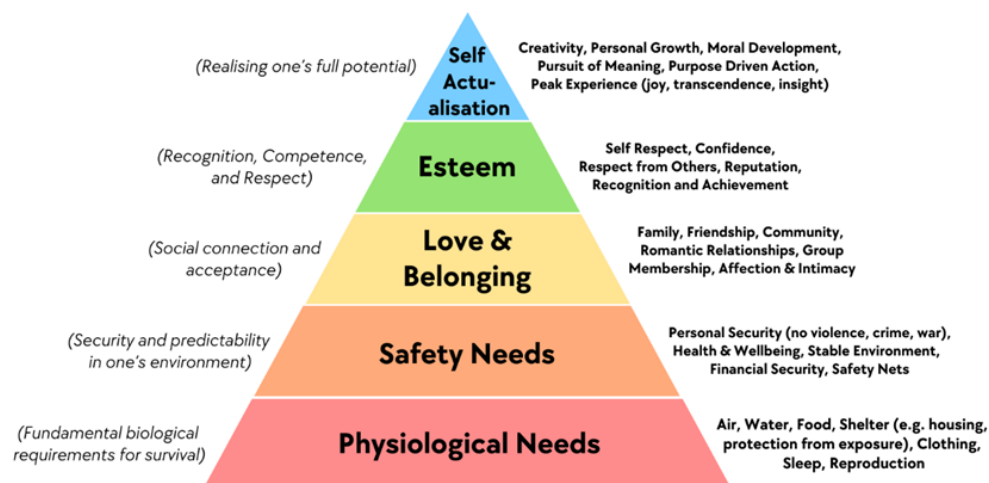
Support groups:

- [Eating Disorder Peer Support Groups | ANAD - National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders](#)
- <https://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com/groups/>

I'm experiencing financial or food insecurity

Before you can address mental health concerns, basic physiological and safety needs must be met. resources. Learn more here: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs>.

The KC benefit navigator can help students connect with vital on- and off-campus resources, including a food pantry, clothing closet, emergency fund, and referrals to community resources. Services are available at both the Kilgore and Longview campuses. Call 903.988.3788 or complete a needs assessment at <https://www.kilgore.edu/kc-student-needs-assessment/>.



I'm experiencing grief or loss

Losing someone we care about can create a major mental health challenge, and many Americans say the loss of a loved one is the most difficult event of their lives. There's no wrong or right way to grieve, but with proper support, self-care and reflection, most find the acceptance and meaning necessary to move forward.

Learn: Learning about the nature of grief and other people's experiences coping with it can help us heal and feel less alone. Whether you prefer listening to podcasts, reading books or watching videos, here are some options to get you started.

- Brene Brown's Unlocking Us—Brene is a researcher and author known for making complicated emotional health challenges accessible and relatable. In this podcast, she talks with grief expert David Kessler: <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/david-kessler-and-brene-on-grief-and-finding-meaning/>
- Nora McInerny's Ted Talk—Writer and podcaster Nora McInerny uses humor and stories of her personal heartbreak to reframe the concept of “moving on” after losing a loved one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHkJKR-ipfw>

Reflect: A grief journal creates a safe place to capture feelings, memories or unanswered questions that can help to cope and heal. This article shares over 20 journaling prompts to help you get started: <https://healingbrave.com/blogs/all/grief-journaling-prompts>

Act: Healing from grief is a personal journey, but we all need coping strategies to help us along the way. What works can differ from person to person, so try out different methods until you find what works for you. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Evidence-based coping tips from the American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/topics/grief>
- This animated video explores the stages of grief and offers helpful ways to cope through the process of losing a loved one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsYL4PC0hyk>
- Popular yoga instructor Adriene has created a 30-minute free yoga session designed to “hold you and comfort you during times of grief and sadness”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEVn59U2_LY

Connect: Healing from loss is a process that takes time. Talking with friends, family, a support group or mental health professional can help. But if you're feeling hopeless, reach out to the resources below as soon as possible.

The Compassionate Friends

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/>

903.806.8927

Meeting Info: 2nd Monday of each month 6:30 pm

Meets at: First United Methodist Church 400 North Fredonia Street, Longview Texas 75601

Support group for bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

Grief Share

https://www.griefshare.org/s?locationType=in_person

Grief and loss support groups in person and online

Support groups located in Longview, Gilmer, Tatum, Hawkins, Marshall, Arp, and Tyler

I'm experiencing low self-esteem

Research on self-esteem shows that the relationship between stress and self-esteem is inextricably linked and that self-esteem can affect many areas of life, including academic and professional success. As a result, the lower a college student's self-esteem falls, the worse he or she performs academically. This, in turn, starts the cycle over again with more stress, lower self-esteem, and poor grades. With stress and self-esteem feeding off each other, building healthy self-esteem and confidence in college performance can lead to happier, more successful students.

What is the Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Academic Performance?

How does self-esteem affect student learning? How do grades affect students' self-esteem? While these two questions appear to be the converse of each other, according to a study in the Journal of Applied Sciences, the answer is the same: "There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in students." In other words, the effects of low self-esteem on academic performance often appear as subpar grades; whereas, high self-esteem can result in higher grades. A positive correlation between self-esteem and academic success would indicate that focusing on self-esteem issues in college students is important for overall student success and improved mental well-being.

The definition of self-esteem is 'confidence in one's own worth or abilities.' For many college students, their self-worth is tied to their grades. Undergraduate students who base their self-worth on academic performance may study harder and longer, but they often experience more stress. They then fall back into the self-esteem/stress feedback cycle, and they still do not receive higher grades.

According to an article by Dr. Jennifer Crocker, psychologist at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, college students who tie their self-worth to external sources, such as academic performance, can experience more anxiety and stress and higher use of drugs and alcohol. On the other hand, says Crocker, students who focused on internal sources, like being virtuous and keeping high moral standards, received higher grades.

Raising Self-Esteem in College Students Through Goal Setting

The key to improving self-esteem among college students, according to Crocker, is to support them in adopting goals that look towards something larger than themselves, like how they can contribute to others. Still, others believe that when setting the right goals, putting the focus on the process, rather than the result, can ease stress and improve success in achieving the result. How does goal-setting work for college students, and what is the relationship between goals and self-esteem?

In the article, “Set Goals that Work for You to Improve Your Self-Esteem,” from HealthyPlace, goals can give a person a sense of purpose as well as the motivation to achieve that goal. When college students are encouraged to set the right goals, it can lead to personal growth as well as improved self-esteem.

Following the SMART goal-setting method popularized by corporate America, college students may find that by setting goals they can better manage class assignments, deadlines, and exams by focusing more on the process to get them there, and not the result. The improved focus on things within their control, may lower their stress, improve their self-esteem, and by association, improve their grades.

If you are a college student who has asked yourself, “Does self-esteem affect performance?”, SMART goals may benefit you.

SMART goals are: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable, and Time-bound. When setting SMART goals, consider how rewarding and satisfying it will feel when you complete them. Rewarding and satisfying have such positive connotations, that simply associating them with your goal can start to improve your feelings of self-worth.

Specific. While building self-esteem may be your goal, this is actually an outcome. Consider instead, this goal: “Complete all assignments 24 hours before the deadline.” This is specific and serves a dual purpose by helping you complete your assignment and by reducing your stress as you will not be racing the clock to come in under the wire.

Measurable. Goals need to be measurable so you can recognize that you completed them. Maybe you have a budget goal of limiting monthly online shopping to \$200. Did you spend \$200 or less last month? This is specific and measurable.

Achievable. Be realistic when setting a goal, and make sure the completion of any goal is 100% within your control. For example, a goal of meeting twice a week to study with a classmate could easily fail if the classmate cancels. Instead, consider setting a goal to study 10 hours a week.

Reasonable. If raising your GPA or grades is a goal, be reasonable in how high it can be raised during the time period. For example, are there enough graded milestones within the time frame to meet your goal?

Time-bound. Establish a deadline for every goal, and, if necessary, set mini-goals with shorter deadlines.

Goals are beneficial in shifting your mindset from comparing yourself to others, to instead focusing on what you want. This shift can result in higher self-esteem.

Improve Self-Esteem and Lower Stress

Aside from goal setting, there are other steps you can take every day to help minimize your stress and raise your self-esteem, thus breaking the vicious feedback cycle.

- Daily Affirmations. Speak a positive affirmation into a mirror every morning. Just like goals, make sure to keep them believable. One Atlanta teacher of fourth-grade students applied this technique in the classroom, and she says the practice “is giving her students confidence and a boost in self-esteem.”
- Focus on your strengths. Identify something you are good at and spend time enjoying an activity that uses that strength. Whether this is writing, running, or drawing, take some time for yourself and feel good about growing that strength.
- Be Intentional. Lower stress by honing your goals and being clear about what you want to achieve as well as taking action to achieve it. People who are intentional often report more effective use of time and resources as well as improved interpersonal relationships.

With stress, self-esteem and academic performance tied so closely together, take the time to focus on your self-esteem along with your studies and watch your grades improve.

Resources:

- Book: The Self-Esteem Workbook (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/961065090>)
- Book: The CBT workbook for perfectionism: evidence-based skills to help you let go of self-criticism, build self-esteem & find balance (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1044773320>)

I’m experiencing perfectionism

Wouldn’t it be nice to be the top athlete, the best student, the most attractive person in the room, the most valuable employee—in a word, perfect? But the irony of perfection is that it’s unattainable. And striving to achieve it can be detrimental to health and happiness. That’s why perfectionism in college students is so closely linked to depression and anxiety.

It's not a coincidence that as mental health issues among young adults have increased, so has perfectionism. According to a study by the American Psychological Association (APA), rates of perfectionism among college students have been rising over the past three decades. "Increases in perfectionism have the potential to explain some of the increase in the prevalence of psychopathology," wrote the APA researchers Thomas Curran and Andrew P. Hill. Perfectionism is a core vulnerability to a variety of disorders, symptoms, and syndromes."

5 Ways to Be Okay with Being Good Enough:

1. Check your beliefs. Rigidly held beliefs underlie the behaviors of many perfectionists. But they may not always be true. Awareness is the first step in loosening their grip. First, notice what areas of your life are affected by perfectionism. Then take some time to examine what beliefs drive those perfectionist behaviors.
2. Experiment with relaxing your standards. Even if a belief is generally true, it may not require 100 percent adherence. Conduct your own experiments to investigate the true consequences of relaxing your standards. Try doing things "well enough" rather than perfectly. Is the result significantly different?
3. Question what you're afraid of. What bad thing might happen if you weren't "perfect"? Sure, the worst-case scenario might result. But how likely is it really? Consider the costs of constantly striving to avoid that scenario. Are the benefits of your perfectionistic behavior outweighing the negatives?
4. Aim for efficiency instead of perfection. What is the right amount of effort to expend to achieve the desired result? Too much effort can backfire by slowing you down, exhausting you, and interfering with your relationships. Too little effort can keep you from achieving what you want to achieve. Again, you will need to experiment to find the sweet spot that is right for you and your circumstances.
5. Neutralize your inner critic with self-compassion. Above all, be kind to yourself. A study with adolescents found that the perfectionist students who had more self-compassion were less likely to experience depression. Self-compassion can help in recovering from perfectionism. You don't have to shake these habits and beliefs all at once. Take small steps, and get support from people you trust or from a professional.

Resources:

- <https://www.newportinstitute.com/resources/co-occurring-disorders/perfectionism-mental-health/>

- Book: The CBT workbook for perfectionism: evidence-based skills to help you let go of self-criticism, build self-esteem & find balance (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1044773320>)

I'm experiencing psychosis (hallucinations, delusions)

Psychosis, a condition where individuals lose touch with reality, is not uncommon among college students and can significantly impact their academic and social life. It's characterized by symptoms like hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized thinking or behavior. Early intervention and support are crucial for students experiencing psychosis, as it can be a frightening and disruptive experience.

