

For students...

School is not the same without you!

Tips for emotional wellbeing

Authors: Rob Hock, Aidyn Iachini, Patrice Penney, Cheri Shapiro
College of Social Work, University of South Carolina



Feel your best, get adequate rest!



When we are tired, problems seem bigger and negative emotions are stronger.

Do you ever find your mind racing with thoughts when you try to sleep? This happens to all of us and there are some proven techniques to get your mind to slow down. When one doesn't work, try another.

- **Change your “what-ifs” to “if-thens”:** Worries often come to us as open-ended *what-if* questions. (e.g. What if I fail my test tomorrow?) We can close the loop on these thoughts by changing them to *if-then* statements. (e.g. If I fail my test, Then I will seek help from my teacher or a smart friend.) After doing this with your most annoying worries, your brain will stop needing to ruminate on them.
- **Keep a thought journal:** Write all the thoughts down on paper, exactly as they are in your mind. This will stop the swirling thoughts. Do it for 10 mins or so.
- **Visualize a relaxing place:** Close your eyes and picture every detail of a relaxing place. Include sights, sounds, smells, and touch. Engaging all of your senses is the key to pushing out the racing thoughts. Try to stay in this place for 3-5 minutes.
- **A change of scenery helps your mind reset:** Leave your room to get water, go to the bathroom, talk to a family member, etc. Just don't turn on a screen!

Check your social media use



Pay attention to how social media makes you feel. If you notice that it leaves you feeling sad or 'flat', cut back on it.

- Try doing a “digital detox” - taking 1 to 7 days off social media. The first day is hard, but most people start feeling much happier in the following days.
- Even if you enjoy social media, consider taking breaks for face-to-face time with friends - time to walk or enjoy nature, getting exercise or playing sports.

Manage Stress with belly breathing

breathe

“Belly breathing” is a skill that can be learned and practiced, and can be used automatically when we are feeling stress or anxiety.

Sit comfortably in a chair. Place one hand on your chest and the other hand on your upper abdomen, above your belly button, and between your ribs (over your diaphragm). Now, practice taking slow breaths, and focus on moving your bottom hand more than your top hand — that is abdominal breathing! You may wish to even count as you breathe --- breathe in to a count of three, and slowly breathe out to a count of three, pausing a moment between breaths. Slow, even breathing that is mostly from your abdomen can help you feel calm in stressful moments.