



DID YOU KNOW?

Nurturing Our Mental and Emotional Health Can Help Prevent and Manage Stress

What we think, how we feel, and how we act all impact our physical health. The flip side of that is also true – our physical health can impact what we think, feel, and do.

It's important to take care of all parts of ourselves – our brains, bodies, thoughts, and feelings.

If you are feeling anxious, sad or isolated, you're not alone. These feelings are common. For those times when we need more support, mental and behavioral health care providers can help us build skills for resilience, provide a safe, supportive, and trusting relationship to discuss worries, and provide treatment for mental health issues.



Lighten your load, and heal your body.

We all experience stress. When the stress feels like it is too much, talk to your health care provider.

- Ask your health care provider about resources to lessen your load (reduce your stressors), like help with housing, food security, or relationship struggles.
- Providers can also help manage your stress response. Too much stress (as adults or in childhood) can change your stress hormone levels and body functions, like your heart rate, food cravings, and mood. The tips in this handout can help balance your body's stress response.

Everyday Practices

Here are some everyday ways you can take care of your mental and emotional health to help prevent and manage stress:

- Take time throughout the day to **pause and take a few slow, deep belly breaths.**
- Practice gratitude. Learn more at [ACEsAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.ACEsAware.org/ManageStress)
- Build in fun time (without electronics and social media).
- Take time to focus on activities that provide meaning and purpose in your life. Volunteer or join a club, group, or community organization. Find your passion.
- Consider ways to weave other stress busters into your weekly routine to help balance your emotions and improve your mental and physical health. Learn more at [ACEsAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.ACEsAware.org/ManageStress)





Sometimes We Need a *Little* Extra Support

When you or people you care about are feeling overwhelmed, these things can help:

- Try grounding techniques. When you are feeling overwhelmed, you can take a few moments to feel your feet on the ground, your back against the chair, or your hands pushing against a wall. You can also use your 5 senses to notice 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.



Build your resilience muscle

These techniques help in the moment. If you practice them often (daily if you can), you increase healthy connections in your brain, which helps you manage stress in the long run. That heals your whole body.

- Rhythmic activities are very soothing. Consider dancing, drumming, or taking a walk.
- Sensory support. Consider ways to nourish your senses. Drink a glass of water, hug or cuddle with a loved one, give yourself a hand massage, use scented oils/lotions, listen to music, draw, paint, or use a mindfulness coloring book.
- Talk to a trusted relative, friend, religious or spiritual leader, or community member.
- Get support through counseling and therapy. This could include traditional talk therapy or more sensory-based therapies such as art therapy, animal-assisted therapy, or nature therapy. Your medical provider can help connect you. Here are some additional links:

- [How Right Now](http://www.cdc.gov/howrightnow/): This is a resource by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide tools, resources, and links for support: www.cdc.gov/howrightnow/

- [Mental Health First Aid resources](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/mental-health-resources/): www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/mental-health-resources/
- For a wide variety of support and services: www.findhelp.org www.211.org



Helping others with their difficult emotions:

- **“Name It to Tame It.”** Practice naming the emotions you experience and when you see others with big emotions. This can help create connection and understanding. For example, “You seem really frustrated. Is that right?”
- **Regulate. Relate. Reason.** When connecting with another person who is agitated, angry, or sad, consider Dr. Bruce Perry’s 3Rs. First **regulate** yourself – do what you need to do for yourself to help you maintain a calm, soothing, and non-threatening voice and posture. Then help **regulate** the other person. Help them feel safe by speaking softly, paying full attention to them, letting them speak and listening intently, or giving a hug or giving space depending on what they need. You can then **relate** to their emotions, empathize with their situation, be curious, and ask questions. Once they are calm, then you can start to collaboratively **reason** and problem-solve together.
- Find more resources at ACEsAware.org/ManageStress



Sometimes We Need *a Lot* of Extra Support

When you or people you support are going through an extra tough time:

- Individual therapy:
 - Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
 - Prolonged Exposure Therapy
 - Cognitive Processing Therapy
 - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
 - Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
 - Internal Family Systems Therapy (for individuals, couples, or families)
- For support with parent-child relationships:
 - Child-Parent Psychotherapy
 - Parent-Child Interaction Therapy
 - Attachment Biobehavioral Catchup
 - Collaborative Problem Solving
- For couples:
 - Emotionally Focused Therapy
 - Gottman Method

- You may also want to connect with other specialists:
 - Occupational therapists for sensory and functional support
 - Physical therapists for movement support
 - Psychiatrists for medication and specialty care
 - Developmental and behavioral pediatrician
 - Substance use specialist

Talk to your medical provider for more support and referrals for services.

If you are in crisis:

- 988 Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline:** Text 988 if you need help.
- Lifeline Disaster Distress Helpline:** Call or text (800)985-5990 (for Spanish, press “2”) to be connected to a trained counselor 24/7/365.
- Addictions and Substance Misuse:** SAMHSA’s National Helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing Service), or TTY: 1-800-487-4889 is confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, in English and Spanish
- California Parent & Youth Helpline:** Call or text 855-427-2736
- National Domestic Violence Hotline:** Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or text “START” to 88788
- Youth suicide:** The JED Foundation (for emotional health and suicide prevention), call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text “START” to 741-741
- For LGBTQ+ youth:** Trevor Project, call 1-866-488-7386 or text “START” to 678-678
- Dating abuse:** Love is Respect, call 1-866-331-9474 or text “LOVEIS” to 22522





SCREEN. TREAT. HEAL.

FOR MORE WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS:

Visit ACEsAware.org/ManageStress or
Talk to your health care provider