Community Healthcore offers the Early Psychosis and Intervention Counseling (EPIC), which provides intensive services to individuals age 15-30, newly diagnosed with early onset of psychosis including schizophrenia, schizoaffective and schizophreniform disorders, delusional disorder, and psychosis NOS. Research shows that coordinated specialty care within the first year of onset contributes to an individual's ability to manage the illness and live a more normal life.

Services include skills training and support to address psychiatric medication, wellness management, education and employment, family support, housing and income, substance abuse, trauma, and safety to increase community integration and involvement. Call 903-237-2326 or 903-758-2471 for more information.

Community Healthcore offers outpatient and intensive services for individuals at any stage of psychosis. Call (800) 446-8253 for more information.

I'm experiencing non-suicidal self-injury

When someone harms themselves on purpose, through cutting, hitting, burning or other deliberate acts, the behavior is called self-injury. More common in teens and young adults, self-injury can be managed with treatment — which often involves finding healthier coping strategies to address painful or hard-to-express feelings.

Learn: Self-injury is complex. While these acts are generally not an attempt to end one's life, people who self-harm are at increased risk for suicide. If you're worried about yourself or a friend, it's helpful to learn more about the behaviors.

- Understanding Self-Harm: This deep dive from The Mighty combines the experience of doctors and patients to explore the types of self-injury, causes, warning signs and treatment options. <https://themighty.com/topic/self-harm/what-is-self-harm/>

- Self-Injury and Suicide: This article from the Child Mind Institute explains the relationships and differences between self-injury and suicide.
<https://childmind.org/article/how-are-self-injury-and-suicide-related/>

Reflect: Since self-injury can cause serious long-term harm, it's important to seek professional help to explore treatment options. Coping mechanisms like journaling can complement a treatment plan and help lean into the painful feelings connected to the behaviors.
<https://www.healthypace.com/blogs/speakingoutaboutselfinjury/2020/6/how-to-manage-self-harm-thoughts-with-journaling>

Act: Self-injury often involves secrecy and shame, so finding the courage to speak up and talk about difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviors is an important first step. Here are some resources to help you better understand recovery strategies.

- Recovery Overview: Cornell University offers a comprehensive resource center on self-injury including a recovery overview that explores how to stop, what to expect during recovery, coping strategies and tips for helping a friend or family member.
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/recovery.html>
- Self-Harm and Self-Care: This ten-minute video from Psych2Go walks through coping strategies and self-care tips that can be helpful if you or someone you know are self-injuring. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtl5zaHicq8>
- How to Help: Mental Health Aid shares tips for supporting someone who is self-injuring, including how to assess the risk of harm, have constructive conversations and encourage them to seek help. <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2018/12/how-to-help-someone-who-self-harms/>

Connect: Mental health professionals are trained to support people who are struggling with self-injury or other mental health challenges. If you need immediate help, please reach out to the resources below:

- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988
- Community Healthcore 24/7 Crisis Line: 800-832.1009
- KC Counseling Center: 903.983.8206

Other resources:

- Self-harm assessment: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/self-harm-assessment>
- What is self-injury? <https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/what-is-self-injury-9.pdf>

- 15 misconceptions about self-injury:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/15-misconceptionsenglish-3.pdf>
- Coping/Stress management strategies:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/coping-stress-management-english-1.pdf>
- Distraction techniques:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/distraction-techniques-pm-2.pdf>
- Talking about self-injury:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/finding-your-voice-pm-2.pdf>
- Wounds heal but scars remain: Responding when someone notices:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/wounds-heal-pm-2.pdf>
- Recovering from self-injury:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/recovering-from-self-injury-1.pdf>
- Therapy myths and misconceptions:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/therapy-myths-and-misconceptions-pm-1.pdf>
- Therapy: What to expect:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/therapy-what-to-expect-pm-2.pdf>
- Stages of change:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/understanding-and-using-the-stages-of-change-for-siers-5.pdf>
- How does self-injury change feelings?
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/how-does-self-injury-change-feelings-1.pdf>
- Reaching out for help:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/reaching-out-for-help-pm-5.pdf>

- Self-injury and eating disorders:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/whats-the-relationship-nssi-and-ed-1.pdf>
- Non-suicidal self-injury and suicide:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/the-relationship-between-nssi-and-suicide-1.pdf>
- What role do emotions play in non-suicidal self-injury?
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/what-role-do-emotions-play-in-nssi-1.pdf>
- What is emotional regulation and how do we do it?
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/what-is-emotion-regulationsinfo-brief.pdf>
- The relationship between self-injury and social media:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/the-relationship-between-non-suicidal-self-injury-and-social-media.pdf>
- Telling family and friends:
<https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/telling-family.pdf>
- Limiting the Damage:
<https://selfinjurysupportltd.eu.rit.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=b559f025-3949-4b03-8a5d-188c90e0851c>

I'm experiencing social anxiety

Everybody experiences some discomfort in new or unfamiliar social situations. Social anxiety involves severe feelings of distress, embarrassment or apprehension and a tendency to withdraw or avoid the situation. This can have a significant impact and often places limits on the individual's work and personal life.

Social anxiety is usually rooted in a fear of being negatively judged by other people. This can include feeling exposed, inadequate, incompetent, stupid or offensive to others. This can lead to worries about being embarrassed or humiliated, blushing or looking nervous, shaking and feeling breathless, stomach problems or bladder urgency and feeling disoriented, overwhelmed or detached.

Social anxiety affects men and women of all ages and often starts with shyness and social avoidance in childhood or adolescence. Social anxiety is a highly debilitating problem affecting

up to 10% of the population and is often linked to other psychological problems including Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Body Dysmorphic Disorder, Low Self-esteem and Depression. Social anxiety is normally experienced in three main ways that can form a vicious cycle. This involves worrying about the social situation before it happens, becoming highly self-conscious during the social situation and ruminating about the social situation after it is over.

Coping with social anxiety

- **Riding out the symptoms:** We don't always need to escape or avoid the situation. For example, leading up to a presentation, nervousness may boost your energy and invigorate what you share.
- **Challenging your thinking:** Question whether the thinking that is feeding your anxiety is valid or helpful. Challenging your thoughts can reduce their effect.
- **Distracting yourself:** Find something else to focus on. Thinking through the plot of a favorite film, playing through a cherished piece of music in your head, or thinking about your children can take the focus off what is causing you upset and give you time to become calm.
- **Breathing exercises;** Breathing out more slowly than you breathe in can engage the parasympathetic system and settle your mind and body (Nestor, 2020). Take a few slow, deep breaths. Make the out-breath slow through pursed lips if it helps.

Resources:

- **Book:** The shyness & social anxiety workbook: proven, step-by-step techniques for overcoming your fear (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1007500975>)
- **Strategies for maintaining eye contact:** <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Strategies-for-Maintaining-Eye-Contact.pdf>
- **Dos and don'ts when making eye contact:** <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Dos-and-Donts-When-Making-Eye-Contact-A-Pocket-Guide.pdf>
- **Starting a Conversation:** <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Starting-a-Conversation-The-ARE-Method.pdf>
- **A guide to small talk:** <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/A-Guide-to-Small-Talk-Conversation-Starters-and-Replies.pdf>

- Different ways to say “no” politely: <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Different-Ways-to-Say-%E2%80%98No-Politely.pdf>
- Using “I” statements: <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Using-%E2%80%98I-Statements-in-Conversation.pdf>
- Video: An introvert’s guild to social freedom: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWCiloSaG74&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fpositivepsychology.com%2F&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjY
- Safety Behaviors: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/social-anxiety-safety-behaviors>
- Book: The Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook: Proven, Step-by-Step Techniques for Overcoming Your Fear by Martin M. Antony and Richard P. Swinson
- Boundaries and healthy relationships for college students: <https://www.evanstonpsychologists.com/2023/08/30/boundaries-and-healthy-relationships-for-college-students/>

I’m experiencing social media issues

The promise of social media is to feel more connected through platforms that can help us support each other. Unfortunately, the potential is always there to be negatively impacted by hurtful words, bullying, judgment and criticism—delivered easily, thoughtlessly and often anonymously. But you can control your online experience.

Learn: Taking control of the social media experience and being proactive about its impact on our emotional health, starts by understanding the ways our digital lives connect with real world well-being.

- Social Media & Mental Health: This article from VeryWellMind explores how the increased reliance on social media raises the risk of feeling anxious, depressed, lonely, envious and even ill. <https://www.verywellmind.com/link-between-social-media-and-mental-health-5089347>
- Social Media Obsession: In this popular TEDx Talk, social media expert Bailey Parnell explores the growing obsession with social media, how it impacts mental health and how to ‘practice safe social.’ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Czg_9C7gw0o

- **Cyberbullying:** The Cyberbullying Research Center offers a wealth of research, resources and insights into cyberbullying and how we can stop or prevent it.
<https://cyberbullying.org/>

Act: Self Magazine worked with experts to create the informative “9 Things to Try if You Hate Social Media But Don’t Actually Want to Quit.” The article helps to maximize the positive impact of social media, avoid negative stressors and make it work for you.
<https://www.self.com/story/social-media-mental-health-tips>

Connect: Even after you take control of your life online, you may still face challenges. If social media or mistreatment on digital platforms interferes with your school, work, relationships or quality of life, get support before things get worse.

I’m experiencing sexuality and gender identity issues

Struggling with sexuality or gender identity can be stressful for anyone. Worrying about whether your family members, friends or community will understand and accept you can make it more challenging. Fortunately, there are many resources available to help navigate the journey while taking care of yourself and your mental health.

Learn: Questioning your sexual orientation or gender identity can feel confusing and lonely, but you’re never alone. There are many resources online to learn more and hear stories from others who’ve gone through similar experiences.

- **The Trevor Project’s Resources:** The Trevor Project’s online resource center covers many issues related to sexuality and gender identity including coming out, discrimination, sexual health and relationships. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/>
- **The Basics:** This video from True Colors United explains the difference between sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vlx9iZ9g_9I&feature=youtu.be
- **Gender Identity Terms:** The Trevor Project explains some key terms related to gender identity that we should all know and understand.
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/understanding-gender-identities-and-pronouns/>
- **Exploring Coming Out:** It’s an important moment at any age, and it can also be a difficult one. The Trevor Project has a Coming Out Handbook that LGBTQ+ young people can use to explore what coming out safely means for them.
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/the-coming-out-handbook/>

Act: Exploring your sexual orientation or gender identity, or trying to support a friend who's struggling with this process, can feel lonely and overwhelming. Here are some actions you can take to help yourself or someone you love.

- Breathe: Headspace shares this quick 1-minute meditation exercise to help calm your mind and body so you can focus on next steps. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEqZthCaMpo>
- Reach Out: GLAAD has put together a list of organizations that can help anyone who is questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. <https://glaad.org/resourcelist>
- Offer Support: Use these tips to support a friend questioning their sexuality or gender identity. <https://www.pride.com/comingout/2019/7/14/7-ways-support-friend-whos-questioning-their-sexuality>

Connect: If struggles related to sexuality or gender are interfering with your ability to get things done, your relationships or overall quality of life, it's important to reach out for support. These resources are a good place to start.

- The Trevor Project: LGBTQ+ peer support and crisis intervention : 866.488.7386 <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/>
- LGBT National Hotline: Confidential peer support, information and resources: 888.843.4564 <https://lgbthotline.org/>

I'm experiencing suicidal thoughts

When mental health challenges go unaddressed, they can lead to serious health problems and can even be fatal. Suicide is preventable if you learn the warning signs and speak up if you're worried about yourself or a loved one.

