



STRATEGIES TO HELP MANAGE SCHOOL STRESS

1. **Recognize and accept all emotions.** All emotions are normal.. The key is to find balance and moderation in the way we embrace them. With the appropriate coping skills, we can: label them, validate them, and engage in behaviors to ease them.
2. **Participate in regular physical activities.** Daily activity (through exercise or sports), can help reduce stress. Try joining a club, getting friends/family together for a game outside, or it can be as simple as a walk around your neighborhood. Staying active, and getting your body moving, can really help you manage during stressful times.
3. **Learn to communicate struggles.** Although it can be difficult, it is important to express yourself. When you are feeling tired, distracted, or overwhelmed., it is important to share these difficult emotions with people we love and trust.
4. **Find trusted listeners.** Student of all ages should have at least two adults they trust and have access to most of the time. This could include a school employee, family friend, family member, community support person, or mental health professional. These are people you feel are trustworthy and healthy sources for you to go to when you need support.
5. **Get a a proper nights rest.** A young mind needs a minimum of 8-10 hours of sleep. A proper nights rest can reduce stress, and increase a mental clarity. This can be extremely helpful to balance emotions , improve daily functioning, and facilitated better outcomes in school/exams.
6. **Listen to music.** Music can be a convenient stress reliever that can: help relieve stress, calm you down, or stimulate your mind; depending on what you need in the moment.
7. **Eat healthy.** It may sound cliché, but your diet is very important to your wellbeing. Eating well can either boost your brainpower or sap you of mental energy. It can also make you more reactive to the stress in your life. So, its important for you to eating fruits, veggies, and also always stay hydrated!
8. **Find ways to minimize stress.** Being a young adult can be difficult. Especially when your involved with various activities, such as: sports, extra-curriculars, and more. It is important to find a balance between what your commitments are, what is important to you, and what is best for your overall health. Really take the time to evaluate what serves you, and what is the extra fluff that can be cut down, or cut out.

****If you are still experiencing difficulties, please reach out for support! ****

If you have questions, please visit: <https://cultureoftherapy.com/>

Reference material: <https://www.healthline.com/health/stress/stress-management-school#for-students>



10 STRATEGIES TO HELP MANAGE ANXIETY

1. **Slow breathing.** When you're anxious, your breathing becomes faster and shallower. Focus in on slowing down your breathing. Breath in for four, hold your breath for four, and exhale for four.
2. **Progressive muscle relaxation.** Find a quiet location. Close your eyes and slowly tense and then relax each of your muscle groups, starting from your toes then work your way up to your head. Hold the tension for three seconds and then release quickly. This can help reduce the feelings of muscle tension that often comes with anxiety.
3. **Stay in the present moment.** Anxiety often causes us to get stuck in the making predictions about a future event that hasn't happened yet. When you notice this happening, provide yourself with a gentle nudge to come back to where you are in that moment. You can try practicing meditation and/or grounding techniques to help you with this.
4. **Healthy lifestyle.** Keeping active, eating well, going out into nature, spending time with family and friends, reducing stress and doing the activities you enjoy are all effective in reducing anxiety and improving your wellbeing. If this sounds overwhelming, try to start with a 5-10 minute walk in the morning to get your day started. Maybe even take a furry friend along with you for company!
5. **Take small acts of bravery.** Avoiding what makes you anxious provides some relief in the short term, but can make you more anxious in the long term. Try approaching something that makes you anxious – even in a small way. The way through anxiety is by learning that what you fear isn't likely to happen – and if it does, you'll be able to cope with it.
6. **Challenge your self-talk.** How you think affects how you feel. Anxiety can make you overestimate the danger in a situation and underestimate your ability to handle it. Try to think of different interpretations to a situation that's making you anxious, rather than jumping to the worst-case scenario. Look at the facts for and against your thought being true.
7. **Plan worry time.** It's hard to stop worrying entirely so set aside some time to indulge your worries. Even 10 minutes each evening to write them down or go over them in your head can help stop your worries from taking over at other times.
8. **Get to know your anxiety.** Keep a diary of when it's at its best – and worst. Find the patterns and plan your week – or day – to proactively manage your anxiety. This will help you identify any triggers, you might have, and be empowered to address them. Remember, when it comes to mental health, power is knowledge.
9. **Learn from others.** Talking with others who also experience anxiety – or are going through something similar – can help you feel less alone. Try joining an online support group, or connecting with others in your community.
10. **Be kind to yourself.** Remember that you are not your anxiety. You are not weak. You are not inferior. You have a mental health condition. It's called anxiety.

