

# HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

## Helping Yourself

There are a number of things you can do to keep your mental health in check. Many people cope with stress through sports, exercise, meditation, or yoga. Others express themselves through art, poetry, writing and music. What you eat might also affect your mood – a well-balanced diet will help keep you both physically and mentally healthy.

## Focus on Your Strengths

Use the things you like most about yourself to make positive change in your community. Random acts of human kindness helps instill self-love while helping others. Give a compliment, volunteer, and offer help to someone in need. Get involved in mental health awareness and advocacy to keep yourself in check.

## Exercise

Exercising 3 days/week will help you stay in a positive space. Find a physical activity that you enjoy doing. Exercise increases Vitamin D and serotonin in the brain to ensure your body and mind stay healthy, reducing stress and anxiety.

## Self-Talk

Self-talk is your inner voice. It can be positive (e.g. "I can make it through this test") or negative (e.g. "I'm never going to be able to pass this exam"). Ask, is this helping or hurting you? Next, try to replace your negative thoughts with more realistic ones. Try to look at your situation from a different perspective, and think of strategies to tackle your problems, rather than giving up hope. By working on your self-talk, you'll feel more confident and in control of yourself.

## Useful Websites & Phone Numbers

**SafeSpace Support Line**  
[7cups.com/p/safespace](http://7cups.com/p/safespace)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

**Crisis Text Line**  
Text HOME to 741741 in the US  
[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)



**safespace**

a youth engagement organization  
dedicated to changing the way young  
people think about mental health issues.

### Be Socially Active & Get Involved

Social relationships are important to your wellbeing. It is okay to take time for yourself but friends are there to provide help when you're having a tough time. Meet new friends through volunteer work, a new job, joining a club, or trying out a new activity or hobby. Spending time with others is important to building friendships.

### Practice Relaxation

Try focused breathing. Place your hand over your diaphragm and focus on breathing in slowly for four seconds, holding your breath for two seconds and breathing out slowly for eight seconds. Another option is progressive muscle relaxation, where you tense and relax muscles from your head to your feet.

### Let Others Help You

Some problems are too large to solve alone, even with support from friends and family. Finding help from a mentor, school counselor or other support person might feel scary at first, but it gets easier over time. Going to your personal doctor is also a first step toward getting help.

### Get Sleep

Teens need about 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night to function best. What gets in the way? Screens. Shut down your screen at least thirty minutes before bedtime, and establish a sleep routine to ensure 8 hours of sleep per night. Place phones and computers in a separate room. The importance of wind down time for teenagers also is a key element to proper sleep. Keep a journal nearby to write down your thoughts.

### Eat a Balanced Diet

Eating healthy decreases depression by 50%. Diet is linked to the hippocampus, a key area of the brain involved in learning, memory, and mental health. People with healthy diets, including one rich in fruits and vegetables, have more hippocampal volume than those with unhealthy diets. Omega 3 fatty acids found in fish may help concentration. Vitamin B Complex found in fish, beans, milk, and dairy can balance your mood and Vitamin C found in many fruits and vegetables can decrease stress.