Learn: The causes of suicide are complex and it's often an impulsive act, so it's important to educate yourself and take action at the first sign of concern. Learning the warning signs and having the courage to speak up can save lives.

- Suicide FAQs: This comprehensive overview from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) includes suicide risk factors, warning signs and ways to reach out for support or help a friend. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/suicide-faq>
- Warning Signs: Health Magazine created a two-minute video that walks through seven common warning signs of suicide. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tRBNEHt5KM>

- Survivor Stories: Suicide attempt survivors share their stories and offer advice for others who may be struggling in this video from As/Is. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vetf9eu3Lbw>
- Digging Deeper: Lemonada Media and The Jed Foundation partnered on “Last Day,” an award-winning, twelve-part series that delves into the many dynamics of suicide and prevention. <https://lemonadamedia.com/show/lastday/>
- Advice for Friends and Family: In this Ted Talk, Kevin Briggs shares stories from his work with suicidal individuals to give advice for friends and family members of someone who may be considering suicide. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Clq4mtiamY>

Act: Whether you’re feeling hopeless, worried about a loved one or coping after losing someone to suicide, there are always actions you can take to help yourself or someone you care about

- Learn the Signs: <https://afsp.org/risk-factors-protective-factors-and-warning-signs/#suicide-warning-signs>
- Reach Out for Help: <https://www.verywellmind.com/tips-for-coping-with-suicidal-thoughts-1067530>
- Help a Friend: <https://www.nami.org/suicide/my-friend-is-suicidal-what-should-i-do/>

Connect: The hopelessness that contributes to suicidal thoughts is usually temporary, and most survivors are glad they lived. Get help at the first sign that you or someone you know feels suicidal. You aren’t alone, and things will get better.

Resources:

- Suicide assessment: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/suicide-assessment>
- Safety plan: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/safety-plan>
- Survivor story: <https://kevinhinesstory.com/>
- Suicide Prevention Video for Texas Colleges and Universities: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 2_ybV9FLSI
- Suicide Risk Factors: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/suicide-warning-signs>

If you or someone you know need immediate assistance, please call any of the local resources listed below:

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text 988; chat at <https://chat.988lifeline.org/>
- <https://988lifeline.org/get-help/>
- Veterans—call 988 and press 1
- Spanish speakers—call 988 and press 2
- Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing loss--reach out to 988 Videophone by calling 988 with a VP number or chat at <https://chat.988lifeline.org/>
- Video: Here's what happens when you call 988:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQnHUzfYGIE>

Community Healthcore 24/7Crisis Line (Longview area)

- 800.832.1009
- Local mental health authority for Bowie, Cass, Gregg, Harrison, Marion, Panola, Red River, Rusk, and Upshur Counties
- Mobile Crisis Outreach Team provides free mental health screening by phone or on location in the community

Andrews Behavioral Health 24/7 Hotline (Tyler area)

- 877.934.2131
- Local mental health authority for Smith, Henderson, Van Zandt, Rains, and Wood Counties
- Mobile Crisis Outreach Team provides free mental health screening by phone or on location in the community

I'm experiencing testing anxiety

Feeling nervous for exams is a normal feeling among college students. However, extreme feelings of anxiety and stress before and during an exam can have unhealthy results. Anxiety can be problematic when it prevents you from doing your best on an exam, causes you to feel anxious all the time, or becomes extreme.

Test anxiety is a combination of physical symptoms and emotional reactions that interfere with your ability to perform well on tests. Many students experience varying levels of test anxiety for a number of different reasons. If you're someone who does, check out these suggestions and resources to reduce your test anxiety and improve your overall testing experience in college.

Symptoms of test anxiety

Test anxiety might look different from student to student, but the following is a list of possible symptoms you might experience:

- Physical symptoms: Headache, nausea, excessive sweating, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness, and feeling faint. Test anxiety can also cause panic attacks, which are the abrupt onset of intense fear or discomfort in which you may feel like you are unable to breathe or like you are having a heart attack.
- Emotional symptoms: Feelings of stress, fear, helplessness, and disappointment, negative thoughts (rumination about past poor performances, consequences of failure, feeling inadequate, helpless), mind going blank, and racing thoughts.
- Behavioral/cognitive symptoms: Difficulty concentrating, thinking negatively, comparing yourself to others, and procrastinating.

Causes of test anxiety

- Fear of failure. While the pressure of doing well on an exam can be motivating, it can be detrimental to your self-worth if you associate the grade of the test with your value.
- Lack of preparation. Waiting until the last minute or not studying at all can leave you feeling anxious and overwhelmed.
- Poor test history. Not succeeding on the previous exam can make you anxious for the next exam. It is important to remember to stay in the present moment when taking an exam so you remain focused. Don't dwell on the past.
- High pressure. If you need a certain grade to pass the class, it could increase your test anxiety.
- Perfectionism. Perfectionism is having extremely high-performance expectations for yourself. Research studies show that students who have high perfectionism and high self-criticism tend to have high test anxiety and do worse on exams. If you struggle with perfectionism, try to let it go. Make sure to take the time to recognize when you have worked hard and allow yourself to make mistakes.

How to reduce test anxiety:

Well before the exam

- Be prepared. Start studying a few weeks in advance so that you have enough time to prepare for your test. Space your studying out into smaller chunks over time. Use one of the Learning Center's weekly calendars to make a schedule. You can also use Learning Center coaching appointments to help you create a study schedule and remain accountable.
- Study effectively. Check out the Learning Center's tips for studying effectively to learn about and use effective study strategies that adequately prepare you for exams and help you learn, understand, and remember material.
- Engage in self-care. Take care of your overall health by eating well, getting enough restful sleep, incorporating exercise or movement into your day, and participating in relaxing and fun activities that you enjoy.
- Create a calming worksheet. This is a paper that you can carry with you all the time and especially before your exam. On this paper you can put motivational quotes, why you are likely to succeed, breathing techniques, pictures of your supporters, and anything

else that will keep you motivated without making you anxious. Create this several days in advance, when you are not stressed and anxious, so that you can turn to it if you do become anxious.

- Talk to your professor to get an idea of what is on the exam and what to expect. Look at old exams and practice exams from that class. This can help you better understand what to expect and better prepare. It will also reduce some of the fear and anxiety of the unknown.

Immediately before the exam

- Get a good night's sleep (7-9 hours) the night before the exam. Your ability to think clearly and to deal with anxiety improve with sleep.
- Eat something to help with focus and attention. Bring water to stay hydrated.
- Avoid too much caffeine. If you've been hitting the caffeine hard to stay awake and study or to stay focused, know that it can also have a negative effect on your nerves.
- Gather all of the materials you need in advance, including a pencil, eraser, or calculator, so that you are not rushing around before the exam.
- Play calming or familiar music to help you relax.
- Arrive to the exam early enough to find a seat that will help, not hinder your focus. (Do you focus best up front? Near a window? Know yourself.)
- Bring ear plugs if you get distracted by noise.
- Don't let the exam define you. Remember that your self-worth and intelligence does not depend on your performance on this one exam.
- Give yourself a pep talk to reframe your anxiety as excitement. Actually, telling yourself you're excited will help you see the exam more positively and experience more positive emotions.

During the exam

- Calm your body. Breathe deeply from your belly. Tighten various muscle groups, and then relax them.
- Stand and stretch or shrug shoulders.
- Close your eyes and count to ten.
- Sit comfortably. Sitting up, relaxing your shoulders, and being mindful of your posture can help you feel more powerful, confident, and assertive. It makes you less stressed, sluggish, and anxious. Research shows that slouching and hunching poses decrease people's persistence and creativity when trying to solve complex problems and increase negative self-thoughts. Research shows people have higher self-esteem and think of themselves more positively when they sit upright rather than hunched.
- Calm your emotions and thoughts. Focus only on present moment to help you stay grounded.

Example: "I am sitting at a desk in Carroll Hall. It is 2:00 pm on Tuesday." Avoid thoughts about the future or past. Example: "I need an A on this test in order to improve my GPA." Example: "I should have done more practice problems." Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

Example: “It’s okay if I can’t answer this question—I can answer another question instead.”

- Stay focused on the current task, which is to complete the test, not on how you believe it relates to your self-value.
- Keep realistic expectations. Often times it is not realistic to expect a 100% on an exam. Be okay with doing well, not perfectly.
- Focus on yourself and what you are doing. Ignore other people around you and don’t compare yourself to others.

Resources:

- Breathing through Exams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBbQK2HlvvI>

I’m experiencing trauma

Trauma is an intense emotional response to overwhelming events like violent acts, sexual assault, natural disasters or ongoing abuse. The signs of trauma don’t always show up immediately and can last for months or years. Mental health professionals can help individuals cope with trauma and prevent or lessen long-term impact.

Learn: Trauma is complex and its causes and symptoms can differ from person to person. The more you know, the better you can identify and address it in your own life or when it impacts a friend or family member.

- Understanding Trauma: Psychology Today explains the different types of trauma, their effects and treatment options. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/trauma>
- PTSD 101: This comprehensive overview of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) explains its causes, symptoms and treatment options. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>
- Trauma and the Brain: Physician and professional musician Dr. John Rigg talks about trauma’s effect on the brain in this popular Tedx talk. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9Pg4K1ZKws&feature=youtu.be>
- Psychology of PTSD: This animated video from Ted-ED walks through the science of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), its symptoms and how the brain reacts to trauma. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_n9qegR7C4

Reflect: Journaling is a proven way to help cope with traumatic events. VeryWellMind put together a guide on journaling and PTSD to get you started.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-use-journaling-to-cope-with-ptsd-2797594>

Act: Regardless of the severity of the trauma you've experienced or where you are in your treatment journey, there are simple strategies for coping when the effects of trauma feel overwhelming. These resources are a good place to start, for you or to help a friend.

- Take a Deep Breathe: When you're feeling overwhelmed, the best thing you can do is step aside and take deep breaths or use simple mindfulness exercises to help regain control of your mind and body. Start by trying this mini meditation from Headspace.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEqZthCaMpo>
- Get Tips from APA: This article from the American Psychological Association offers tips for coping with trauma, suggests when to seek help and explains how psychologists can provide evidence-based interventions to help with traumatic stress or acute stress disorder. <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma/stress>
- Tools for Traumatic Stress: The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) shares 7 tools for coping with traumatic stress. <https://www.nami.org/recovery/7-tools-for-managing-traumatic-stress/>

Trauma Coping Statements:

- I am (name). I am safe right now. This is just a memory. That was then and this is now. I am in (place) and the date is (date). This flashback will pass.
- What happened to me does not define me.
- What happened to me is not my fault.
- I am healing one day at a time.
- I couldn't control what happened to me then, but I can make different choices now.
- I can make it through this. I am a survivor.
- I'll be gentle with myself and take the time to recover.
- It's okay to have a bad day, week, or month. Healing is not linear.
- My feelings and thoughts related to trauma are normal.
- The trauma doesn't mean anything bad about me.
- I did the best I could with what I knew in a tough situation.
- The worst is over. It happened in the past, but it is not happening now.
- I don't need to feel embarrassed or ashamed.
- That was then. I am in control now.

Connect: Treatment is often required to cope with trauma, and since it can impact all areas of your life, it's best to seek help at the first signs of a problem. If you feel hopeless or like you can't go on, don't wait to reach out.