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Reference material: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>



TIPS FOR MOTHERS

1. Find your Tribe! We all need support. There is a beauty that comes from connect and community. This can come from our: friends, family, faith, a therapist, a support group, and mother's chat room, anything... It doesn't matter. It is about finding a safe space where you feel you being supported, in a non-judgmental environment. It can be hard to ask for support when we are having difficult times, but remember that we all go through our own struggles, and need to be there to support each other along the way. So, reach out!

2. Self Care. When you are a mother, especially a new mom, the last thing on your mind is taking care of yourself. You have a little one(s) that need your full attention and care., right? Well that's the exact reason you need to make time for some self care. If our gas tank is empty, we will only get so far before we stall out. So, if asking your partner, family, friends, etc., to watch the kiddos while you prioritize yourself for an hour or two, then lets do it! Self care does not have to be anything extreme. It can be as simple as reading a book, taking a little nap, taking a shower, watching an episode of your favorite tv show...uninterrupted,. The options are endless as long as they bring you a sense of peace and regeneration.

3. Kindness Towards Self. Society has often make women think that to be a good momma, you have to have an unwavering commitment and dedication to your child(ren). You should be self-less. You should always be on top of everything. The truth is that this is impossible. It is an illusion that the world has place onto women's' shoulders. The truth is, its okay to have bad days,. It's okay to not love motherhood all the time, and to be stressed and overwhelmed. (all in moderation). These are all normal and nature stages of motherhood. So, be kind to yourself. You are doing fine. You are worthy of love, compassion, acceptance, and much more... even in your most imperfect moments.

4. Kindness Towards Your Kiddos. Just as important as it is to be kind to yourself, it is just as important to do the same for your kiddos . As children, they will make mistakes, do things they are not supposed to, and push your buttons. At least once in their life, they will probably push it a 'little to far'. It is important to remember that they are learning. This does not excuse their poor behaviors/attitudes. It just means that it might be time to changes some things up. Maybe they need more/less structure? Maybe they need more active communication? (i.e. quick to listen, slow to speak).

- Sometimes, behavioral challenges are a result of miscommunication. Next time they do something that you don't appreciate, try sitting them down and explaining why their actions are upsetting to you. Being honest with them is about how they make you feel (*without overwhelming them*). This can be a great way for them to learn how their actions affect the people they love.
- Once you've had this conversation, you can explain to them specifically, what you hope to see. change next time. There is no one right way to do things. But when in doubt, kindness and compromise can go a lot way to develop a healthy and happy relationship with your kiddo(s).

5. Remember, You are Your Own Person. As some of the tips above illuded to, being a mom is a lot of work, and can take a lot out of you. However, it is important to keep your identity as a mother, separate from who you are a your own person. . You are uniquely you. You have your own: goals, passions, desires, etc. Being true to who you are, aside from what your responsibilities are as a parent, can have endless benefits for your family dynamic;. It can help model the importance of self-worth to your children, create a sense of empowerment within your relationships, and most of all, it will give you a sense of confidence and comfort in being your own person.

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If you have questions or need additional resources,
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TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

Ask for Help

- Caregivers are a group of people that care for and love someone so much, they dedicate a big portion of their life to them. However, taking care of another person, no matter how much we love them, can be daunting. It comes with responsibilities and time commitments that you might have never imagined. You know what the bright side is? You do not have to do it alone! But you do have to ask for help! Connect with family, friends, neighbors, and let them know when you need support. If these resources aren't available, connect with your local Dept. of Aging Services to see if there are ways you can be supported.
 - Sometimes we might feel like it's 'our burden to carry' or that we 'don't want to impose', but the truth is we all need help. It's okay to need or even want to have a night off. You just have to be willing to ask for a helping hand...

