

COPING SHEET

Everybody feels down at times, but sometimes it can start to feel overwhelming. Luckily, there have been studies with thousands of teens showing that some strategies can help. That's not to say you'll always feel better right away, but over time these tips can help you to lead a happier and healthier life.

FUN ACTIVITIES

Step 1: Brainstorm things you LIKE doing (e.g., playing a game, art, being with pets)

Step 2: Add 1-2 activities from the list to your day, every day.



MOVE!

Even simple activities like going for a walk or doing something fun that involves movement (e.g., playing a sport or dancing) can help you feel better. If you can do the activity in nature and in the sun, it's even better for your mood!



SLEEP

One of the most important things you can do for your mental health is **get enough sleep**. You might have to wake up early for school, but you can control what time you go to sleep at night. [This is your permission to take a nap!]



EAT

Hanger is real! When we're hungry or when we haven't eaten well, it can make us feel bad physically AND mentally. High-protein foods (e.g., nuts, cheese, yogurt) can help you to feel fuller longer, and fruits and vegetables are good for both your mental and physical health!



BE WITH PEOPLE

Feeling lonely? Reach out & make plans to meet up with someone (or at least talk over the phone/text). Most of us crave social connection, and talking to friends can help even when we don't think it will.





HELP OTHERS

It actually makes *us* feel better when we help others! Talking a friend through a problem or volunteering for a cause that's important to you are great ways to help others and feel better at the same time.

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

When we feel bad, it's easy to fixate on everything going wrong. You wake up cranky, and see everything in a negative light.



To interrupt this cycle, it can be helpful to list out GOOD things or things you're grateful for each day. This can start small (e.g., you eat your favorite breakfast!). Over time, and with practice, a gratitude journal can help you pay attention to the things that are going right!

BREATHE DEEPLY



Have you ever started to feel really anxious before talking in class or before introducing yourself to someone new? You might notice in those moments that your heart beats fast and your breathing is shallow. Even when it's less obvious, our breathing can be impacting how we are thinking and feeling.

A QUICK way to disrupt this cycle: be intentional about your breathing! This can actually help you to calm your nerves and reduce stress and anxiety over time. For example, try the 4-7-8 rule: Breathe in for 4, hold for 7, and breathe out for 8.



TALK TO SOMEONE

Sometimes it's hard to trust someone in your life, or to feel like anyone is really there for you. **In these cases, it can still be helpful to talk to someone.** There are a few FREE and CONFIDENTIAL options:

1. Call a peer-led 'warm lines' to talk to someone **confidentially and privately** about anything going on in your life. These are available from 7am to midnight (Colorado #: (844) 493-8255).
2. If you're currently feeling suicidal or like you can't keep yourself safe, you can call 1-844-493-8255 or text 'TALK' to 38255
3. Start therapy! Did you know that in the state of Colorado teens (aged 12+) can start therapy without a parent/guardian? To find a therapist you can start here: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/child-or-adolescent>