Resources:

- What is Trauma? <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/what-is-trauma>

- The Fight or Flight Response Fact Sheet: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/fight-or-flight>
- Common Reactions to Trauma: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/trauma-reactions>
- The Impacts of Trauma on the Brain: https://orwfoundation.org/the-impacts-of-trauma-on-the-brain/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22659336899&gclid=CjwKCAjwpriDBhBTEiwA1m1d0lBtolco4kW19IEWliSbSJfulxMgtV-bo-42RY_fPz_OH_0FCBldTRoCGHkQAvD_BwE
- Identifying your Trauma Triggers: <https://www.choosingtherapy.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Identifying-Your-Trauma-Triggers-Worksheet.pdf>
- Triggers: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/triggers>

I am a student with disabilities

Academic accommodations are required by law for eligible college students with LD. Accommodations are changes in the learning and testing environments that give college students with LD an equal opportunity to learn. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its amendments (ADAAA) require that reasonable accommodations be made available to college students who have current documentation of learning disabilities and who request learning and/or testing accommodations.

Student Responsibilities

- To self-identify as a person with a disability to the disability services office at the college or university.
- To provide up-to-date documentation of the disability to the disability services office.
- To request academic accommodations that will ensure access to information and testing on an equal level with students who do not have disabilities.
- To self-identify to faculty as a student with a disability and provide them
- with a copy of the Individual Student Profile developed with the disability services office.
- To remind faculty in a timely manner of academic accommodations required for tests and assignments.
- To ultimately accept responsibility for his or her successful education. This includes maintaining satisfactory academic levels, attending classes, completing assignments, behaving appropriately, and communicating regularly with the appropriate office and/or individual regarding specific needs.

Disability Services Office Responsibilities

- To assess students' requests for accommodations using the current disability documentation provided by the students.

- To provide information regarding policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request.
- To recommend appropriate learning and testing accommodations.
- To provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities who meet the college or university criteria for eligibility.
- To ensure confidentiality of all information pertaining to students' disabilities.
- To assist students in communicating with faculty about their disabilities and required accommodations, if needed.

Faculty Responsibilities

If students request instructional and/or testing accommodations in a class, they must disclose the need for the accommodations to the instructor and give the instructor any documentation provided by the disability services office, typically a letter from that office validating the need for the specified accommodations. Students do not have to disclose their disabilities to their instructor, only the need for accommodations.

The instructors' responsibilities include the following:

- To allow students to disclose their disabilities in an appropriate and confidential place.
- To acknowledge the rights of students with dignity and respect.
- To maintain the integrity of academic standards.
- To maintain student confidentiality at all times.
- To provide reasonable instructional and/or testing accommodations.

KC provides services to students with documented disabilities. The Office of Disability Services, which serves as a clearinghouse for all students with disabilities, can be reached at (903) 983-8682. These services may include, but are not limited to:

- Accommodations in class
- Tutoring
- Interpreting for the deaf
- Readers, scribes, Kurzweil Reader and Bookshare
- Accommodations for Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

Students seeking accommodations must contact the Office of Disability Services and provide the necessary documentation in a timely manner. Although Kilgore College can assist students with support and guidance, students have the final responsibility for their success. In order to be processed by the first day of classes, new students should request services prior to the first day of classes.

Learn more about the application process, examples of reasonable accommodations, and more at <https://www.kilgore.edu/academics/support-services/accommodations-disability-services/> or contact the accommodations coordinator at 903.983.8682 or the front desk: 903.983.8206.

Additional Resources:

East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind

The transition from dependence to independence comes easier for some than others. For those with learning disabilities, physical handicaps or other obstacles, the road to independence can be difficult to navigate. At East Texas Lighthouse, we strive to empower the blind and visually impaired to become whatever they want to be. Our goal is to not only point out a path to independence, but to walk it with our clients until they feel empowered to face it on their own.

East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind (ETLB) offers educational programs designed to prepare teens and young adults for life beyond high school. Through our college preparatory program, scholarship program, and annual summer camp, teens and young adults who are blind or have a visual impairment have the opportunity to equip themselves with the skills necessary to conquer their transition goals.

1-888-565-3852 | info@etxlighthouse.org | 411 West Front Street, Tyler TX 75702

[I am a foster care alumnus](#)

Attending college is a big step to take for any student who wants to pursue higher education. This is especially true for a student who experienced the foster care system as a child or youth. One of the secrets to postsecondary educational success is having a healthy and stable support system that provides practical and/or emotional support. Many children and youth in foster care have fewer opportunities to build or expand their support systems due to the instability and unpredictability of their foster care placements. For students who age out of foster care, there is often little or no support available. These students are often in crisis mode, focusing on other basic needs such as securing food and shelter. Other students who may have returned to their parents or been adopted face similar challenges when familial support is tenuous or non-existent after the student turns 18. Foster care alumni want and need the support that many students in higher education receive from family and other supportive adults.

The KC foster care liaison can help foster care alumni navigate college, connect with resources, and find the support they need to be a successful student. For more information, call 903.988.7585.

Resources:

- FAQ: Tuition and Fee Waiver:
<https://www.texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/evubvlk1/tuition-and-fee-waiver-ga-2821.pdf>

- Tuition and Fee Waiver: https://texasfosteryouth.org/downloads/tuition_waiver.pdf

I am a pregnant or parenting student

Kilgore College welcomes pregnant and parenting students as a part of the student body.

This institution is committed to providing support and accommodations for a successful educational experience for pregnant and parenting students. This policy ensures that students receive equal access to educational opportunities and appropriate support in compliance with Texas Senate Bill 412.

The passage of Texas Senate Bill 412 provides guidance that “an institution of higher education may not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of the student's status as a pregnant or parenting student or due to issues related to the student's pregnancy or parenting” to take leave of absence or withdraw from the student’s degree or certificate program, limit the students’ studies, participate in an alternative program, or change the student’s major, degree, or certification, or refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the institution. This legislation means that the student will be required to meet the same academic standards as other Panola students but will have access to the support and reasonable accommodations to support them in meeting those academic standards.

Contact the Liaison Officer for pregnant and parenting students at Kilgore College 903.983.8682. For more information, visit: <https://www.kilgore.edu/academics/support-services/instructional-student-support/>

Other resources:

- **Parenting Resource Center of East Texas** is a primary prevention program whose purpose is to provide parents with the necessary tools, skills, and resources to develop strong, healthy families. We are a non-profit organization that has offered parent education in our community for over 30 years. Our classes are taught in person by highly qualified instructors. We strive to offer high quality programs that reflect the needs of the community and to offer support and encouragement to parents in their efforts to make positive changes in their families. Classes include:
 - **For Kids' Sake: Divorce** is a painful and confusing time for children. The For Kids' Sake seminar focuses on understanding the effects of divorce on children, talking to children about family changes, avoiding placing children in the middle, maintaining parent/child relationships, and co-parenting skills. Class participants will receive a certificate at the end of the class. This class **MUST** be paid in advance. Your seat in the class is not guaranteed until we receive payment. Online courses **WILL NOT** be accepted by the court. Cost of the class is \$55.00 cash or \$58.00 debit/credit card.

- **Home Front:** Abuse and violence within the home have damaging and lasting effects on children. Home Front participants learn new communication skills, anger management, conflict resolution, and alternative ways to discipline that help break the cycle of violence that passes from one generation to the next. Participants overwhelmingly comment that Home Front is a supportive and worthwhile course. Certificates are issued at the completion of the 4-week course. \$65.00 for all 4 classes or \$68.50 debit/credit card.
- **Family Matters:** The Family Matters course teaches parenting styles, effective communication, discipline techniques, giving children responsibility, setting boundaries, and building self-esteem. Classes are tailored for parents of young children and a separate class for parents of teenagers. The 4-week series is offered each month and is offered to anyone who cares for children. Young parents as well as grandparents raising grandchildren attend the classes. A certificate is given when the 4-week course is completed. \$55 for all 4 classes or \$58 debit/credit card.

For more information, visit <http://www.parentingresourcecenter.org/index.html>.

- **East Texas Parenting Classes:** Take a brave step toward restoring your family with our FREE court approved program.
 - <https://familiescountetx.org/>
- **Expectant Heart Pregnancy Resource Center** is a place where women experiencing unplanned pregnancies might come to receive free services such as pregnancy tests, educational classes, career training, spiritual encouragement for them and their family through support groups, one-on-one advocate assistance, and transitional housing for expecting families.
 - 2440 S High Street, Longview
 - (903) 931-3124
 - <http://www.expectantheart.org/>

I am a Veteran

Welcome, Military-Affiliated Students! Kilgore College is proud to serve students who are veterans, active duty, military dependents and survivors. We are committed to providing the best possible educational experience and service to all that attend our college.

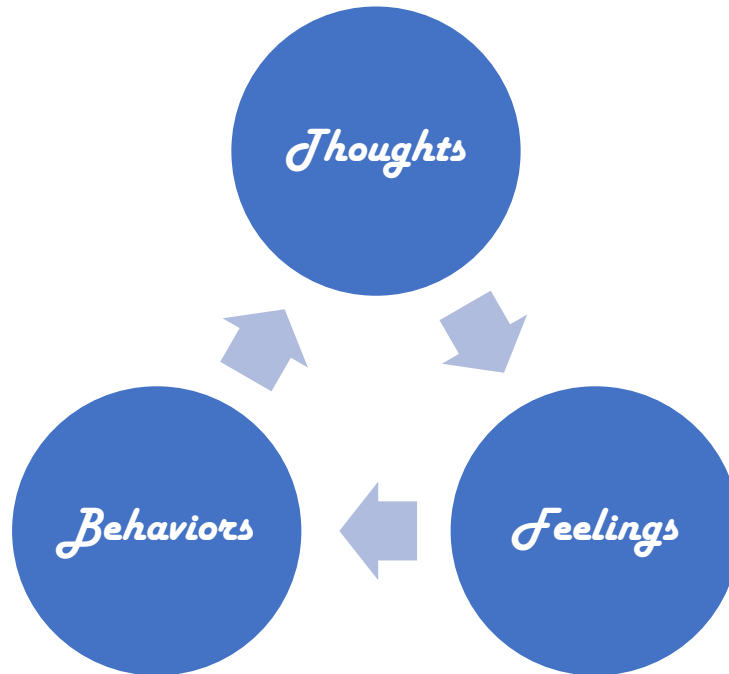
- VA Education Benefits: <https://www.kilgore.edu/cost-financial-aid/va-education-benefits/>

Off-Campus Resources:

- East Texas Veterans Resource Center (ETVRC)
 - www.helpforvets.com
 - 903.291.1155
 - 501 Pine Tree Road, Ste G-4, Longview, TX 75604
 - Services include peer support services, peer support groups and trips, suicide prevention, case management, assistance with emergent needs relating to health care and daily living services.
- Military Veteran Peer Network - VMHD
 - veteransmentalhealth.texas.gov
 - peer support, training, military cultural awareness, connecting veterans to services
- Camp V
 - 903.566.1010
 - 3212 West Front Street Tyler, TX 75702
 - Serving ALL of East Texas
 - Serving your country is hard. Getting support shouldn't be. At CampV, we have the knowledge and the resources to assist Veterans, military personnel, and their families during and after service to our country.
- Veterans' Services, East Texas Workforce Center
 - <https://www.easttexasworkforce.org/Veterans>
- Gregg County Veterans Services Office
 - 1203A E. Marshall, Longview, TX 75601
 - 903-212-0697
 - Veterans@co.gregg.tx.us

TOOLS TO MANAGE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Cognitive Behavioral Triangle



Our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected. Therefore, changing one of these factors can change the others. Let's take this simple example:

- Thought: "I am not qualified for this job."
- Feeling: Sad, defeated, embarrassed
- Behavior: Quitting the job

With the help of the cognitive triangle, a person will be able to challenge this negative thought and replace it with a positive one:

- Alternative thought: "I can learn and improve with practice."
- New feeling: Empowered, interested, hopeful
- New behavior: Doing your best

Learn more:

- Book: The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Workbook: Evidence-Based CBT Skills to Help You Manage Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and More (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1417196700>)
- The CBT Model: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cbt-model-worksheet>, <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cognitive-behavioral-model>
- CBT triangle: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cbt-triangle>

- CBT practice exercises: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cbt-practice-exercises>

Managing Thoughts

THOUGHTS >> are not << FACTS

According to a 2020 study, the average person has more than 6,000 thoughts each day. These include positive thoughts and negatively biased habitual thoughts or “cognitive distortions,” such as:

- All-or-nothing thinking. This is also known as black-or-white thinking, in which a person views something as either good or bad and not something in between. For example, they may view a small mistake as a total failure and as a result, they’re afraid to try again.
- Catastrophizing. This distorted type of thinking is when a person assumes the worst possible scenario. People who catastrophize may have experienced a traumatic event that causes them to be fearful.
- Mind reading. This is when you assume what someone else is thinking. For example, assuming that your spouse is angry with you because they stayed silent during dinner.
- Emotional reasoning. This refers to the use of one’s emotions (instead of rational evidence) to form conclusions about a situation. For example, you’re scared to play the piano on stage because you might make a mistake. During the big event, you felt nervous and started sweating. Then you tell yourself, “I’m going to fail.”
- Labeling. When a person uses labeling, they judge themselves or others based on one characteristic. For example, calling yourself “dumb” because you got a bad grade in school.
- Personalization. This is when you take things personally, blame yourself, or someone else for situations that are uncontrollable. Individuals with depression, anxiety, or a history of trauma are at risk of having this cognitive distortion.