Join a Support Group

- Support groups are an excellent source of community and comfort in some of our most challenging times. They are filled with people that are going through very similar experiences to you, and can be there when you need a listening ear. Your local Dept. of Aging should have information on local support groups in your area,, but if not, you can easily find free support groups to join online.

Keep Up with Your Own Health

- Being a caretaker often means you are probably putting your needs secondary to those you care for. This is especially true for many women who are mothers, caretakers, and who also work,. That is a lot of hats to wear, with a lot of responsibilities attached to each one. This is why it is essential to make your health/mental health a priority. If we continue to pour out of our cups into others, but not do what is needed to refill our own, eventually the cup will empty. This is the same with our health/mental health. So, schedule your appointments, get your physicals done, talk to a professional, and prioritize your health.

Be Kind To Yourself

- We all have bad days. We get stressed, tired, overwhelmed, sad, mad, and much more. It is important to remember that you are doing the best you can, and to give yourself some grace as you go through your caretaking journey. Some days you will want to give up and run away, and some days it will be like you are on top of the work. All of these emotions are a natural part of the caregiving experience. You are not alone. You are doing fine. You are worthy of love, compassion, acceptance, and much more... even in your most imperfect moments.

**If you are still experiencing difficulties finding balance in your life, please reach out for support! **



SIMPLE & EASY MINDFULNESS EXERCISES (10 MINS OR LESS!)

These are a few mindfulness tools you can use to help relax your body during stressful times. It is best if you can find a quiet, comfortable spot to try these techniques. You can use these between classes, at lunch, or before and after school.

• Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Get in a comfortable position, ideally lying down.
- Start by tensing your lower leg muscles.
- While contracting these muscles, breathe in for 5 to 10 seconds, then exhale and release the contraction.
- Stay in this relaxed position for 10 seconds.
- Move your way up your body, contracting different muscle groups while breathing in and out, holding for 5 to 10 seconds with each breath, and then relaxing for 10 seconds before moving to the next muscle group.

• Deep Belly Breathing

- Sit comfortably, with both feet on floor, and place one hand on your abdomen. Make sure your muscles are relaxed.
- Breathe deeply through your nose until your abdomen rises.
- Hold this breath for 5 seconds, then exhale slowly through your mouth like you're blowing through a straw.
- Repeat this pattern for 3 to 5 minutes.

• Walking Meditation

- Find a quiet place that is about 10- 20 feet in length (this might be the distance to your next class or the sidewalk in front of your home),
- Begin to walk slowly.
- Focus on the experience of walking, being aware of the sensations of standing and the subtle movements that keep your balance.
- Really focus in on your breathing, the weather, the colors and textures of the things around you.
- Notice any sensations that come up for you (i.e. warm, cold, tingly, relaxed, tight, etc.).
 - Walk for 5-10 minutes. Once you have finished your walk, take 1 minute to reflect on how this experience was for you, and if you noticed any changes in your body.

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PRACTICAL & EFFECTIVE SELF CARE STRATEGIES

1. **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health. If 30 minutes is too much., don't worry! Try starting off with 5-10 minutes a day, and gradually build up.
2. **Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.** A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Also, limit caffeinated beverages such as soda, coffee, and energy drinks.
3. **Make sleep a priority.** Try your best to stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so try to reduce/eliminate all screen time at least 15 minutes before bedtime. Don't be afraid to put a sleep story on, or some white noise to help you ease into a restful night sleep.
4. **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. See our "Tools to Support your Journey" worksheet for some recommended tools. You can also try, other healthy activities such as: journaling, reading, listening to music, getting a massage, watching a movie, etc.
5. **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Create a list which prioritizes the things most needed, and most realistically accomplished by the end of the day, and what can be moved to a different day if you cannot complete everything .
6. **Practice gratitude.** Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down at night, or replay them in your mind. You can also try creating daily affirmations to remember the what are grateful for.
7. **Focus on positivity.** Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts. When you find yourself thinking negativity, or having maladaptive thoughts, ask yourself : Is this thought(s) serving me? How can I rephrase this thought to be more positive, or even just neutral?
8. **Stay connected.** Reach out to your friends or family members who can provide both emotional, and practical support. Also consider joining an in-person or online support/interested-based group.