Challenging Negative Thoughts:

Challenging negative thoughts is crucial for improving mental well-being, promoting a more positive mindset, and developing better coping mechanisms. By questioning and reframing negative thoughts, individuals can reduce anxiety and stress, develop a more balanced perspective, and build resilience against life's challenges.

Am I overreacting or making assumptions?	Is my worry based on emotion or logical thinking?	Are there any other possible outcomes?
Is there any evidence for this worry?	Have I overcome this worry before?	Is this worry in or out of my control?
What is the evidence for this thought?	What is the evidence against this thought?	How can I reframe my negative thought to a more realistic one?

Growth Mindset

A growth mindset is important because it fosters a belief in the ability to learn and improve, leading to increased resilience, adaptability, and overall success in various aspects of life. It encourages embracing challenges, viewing setbacks as learning opportunities, and persisting through difficulties. Changing your mindset can change your life!

Fixed mindset:

- This is too hard.
- I'm not smart enough.
- I always make mistakes.
- I don't know how to do it.
- I don't like challenges.
- I don't think I can do it.

Flexible mindset:

- I'll keep trying.
- I'll figure out a different way.
- Challenges help me grow.
- If I keep practicing, it will get easier.
- I'll give it my best effort.
- I can learn from my mistakes.

The Power of Yet

This concept is based on the idea that "yet" allows you to open the door to possibility and growth. When you add "yet" to your self-talk, it gives you an opportunity to reflect and see that perhaps the issue isn't as insurmountable as it might have seemed at first.

- I haven't figured this out...yet.
- I can't do it...yet.
- I don't understand this...yet.
- I'm not good at this...yet.
- This doesn't make sense...yet.

The Circle of Control

By focusing on what you can control and letting go of things you cannot control, you can reduce feelings of overwhelm and helplessness and avoid draining your time and energy.

Things you can control:

- Your boundaries
- Your values and beliefs
- Who you spend time with
- What you post online
- What you say
- What you do
- Your goals
- Your thoughts
- How you spend your spare time
- Your efforts

Things you can NOT control:

- What other people think
- What other people do
- How other people feel
- How people react
- The future
- The past
- Death
- The weather
- My age
- The results of a sports match

Think about a situation that has caused you stress or emotional upset. What thoughts and feelings have you had about the situation? What can you control about it and what is out of your control? What action steps can you take to reduce stress or move in a positive direction? What can you tell yourself to come to terms with what you cannot control about the situation, and what things should you let go of? What coping skills can you use to manage your emotions?

Resources:

- Book: The growth mindset workbook: CBT skills to help you build resilience, increase confidence & thrive through life's challenges (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1298393104>)
- Book: The negative thoughts workbook: CBT skills to overcome the repetitive worry, shame, and rumination that drive anxiety and depression (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1147949939>)
- Thought record: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/thought-record>
- Automatic thoughts: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/automatic-thoughts>
- Knowing what you can control helps you focus your energy on things that matter: <https://www.universalcoachinstitute.com/circle-of-control/>
- Challenging negative thoughts: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/challenging-negative-thoughts>, <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/countering-negative-thoughts-thought-log>

- Putting thoughts on trial: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/putting-thoughts-on-trial>
- Thoughts are not facts. Next time your mind jumps to a conclusion that inevitably sends in you in a spiral toward depression or anxiety, check to see where your head was at the time of that interpretation. <https://www.mindful.org/content/uploads/Thoughts-Are-Not-Facts-InfoG-revised.png>
- Core beliefs: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/core-beliefs>, <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/core-beliefs-info-sheet>, <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/core-beliefs-examining-evidence>
- Cognitive distortions: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cognitive-distortions>
- What could happen vs what will happen: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/worry-exploration-questions>
- De-catastrophizing: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/decatastrophizing>
- Video: What to do when you are overthinking: This video explains some of the things you can try when you find yourself overthinking or your mind is racing. After the video, take a few moments to think about what you just learned and how you can use it the next time you are overthinking. <https://youtu.be/kHbTskmIJUk?si=C9mbqJqr9bdpLf7>
- Video: You are not your thoughts: This video explains some of the things you can try when you feel overwhelmed by your thoughts. After the video, take a few moments to observe your thoughts with curiosity, paying attention to how each one makes you feel. Paying attention to your thoughts and sorting through them takes practice and patience. <https://youtu.be/0QXmmP4psbA?si=uaptSJ2QBKOcGAYy>

Managing Feelings

Feelings are just visitors. Let them come and go.

What are emotions, exactly? If you think about it, most of your feelings come from your body. For example, how do you know when you're anxious? You probably feel pressure in your chest or butterflies in your stomach. What about anger? You might clench your fists, or your face might flush. We think of emotions in our mind because our thoughts and feelings are related. Thoughts may bring on a certain emotion, and a thought can change how we feel.

Ignoring your feelings is like holding a beach ball under water; you can try to push them down, but eventually they will become too difficult, they will pop back up, and be felt more intensely. – Melissa Preston



Emotional regulation is the ability to soothe feelings or control your reactions to them. For example, if someone becomes angry and starts punching a wall, we might call that dysregulated. If they're able to lower the intensity of the feeling, that's called emotional regulation.

What can you do to help yourself when you're overwhelmed with feelings? Here are some tips you can try, along with resources to support your efforts:

1. Recognize your emotion: It's common for people to not even recognize they're having a feeling. They may also be used to minimizing their emotions, even when others can see them. "I'm not angry!" "Why would I be stressed?" So, a good starting point may be to put a language to feelings. Just having about 5 to 10 feelings words can help you get a better handle of what's happening. Connecting your feelings to your physical sensations (remember the butterflies) can also help. Some studies show (UCLA, 2007) that simply naming an emotion can make you feel better. That may be because it connects the emotional and cognitive parts of your brain. That helps your brain know how to respond to a stressful situation. This may not work for everyone, so notice your experience when you try it. Does labeling that you're angry make you more or less angry?

2. Validate your feelings: Therapists know that it's important not to immediately dismiss or judge feelings. If you feel angry or sad, there's a reason. However, most people grow up being taught to shut down feelings. You might have heard (or said) things like: "Don't cry." "It's nothing to be upset about." "You don't need to get so angry." This advice comes from well-meaning people who want to make you feel better. Or, they may feel uncomfortable and want to feel better themselves. Either way, they are usually just reacting automatically.

But when feelings are dismissed, it's called invalidating. It may make you feel confused or ashamed of what you're feeling. We all want to know that our experiences are real, and if someone tells you you're not actually feeling what you are, it can be really upsetting. Most people also invalidate their own emotions. You might think: "I shouldn't feel this way." "I have nothing to be angry about." "Whatever. I didn't care about them anyway." When you push

feelings away all the time, they could come back even stronger. When you continue to have emotions and thoughts crop back up, that means they still need to be resolved. Invalidating them is making it worse. Instead, accept what you're feeling and validate yourself. Here's what that might sound like: "Of course I'm upset. They were really mean to me." "It's understandable I would be angry. That was important." "I'm disappointed that happened. It's okay to feel sad."

3. Consider riding it out: Once you recognize your feelings and accept them, what do you do next? It depends on your experience at the moment. Often, we push away feelings because we believe we can't handle them. However, if uncomfortable emotions keep coming back, ignoring them won't make them any easier to deal with. If your feeling is uncomfortable, but you know you can take it, consider staying with it. For example, if you're feeling anxious in a public setting, the feeling might pass if you just ride it out. If your feelings are hurt, allowing yourself to cry may bring some relief.

4. Try self-soothing: In some cases, riding out the feeling won't work. If you're about to punch your boss, it's probably a good idea to calm yourself quickly. If a child is harming themselves, they need more coping skills. In such cases, it's important to get professional help. Meanwhile, try some of these self-soothing skills. They can help calm your nervous system. After you experiment you may find one or two that work best for you.

5. Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness is one of the most effective techniques for the majority of mental health symptoms. It can help you with both short-term and long-term feelings of anxiety and depression. It can also lower symptoms of other mental health disorders. Mindfulness is the practice of staying in the moment, being aware of your environment and experience, without trying to change it. You can practice mindfulness through online videos and apps. But here are a few basic instructions to get started.

Bring your attention to the moment:

- What are you physically experiencing? (For example, right now I'm noticing my fingers pressing on the keyboard.)
- What other things do you notice? (There's music playing overhead, and I can hear people across the room – I'm in a coffee shop. My feet feel tired.)
- Don't try to judge your experience, just notice it. Stay in the here and the now.

When I return to this moment, my brain gets a better grip on what's going on and can chill out. There's nothing dangerous happening right now, so I don't need to be on edge. There's no immediate threat, so I don't need to physically react by punching a wall. Get the idea? Many people learn mindfulness through purposefully sitting still and doing nothing. That's a great place to start, but you can actually practice mindfulness at any moment, while you're doing anything. That includes during any feeling you're experiencing.

Resources:

- Book: Don't believe everything you feel: a CBT workbook to identify your emotional schemas and find freedom from anxiety and depression (check out the e-book here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1145906471>)
- Learn how to label your feelings with a feelings wheel: <https://uca.edu/bewell/files/2020/11/Feelings-Wheel-Learn-How-to-Label-Your-Feelings.pdf>
- Distress tolerance skills: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/dbt-tipp>
- Learn to identify and manage emotional triggers: <https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/pdfs/workplace-wellness-resources/Emotional-Triggers-Tool.pdf>
- Feelings of uncertainty and how to manage them: This video provides tools for coping with uncertainty and unknowns about the future, whether it's something specific or we want to know what will happen in the coming days, weeks or months. This video helps with regaining perspective to focus on the things we can control right here and now. https://youtu.be/_vWMe3A-IKY?si=y_v514BMfJk3MrJb
- How to feel feelings: As humans, we spend a lot of time thinking about or talking about our feelings instead of feeling them. This video explains what feelings are and why it's important to feel our feelings. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjJdzhRZxGw&t=77s>
- How to practice feeling your feelings: This video helps you learn how to practice your feelings by showing you some of the emotions you may have from time-to-time, what your feelings are trying to tell you and how you can try to calm these feelings. After you watch the video, consider replaying it and just listening to the instructions while you practice the steps and the next time you are having strong feelings, you can practice what you just learned. <https://youtu.be/OL7AQbGh7WU?si=6pouaKnMnhCNRDYH>
- Use a feelings thermometer to measure the intensity of your emotions so that you will know when to use coping skills to prevent dysregulation. A feelings thermometer is a visual tool, often a simple drawing of a thermometer that works by associating different emotional states with levels on the thermometer, typically from "cool" or low-intensity emotions at the bottom to "hot" or high-intensity emotions at the top. Tune into where your feelings fall on the thermometer, and as they rise in intensity, implement coping strategies to remain in control of your emotions.

Managing Behaviors

Behaviors refer to the way you react to stimuli. Your behavior can be influenced by different things, including your thoughts and feelings. In other words, a person's behavior can serve as a clue on how they're feeling, especially when they don't communicate it.

Consider this example: A happy person is more likely to socialize with others, display a "can do" attitude, and engage in health-promoting behaviors such as exercising and eating nutritious foods.

One of the most pervasive misconceptions about mental health is the belief that we must wait until we "feel better" before taking positive action in our lives. This mindset, while understandable, often leads to stagnation, particularly for those struggling with anxiety, depression, or negative, self-destructive behaviors. However, there's an important shift in thinking that can radically change one's trajectory: the idea that doing better helps you feel better, rather than waiting to feel better before you do anything.

This principle, rooted in cognitive-behavioral practices and motivational theory, is pivotal for those looking to improve their mental and emotional well-being. Moreover, how we approach motivation—specifically the contrast between "moving towards" goals versus "moving away from" negative states—can make all the difference in how effectively we break free from harmful cycles.

How to get motivated when you're feeling "blah":

- **Set SMART Goals:**
 1. **Specific:** Define your goals clearly. Instead of "get healthier," aim for "exercise for 30 minutes, three times a week."
 2. **Measurable:** How will you track your progress? Use metrics to assess your success.
 3. **Achievable:** Set realistic goals that challenge you but are within reach.
 4. **Relevant:** Ensure your goals align with your overall values and aspirations.
 5. **Time-bound:** Give yourself deadlines to create a sense of urgency and focus.
- **Break Down Tasks:** Large, overwhelming tasks can be daunting. Divide them into smaller, more manageable steps to make them less intimidating. Each completed step provides a sense of accomplishment and boosts your motivation to continue.
- **Reward Yourself:** Acknowledge and celebrate your successes, no matter how small they may seem. Positive reinforcement, like rewarding yourself after completing a task, can be a powerful motivator.

- **Change Your Environment:** Your surroundings can significantly impact your motivation. Find a space that is conducive to focus and productivity. Consider rearranging your workspace, finding a quiet spot, or even changing your scenery to break free from a rut.
- **Establish a Routine:** Creating a daily or weekly routine can help you stay on track and build momentum. Consistency is key, so try to stick to your routine as much as possible, even when you don't feel motivated.
- **Seek Support:** Don't be afraid to ask for help or guidance from friends, family, or a mentor. Accountability partners can provide encouragement and keep you accountable to your goals.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Prioritize activities that promote your well-being, such as exercise, mindfulness, or spending time in nature. Self-care can help reduce stress and improve your overall mood, which can indirectly boost your motivation.
- **Be Patient and Kind to Yourself:** Motivation can fluctuate, and it's normal to experience periods of low motivation. Be patient with yourself, practice self-compassion, and don't beat yourself up if you have setbacks.
- **Start with a Small Task:** If you're feeling completely unmotivated, start with a tiny, easy task to get the ball rolling. Once you've completed that, you might find it easier to tackle a bigger task.
- **Remember Your "Why":** Connecting with your deeper reasons for pursuing your goals can provide a powerful source of motivation. Reflect on why your goals are important to you and how achieving them will make you feel.

Resources:

- **Book:** The Behavioral Activation Workbook for Depression: Powerful Strategies to Boost Your Mood and Build a Better Life (check out the e-book from our library here: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1420641486>)
- **The Trap of Waiting to Feel Better:** <https://newdaysp.com.au/doing-better-to-feel-better/>
- **Book:** The 5-Second Rule by Mel Robbins
- **Behavioral activation:** <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/behavioral-activation>
- **Behavioral experiment:** <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/behavioral-experiment>

- Weekly schedule for behavioral activation: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/schedule-behavioral-activation>
- Positive activities: <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/activities-behavioral-activation>

Coping Skills

Coping skills are actions we take, consciously or unconsciously, to deal with stress, problems, or uncomfortable emotions. Unhealthy coping strategies tend to feel good in the moment, but have long-term negative consequences. Healthy coping strategies may not provide instant gratification, but they lead to long-lasting positive outcomes. Examples of unhealthy coping skills include: drug or alcohol use, overeating, procrastination, sleeping too much or too little, social withdrawal, self-harm, retail “therapy”, and aggression. Examples of healthy coping strategies include: exercise, talking about your problems, healthy eating, counseling, deep breathing, and social support.

- Healthy vs. Unhealthy Coping Skills: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/healthy-unhealthy-coping-strategies>
- Protective Factors: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/protective-factors>

Try out some new coping skills to see what works for you:

Breathing Exercises

You probably don’t think about your breath that often. It’s always there, in the background, when you need it. But paying more attention to how you’re breathing can make a big impact on your stress levels. Deep breathing (sometimes called diaphragmatic breathing) is a practice that enables more air to flow into your body and can help calm your nerves, reducing stress and anxiety. It can also help you improve your attention span and lower pain levels.

How deep breathing calms the body — and mind

Your breath isn’t just part of your body’s stress response, it’s key to it. In fact, you can induce a state of anxiety or panic in someone just by having them take shallow, short breaths from their chest (You’ve probably heard of this as hyperventilation). That means that purposeful deep breathing can physically calm your body down if you’re feeling stressed or anxious. It can be helpful for dealing with day-to-day anxiety as well as more pervasive problems such as generalized anxiety disorder.

But why does deep breathing work? It has to do with how your nervous system functions.

Here's a quick and painless biology lesson: Your autonomic nervous system, which controls involuntary actions like heart rate and digestion, is split into two parts. One part, the sympathetic nervous system, controls your fight-or-flight response. The other part, the parasympathetic nervous system, controls your rest-and-relax response. While both parts of your nervous system are always active, deep breathing can help quiet your sympathetic nervous system and therefore reduce feelings of stress or anxiety.

Ready to give it a try? How to practice deep breathing

Deep breathing involves taking slower, longer breaths from your stomach to counter the short, rapid breaths that you default to when stressed or anxious.

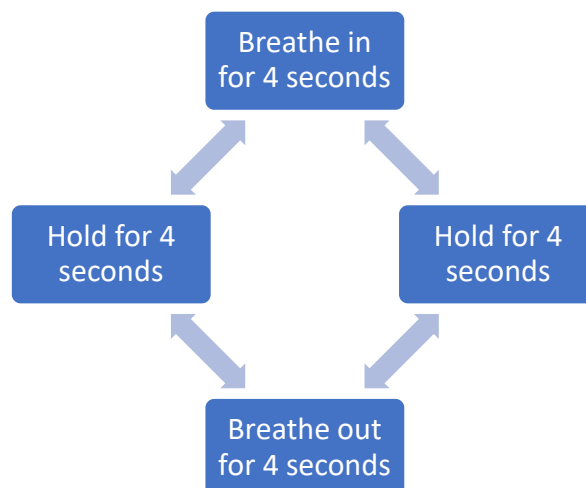
1. Activate your sympathetic nervous system. You can do this by sitting comfortably, closing your eyes and imagining an extremely stressful situation. Notice how your body responds: Your chest might tighten your breathing might grow shallower and your heart might beat faster.
2. Next, turn your attention to your breath. Focus on breathing from your stomach, pushing your stomach out each time you inhale. Take longer breaths, counting to at least three for each inhalation and exhalation. Keep doing this even though it may feel uncomfortable at first. After a while, you will start to notice your body feeling more relaxed.

Deep breathing may be simple, but it isn't necessarily easy. It can quiet your nervous system in a short amount of time, though it probably won't provide instant relief from all anxiety. The more you practice, the better you'll get at it and the more you'll be able to use it in times of stress to help calm yourself down.

Box Breathing Technique:

Box breathing, also referred to as square breathing, is a deep breathing technique that can help you slow down your breathing. It works by distracting your mind as you count to four, calming your nervous system, and decreasing stress in your body.

Box breathing is a simple but powerful relaxation technique that can help return your breathing pattern to a relaxed rhythm. It can clear and calm your mind, improving your focus.



Deep Breathing Videos:

- Box Breathing: <https://youtu.be/n6RbW2LtdFs?si=w3MphndrqrG29Qfp>
- Navy Seal Box Breathing Technique:
- Breathing videos from Headspace:
<https://www.youtube.com/@headspace/search?query=breath>

Coping Statements/Affirmations:

Positive affirmations can significantly benefit mental health by promoting a positive self-image, reducing stress and anxiety, and fostering resilience. By repeatedly stating positive statements about oneself, individuals can begin to internalize these beliefs, which can lead to improved mood, increased self-esteem, and a more optimistic outlook on life.

- A bad day does not equal a bad life.
- You are not this struggle.
- The only way out is through. I can move forward even though I feel...
- Your worth is not contingent on circumstances. You are lovable and enough. Always.
- Nothing stays the same. Life guarantees this.
- You can't be everything to everyone, but you can be true to yourself.
- Be gentle with yourself, and trust your inner voice.
- You're not alone. It's OK to ask for help and be vulnerable.
- This challenge is here to teach me something.
- All I need to do is take it one step at a time. Breathe. And do the next right thing.
- I've survived other tough times, and I will be strong this time too.
- This hurts, so I need to be extra kind towards myself.
- Feelings are not facts. But all your feelings are valid, real, and allowed.
- This is just a feeling--it will pass.
- Every emotion that has risen has fallen, and this will too.
- This feeling is a reminder to slow down and take some deep breaths.
- This feeling is a normal reaction. I will use my coping tools to respond with thoughtfulness and self-compassion.
- Not all thoughts are true.
- Focus on the things you can control. Let go of the rest (this is easier said than done).
- This isn't an emergency. It's okay to think slowly about what I need to do.
- I may not be able to control this situation, but I am in control of how I respond.

Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques help improve mental health by bringing one's focus back to the present moment, which can reduce anxiety, stress, and the intensity of negative thoughts or flashbacks. By shifting attention away from distressing feelings and experiences, grounding can promote a sense of calm and emotional regulation.

Techniques to try:

- **Rainbow grounding:** look around the room and find objects for each color of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple). Unlike traditional grounding methods, color grounding taps into your brain's natural visual processing system. By actively engaging with colors in your environment, you create an instant shift in your mental state. Think of it as pressing a reset button using the rainbow that's already around you.
- **5-4-3-2-1.** Challenge yourself to notice and name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. This helps to ground you in your immediate environment.
- **Grounding objects.** Carry a small object with you that you can touch or hold onto when you feel overwhelmed. This could be a smooth stone, a piece of fabric, or a stress ball. Some people even find that fidget toys marketed to children to be a welcome distraction.
- **Counting.** Count backward from 100 by threes or any other sequence that requires you to focus on the task at hand instead of the situation that is causing your distress.
- **Play a game of Categories:** Choose a category (ex: animals, food, countries) and try to name something in that category for every letter of the alphabet (aardvark, bear, cat, etc.). This can serve as a distraction to reset your mindset.

Resources:

- **30 Grounding Techniques to Quiet Distressing Thoughts:**
<https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques>

Guided Meditation

Guided meditation can significantly improve mental health by reducing stress and anxiety, alleviating symptoms of depression, enhancing focus and concentration, and promoting emotional regulation. By guiding individuals through specific techniques, it helps cultivate a

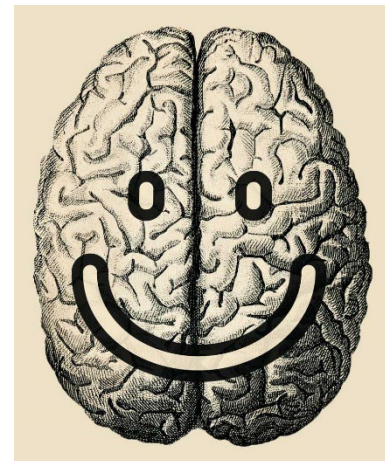
sense of calm, presence, and self-awareness, leading to a more balanced and resilient mental state.

Guided Meditation Videos:

- Videos: About Kids Health guided meditation videos are great for all ages and include mindfulness, coping with pain, coping with stress and finding calm:
<https://teens.aboutkidshealth.ca/guidedmeditations>
- Through evidence-based meditation and mindfulness tools, Headspace helps you create life-changing habits to support your mental health and find a healthier, happier you.
<https://www.youtube.com/@headspace>
- Guided meditations from Cal Poly:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLI44jVzqiSNuYrPNPWHc6BTqrwBXtlhrS>

The Happy Brain Chemicals

Different glands across your body produce chemicals that travel through the bloodstream, acting as messengers and playing a part in helping regulate your mood. Certain chemicals help promote more positive feelings. Four primary chemicals can drive the positive emotions you feel throughout the day: dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins:



Dopamine: The Reward Chemical

- It is released during activities that are considered pleasurable, such as exercising or eating. It acts across several brain areas and can affect many functions, such as memory, learning, behavior, and movement.
- How to increase dopamine levels:
 - Exercise—go for a power walk, visit the gym, or do some aerobics at home.
 - Eat a little bit of chocolate—a little bit in moderation will help boost mood.
 - Mindfulness—meditation causes a 65% increase in dopamine levels.
 - Sunlight—Try walking outside, picnics, reading a book outside for 30 minutes.
 - Music—make a feel-good music playlist.
 - High-protein diet—protein is a building block of amino acids that can help keep your dopamine levels where they should be.
 - Small wins—make a list of all the things you have accomplished today
 - Sleep—set up a good nighttime routine.

Oxytocin: The Love Hormone

- It is the happiness chemical that helps us feel loved and connected to others. It is released when we have human to human contact, such as hugging. It is also released when we feel trust.

- How to increase oxytocin levels:
 - Hot baths—add essential oils and listen to relaxing music.
 - Connect online—rekindle a friendship.
 - Use the “L” word—tell all the special people in your life that you love them (in person, in writing, by phone/text).
 - Connect with friends—catch up with friends and feel less alone.
 - Cuddle—8 hugs a day is the magic number!
 - Share your feelings—show affection and express what you value about your connections with friends and family.
 - Play with a pet—spending just a short time with a pet can make you feel happier.
 - Be nice—give someone a random act of kindness.

Serotonin: The Mood Stabilizer

- It is one of the critical hormones linked to our emotions and mood. It is associated with satisfaction and optimism and affects our physical health.
- How to increase serotonin levels:
 - Laughter—watch a funny movie, read funny jokes, even faking a smile can increase serotonin levels.
 - Massages can increase serotonin levels by as much as 30%.
 - Aromatherapy—use essential oils in a diffuser, candles, or sprays.
 - Try something new—try cooking a new recipe or learn a new hobby or skill.
 - Practice gratitude—write 3 things you are grateful for each day.
 - Thinking about positive memories—write down your top 10 memories.
 - Setting goals—write a list of weekly goals, then break them down into daily goals.

Endorphins: The Pain Killer

- It is considered a natural pain reliever and mood booster. It acts directly on the brain’s opioid receptors, reducing pain and resulting in an energized, excited feeling.
- How to increase endorphin levels:
 - Play your favorite game, sport, or just be silly.
 - Art—face painting, drawing, clay sculpting, and painting.
 - Dancing raises your heart rate and endorphins.
 - Eat spicy food—when we eat something spicy, the receptors in our mouth and nose react, making us feel like we are under the sun’s heat.
 - Take a trip down memory lane and relive your favorite memories.
 - Acupuncture stimulates pain receptors and increases endorphins.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.

Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there’s a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts

tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.

- Video: Circle of Gratitude: https://youtu.be/jc64ap852FU?si=VQ6T8j8_8ZFz0jBZ
- Video: Being with all of your experiences:
https://youtu.be/jaNAwy3Xsfl?si=_4TpgMNkhP2H86wH
- Video: Dealing with difficult moments:
https://youtu.be/Ty93GRPpIJo?si=PIKTjWjFdoc_m2TQ
- Video: Everyday Mindfulness: <https://youtu.be/QTsUEOUaWpY?si=k1kp2M0aBlxKnGnD>
- Video: How to find a moment of peace:
https://youtu.be/nQdM_Cku9pA?si=NdW6rOY6SLfwETK3
- Video: Moving towards or away:
https://youtu.be/oLqSDV2KwbQ?si=OclBBwA87G4YRw5_
- Video: Overwhelmed—Managing Feelings and Racing Thoughts:
<https://youtu.be/SHc8hi76ZSY?si=slkMDGGOKiGDPG6a>
- Video: Stop for Mindfulness:
<https://youtu.be/GgBVIZAEQqU?si=mNqsv5nbGf3dHwlx>
- Video: Two wings to fly: Mindfulness and compassion:
<https://youtu.be/cFCiUIFKuO4?si=CCyiQZZHCwxSCpw6>

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) offers numerous benefits for both physical and mental well-being. It's a technique that involves systematically tensing and relaxing different muscle groups to reduce overall tension and promote relaxation. Some key benefits include reduced anxiety and stress, improved sleep, lower blood pressure, and relief from various types of pain, including headaches and TMJ pain.

When you're ready to try:

Find a comfortable, private space to sit or lie down. Make sure you're wearing loose-fitting clothing. If you live with other humans, let them know you'll need 10 to 15 minutes of time by yourself. (You can also tell the dog, but he may not listen.)

Close your eyes and take a few deep, slow breaths, breathing in and out through your nose. Rest your hand on your belly so you can feel the breath rise and fall as you settle in and arrive to the practice. Throughout the session, breathe in as you tense and out as you relax.

Starting with the right foot, focus on squeezing the muscles as hard as you can for about five seconds by fanning out your toes and arching the foot, feeling the muscles become tighter and tenser. Then relax them quickly, letting the tension leave your body through that foot and exhaling. Don't squeeze so hard that you cramp, but hard enough so that you'll clearly feel the difference between the tension and the relaxation. Then do the same on the left foot. If you're pressed for time, you can do both feet at once.

Shift your focus up to your right calf. Tense the muscle tightly for about five seconds, then relax, exhaling and letting the tension leave your body through the calf. Take a few moments to notice the feeling of relaxation. Then do the same with the left calf.

Move up your legs until you reach your buttocks, squeezing and relaxing.

When you reach your belly, contract your abs as you take a nice, deep inhale, then relax as you push the breath out and allow the muscles to relax.

Do the same with your back – contract and tighten the muscles as you inhale, then relax as you exhale.

Focus on your right hand as you inhale, squeeze and make a fist as hard as you can, then let it go, exhaling. Do the same with your left hand.

Move to your right arm and squeeze your biceps– imagine you're Popeye, showing off your muscles – then let all the tension go.

Move to the shoulders and shrug them toward your ears for five seconds, then let your breath out and let them fall. Take a few moments to observe how different they feel when they're relaxed.

Once you reach your face, inhale and squeeze your features together as hard as you can, then exhale as your face relaxes and all the tension leaves it.

When you're finished with your entire body, take a few additional deep breaths as you check in with how you feel. Can you notice the difference between now and when you started? If you did this before bed you might have even fallen asleep. If so, congratulations ... you've done it right!

Videos:

- PMR Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihO02wUzgkc>

- How to do PRM: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>

Self-Care

Self-care is anything that one does intentionally to take care of one's mental, physical or emotional health. Please see the information and links below for information on different avenues of self-care.

Want to start a self-care plan, but do not know where to start? Here are a few ideas to get your started:

1. Write in a journal
2. Go for a 5–10-minute walk/exercise
3. Take 20 deep breaths
4. Listen to music
5. Talk to a friend
6. Color - check out these free/printable mandalas
7. Draw/paint a picture
8. Unplug for a half hour - put your phone on silent and take a break from all screens.

Remember: Self-care should be something that is fun for you and recharges you - so do something that you will enjoy!

Resources:

- 12 Ways to Take Better Care of Yourself:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-for-happiness/201812/self-care-12-ways-to-take-better-care-of-yourself>
- Book: Self-Care for College Students: From Orientation to Graduation, 150+ Easy Ways to Stay Happy, Healthy, and Stress-Free By Julia Dellitt
- Sleep Hygiene Factors:
https://thinkcbt.com/images/Downloads/Behavioural_Change_Resources/Sleep_Resources/SLEEP-HYGIENE-FACTORS-THINK-CBT-V-18.08.17.pdf
- Sleep Diary:
https://thinkcbt.com/images/Downloads/Behavioural_Change_Resources/Sleep_Resources/SLEEP-DIARY-V-THINK-CBT-18.08.17.pdf
- Wellness Wheel:
<https://imperfectinspiration.squarespace.com/shopall/p/wellnesswheel>

Yoga

Yoga significantly benefits mental health by reducing stress and anxiety, improving mood, enhancing focus and cognitive function, and promoting emotional resilience. Through physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation, yoga helps regulate the nervous system, reduce stress hormones like cortisol, and increase levels of mood-boosting neurotransmitters like serotonin and GABA.

Yoga Videos:

- Yoga with Adriene (free yoga videos): <https://yogawithadriene.com/free-yoga-videos/>

ON-CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH, CRISIS, AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Kilgore College Counseling Center

- Devall Student Center, 2nd floor, Office 245
- Front Desk: 903.983.8206
- Coordinator of Counseling: 903.988.7585
- Office Hours:
 - January and August: M-TH 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, F 8:00 am to 3:45 pm
 - All other months: M-TH 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, F 8:00 am to 12:00 pm (front desk is staffed)
- Free mental health counseling is available to actively enrolled students. Referrals may be offered for on- and off-campus resources.

Kilgore College Police Department

The major responsibility for the safety and well-being of students, faculty and staff members at Kilgore College rests with the Kilgore College Police Department. The department recognizes that it has a wider mission than other law enforcement agencies, adding significantly to its responsibilities. Department personnel are sensitive to the unique nature of the college community – a diverse group of students, faculty and staff. This calls for a safe and orderly environment so that all members of the community can fulfill their individual missions.

As a service to the students, staff and visitors, campus police will assist with minor vehicle problems such as jump-starting low batteries and accidental lock-outs.

- Kilgore Campus: 903.983.8650
- Longview Campus: 903.236.2011
- Available 24/7/365. In case of emergency, call KCPD when you are on campus.
- *Tip: Save this contact in your cell phone.*

Other On-Campus Support Services:

- Social Services (Emergency fund, food pantry, clothing closet): 903.988.3766
- Disability Services: 903.983.8682
- Title IX (sexual harassment, stalking, sexual assault): 903.983.8682
- Academic Advising: <https://www.kilgore.edu/academic-advising/>
- The Zone Tutoring: 903.988.7491 (Watson Library, 1st floor)
- KC Writing Studio: 903.988.7421 (Watson Library, 1st floor)
- TRiO Fast Track Program: 903.988.7591 (Devall Student Center, 1st floor)
- TRiO Educational Opportunity Center/FAFSA: Kilgore 903.983.8615, Longview 903.236.2023

Career Services and Career Coaching

Kilgore College is now using CollegeCentral.com for career search, job readiness, and employment opportunities. Get help with resume writing, Interview assistance, advice for job searches, career exploration, professional development, skills training, and educational programs. <https://www.kilgore.edu/academics/support-services/career-services-career-coaching/>

OFF-CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Counseling Services

Andrews Center

- <https://www.andrewscenter.com/>
- 903.597.1351
- Mental health services, intellectual and developmental disabilities services, autism services, veterans' services, crisis intervention services.
- Smith, Henderson, Van Zandt, Rains, and Wood Counties

Community Healthcore

- <https://communityhealthcore.com/>
- Intake line: 800.446.8253
- Mental health services, intellectual and developmental disabilities services, substance use treatment, crisis intervention, veteran's services, supportive housing.
- Bowie, Cass, Gregg, Harrison, Marion, Panola, Red River, Rusk, and Upshur Counties

Crossroads Family Care

- <https://crossroadsfamilycare.com/behavioral-health/>
- 903.392.8203
- Locations in Henderson, Mt. Enterprise, and Palestine

- Family behavioral health providing Treatment For Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD), Abuse/Trauma Issues, Anger Management, Schizophrenia, Traumatic Stress Disorders

East Texas Center for Independent Living

- <https://www.etcil.org/counseling/>
- 903-581-7542
- 719 West Front Street, Tyler, TX 75702
- Persons with a disability, their family members and supporters are eligible to access ETCIL activities, core services and programs. ETCIL provides professional counseling services for adults, youth, and child (age 6+).
- Don't let finances keep you from getting the help that you need. ETCIL works on a sliding scale and has scholarship opportunities. If you are concerned about the cost, please talk to our staff to see how we can help!!
- Service area: Rains County, Van Zandt County, Smith County, Camp County, Rusk County, Harrison County, Upshur County, Wood County, Henderson County, Cherokee County, Gregg County, Marion County, Panola County Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Trafficking Resources

East Texas Counseling Group

- <https://www.etxcounseling.com/>
- 903.502.0490
- Located in Longview Individual Therapy, Couple's and Marriage Counseling, Child and Parent Therapy, Grief and Loss Counseling, Trauma Counseling and EMDR, Addiction Counseling, Career Counseling and Coaching

Family Circle of Care

- <https://www.tylercircleofcare.org/for-patients/services/mental-health/>
- For Appointments Call: (903) 535-9041
- Mental health professionals are available at the Tyler, Athens, and Jacksonville locations
- Embark on a transformative journey towards mental wellness with our compassionate and experienced mental health professionals. Embrace personalized support and evidence-based therapies that empower you to overcome challenges and achieve emotional balance.

Hope Road Counseling

- <https://www.hoperoadcounseling.org/>
- 903.252.4673
- 3032 N Eastman Rd #102, Longview
- Individual, marital, and pre-marital counseling

Pathstones Counseling Center

- <https://www.pathstones.org/>
- 903-248-2480
- 814 Gilmer Rd Ste 1, Longview
- Individual Adult Counseling, Marriage and Family Counseling, Child and Adolescent Counseling Substance Abuse and Addiction Counseling, Grief Counseling, Anger Management Counseling, Etc.

Special Health Resources of East Texas

- <https://www.specialhealth.org/jim-meyer/home/>
- 903.234.8808
- 409 N 6th St, Longview
- We believe health extends beyond a patients' physical needs and includes every aspect of their lives—mind, soul and body. That's why our health center provides exceptional behavioral health services. We provide care for mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, physical health issues such as obesity and diabetes and substance abuse disorders.

Wellness Pointe

- <https://wellnesspointe.org/healthcare/behavioral-health/>
- 903.758.2610
- Address: 425 N Fredonia Street, Longview, Texas 75601
- Behavioral Health Services: Stress management, Grief/ Loss, Anxiety, Depression, Addictions, Smoking cessation for qualified patients, other mental health problems.
- Accepts Medicaid, CHIP, Medicare, and most private insurance. We also offer a wide range of grant programs and a sliding fee discount to help get you the care you need.

Support Groups

Celebrate Recovery

- <https://celebraterecovery.com/>
Celebrate Recovery is a safe place to find freedom from your hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

National Alliance on Mental Illness

- <https://www.nami.org/support-education/support-groups/>
NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group is a free, peer-led support group for any adult who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. You will gain insight from hearing the challenges and successes of others, and the groups are led by trained leaders who've been there.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

- <https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/chapters-and-support-groups/online-support-groups>. DBSA online support groups give people living with depression and bipolar disorder a safe, welcoming place to share experiences, discuss coping skills, and offer each other hope. All DBSA online support groups are free of charge.

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

- <https://adaa.org/find-help/support>. ADAA has created four free online peer-to-peer communities for people suffering from mental health disorders to be able to find support, share their stories and connect with others who have had similar experiences. Groups include Anxiety and depression in English and Spanish, major depressive disorder, and PTSD.

Pathlight Mood and Anxiety Center

- <https://www.pathlightbh.com/support-group>. Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Center offers free, virtual, trained facilitator-led, peer support groups for those struggling with anxiety and mood disorders. These groups are open to alumni, families and community members, providing support and resources for mental health recovery. Topics include body image, anxiety and depression, mood and anxiety, LGBTQ mental health, and more.

Postpartum Support International

- <https://postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings/>. PSI offers over 50+ FREE and virtual support groups for pregnant and postpartum mental health.

The Compassionate Friends

- <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/>
903.806.8927
Meeting Info: 2nd Monday of each month 6:30 pm
Meets at: First United Methodist Church 400 North Fredonia Street, Longview Texas 75601
Support group for bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

Grief Share

- https://www.griefshare.org/s?locationType=in_person
Grief and loss support groups in person and online
Support groups located in Longview, Gilmer, Tatum, Hawkins, Marshall, Arp, and Tyler

Mental Health Apps (iPhone & Android)

- Head Space offers a user-friendly platform packed with guided meditations tailored for students. Learn mindfulness techniques to manage stress, improve focus, and even drift off to sleep.
- Calm focuses on promoting mindfulness and relaxation. Explore guided meditations, calming music, and sleep stories to soothe your mind and body. Struggling with exam anxiety? Calm offers bite-sized "SOS Sessions" to help you de-stress in the moment.
- MoodKit is a self-help app based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) principles. Learn tools to identify and challenge negative thought patterns that contribute to anxiety, depression, or low self-esteem. MoodKit offers mood tracking, activity scheduling, and thought reframing exercises – all designed to empower you to take charge of your well-being.
- Happify: Train Your Brain for Positivity: Feeling down? Happify uses science-backed games and activities to cultivate a more positive outlook. Earn points for completing exercises and track your progress as you build resilience and optimism.
- Daylio: Simple mood tracking, no writing required, generates charts to help see mood fluctuations but also activities and correlations.
- Moodfit provides a comprehensive set of customizable tools to help you learn and focus on what most affects your mood.
- MindShift uses scientifically proven strategies to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.
- SAM (Self-help App for the Mind) offers a range of self-help methods for people who are serious about learning to manage their anxiety.
- ClearFear: Want to overcome anxiety? Learn to breathe, relax and be mindful as well as changing thoughts and behaviors and releasing
- Mindfulness Coach: This app offers information about mindfulness, mindfulness exercises, and a tracking log to optimize mindfulness meditation practice.
- Breathe2Relax assists the user in learning the stress management skill of diaphragmatic breathing, which is also known as "deep breathing".

- Happyfeed is a gratitude journal app that helps you cultivate joy by reflecting on good things each day.
- Sanvello: Find Your Support Squad: Feeling isolated? Sanvello fosters a supportive online community where students connect with peers facing similar challenges. Share experiences, offer encouragement, and learn coping mechanisms from others who "get it." Sanvello provides a safe space to express yourself and feel less alone.
- Circles: Group Chat for Mental Wellness: Circles focuses on group discussions led by trained facilitators who address specific mental health topics relevant to students. Whether it's managing stress, overcoming loneliness, or building healthy relationships, Circles provides a platform for open and honest discussions with a supportive group.
- Worry Watch is perfect for students dealing with anxiety. It allows you to track your worries, identify patterns, and challenge negative thoughts. By recording your concerns, you gain insights into your triggers and learn effective coping strategies.

Mental Health Screening and Evaluation

The Kilgore College Counseling Center does not make official diagnoses of mental health disorders. However, we can conduct screenings to identify and track symptoms of common mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, and trauma.

Some of these screening tools are available online at Mental Health America:

- <https://screening.mhanational.org/>
- Online screening is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition.
- How can online mental health testing help me? Taking a mental health test online is a great way to keep tabs on your mental health. It can help give you a sense of what's going on. It can be hard to wrap your head around what's going on with your own mental health. There are so many different mental health conditions, each with their own symptoms, causes, and treatments. Many people experience more than one mental health condition at once. Our mental health can get better or worse over time. This is where mental health testing comes in.
- Online mental health testing is great for two things:
 - Identifying what kinds of mental health challenges you're facing—which helps you figure out what next steps to take.
 - Keeping track of your mental health over time.

- Current screenings include depression, post-partum depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, ADHD, psychosis/schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, and addiction

For some students, It may be helpful to complete a psychological evaluation, which provides a comprehensive understanding of an individual's mental health, cognitive abilities, and emotional state. Psychological evaluations must be conducted by licensed psychologists or psychiatrists. Full mental health evaluations are available at the following community resources:

- Kranz Psychological Services
 - 3118 HG Mosley Pkwy., Longview, TX 75605
 - (903) 200-1433
 - <https://www.kranzpsychservices.com/>
- Winsted Psychological Services
 - 414 N Green St, Longview, Tx 75601
 - (903) 238-9050
- Morgan Counseling and Assessment
 - 115 E Main St, Henderson, TX 75652
 - (903) 646-1326
 - morgancounselingandassessment.com
- East Texas Psychological Services
 - 700 S Palestine St, Athens, TX 75751
 - (903) 675-9570
 - www.etpsathens.com
- Wellspring Psychological Services
 - 4801 Troup Highway Ste 502, Tyler, Tx 75703
 - (903) 630-5788
 - www.wellspringtyler.com
- Dr. Jonathan Lockhart
 - 807 Baylor Dr, Longview, TX 75601
 - (903) 295-8990

Transportation Assistance

If you are needing transportation to mental health appointments, etc., the GO Bus is a local resource. Visit their website for updated information about fares, schedules, hours of operation, and bookings: <https://www.gobustransit.com/gregg-county>.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Texas Workforce Commission offers services to assist with employment and may provide testing and accommodations. For more information, <https://www.twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation/adults>.

- Vocational counseling and guidance
- Hearing tests, visual exams, or other physical evaluations for diagnosis and treatment ideas
- Psychological testing for mental health
- Vocational assessments & Medical exams
- Helping to find jobs or careers that fit what may interest you based on your needs
- Help buy hearing aids, wheelchairs, prosthetics, braces or other medical devices
- Therapy services like speech therapy, physical therapy, psychological therapy, or other behavioral therapy
- Services to improve your physical wellbeing, including possible surgeries for recommended & needed treatments
- Get a degree or certificate from a college, university, or vocational training program
- On the job supports such as training on the job, or a job coach to assist you on the job
- Provide accessibility evaluation for your job and recommend accommodations or assistive technology
- Working with your employer on job duties. This will help you talk to your employer on any disability related issues you may have
- Work with your employer to provide different ideas on how to be successful on your job.

If you are blind or visually impaired, we can connect you with people who help you learn braille. They teach how to get around the house and workplace



KILGORE COLLEGE
COUNSELING

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