Helpful Tips & Information for Families

- Coping Toolbox
- Stress Management Tips
- Benefits of Exercise
- Mindfulness
- Relaxation Techniques
- Coping Skills
- Fun Activities
- Self Care Checklist

For more information, contact HCRS at (802) 886-4500
Supporting families since 1967 across Windsor and Windham Counties
www.hcrs.org
Helping Children Cope During and After a Disaster
A Resource for Parents and Caregivers

The amount of damage caused from a disaster can be overwhelming. The destruction of homes and separation from school, family, and friends can create a great amount of stress and anxiety for children. They may not fully understand what is going on. A child's reaction and signs of stress may vary depending on age and previous experiences and typical coping behavior with stress.

**What You Can Do to Help Children Cope with a Disaster**

Set a good example by managing your own stress through healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating healthy, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, and avoiding drugs and alcohol. When you are prepared, rested, and relaxed, you can respond better to unexpected events and can make decisions in the best interest of your loved ones.

The following tips can help reduce stress before, during, and after a disaster or traumatic event.

**Before**
- Assure your children that you are prepared to keep them safe.
- Review safety plans before a disaster or emergency happens. Having a plan will increase your children's confidence and help give them a sense of control.

**During**
- Stay calm and reassure your children.
- Talk to your children about what is happening in a way that they can understand. Keep it simple and appropriate for each child's age.

**After**
- Give your children opportunities to talk about what they went through. Encourage them to share concerns and ask questions.
- Encourage your children to take action directly related to the disaster so they feel a sense of control. For example, children can help others after a disaster, such as volunteering to help community or family members in a safe environment. Children should NOT participate in disaster cleanup activities for health and safety reasons.
- Because parents, teachers, and other adults see children in different situations, it is important for them to work together to share information about how each child is coping after a traumatic event.
- Help your children to have a sense of structure, which can make them feel more at ease or provide a sense of familiarity. Once schools and child care opens again, help them return to their regular activities.
**Common Reactions**

The common reactions to distress will fade over time for most children. Children who were directly exposed to a disaster can become upset again and behavior related to the event may return if they see or hear reminders.

If children continue to be very upset or if their reactions hurt their relationships or schoolwork, parents may want to talk to a professional or have their children to talk to someone who specializes in children’s emotional needs.

---

**Learn more about common reactions to distress below:**

### For Infants to 2-Year-Olds

Infants may become more cranky. They may cry more than usual or want to be held and cuddled more.

![Image of infant]

### For 3 to 6-Year-Olds

They may have toileting accidents, bed-wetting, tantrums and a hard time sleeping, or be frightened about being separated from their parents/caregivers.

![Image of child]

### For 7 to 10-Year-Olds

Older children may feel sad, mad, or afraid that the event will happen again. Correct misinformation the child may get from others.

![Image of child]

### For Preteens and Teenagers

Some preteens and teenagers respond to trauma by acting out or feeling afraid to leave the home. Their overwhelming emotions may lead to increased arguing and even fighting with siblings, parents/caregivers or other adults.

![Image of child]

### For Special Needs Children

Children with physical, emotional, or intellectual limitations may have stronger reactions to a threatened or actual disaster. Children with special needs may need extra words of reassurance, more explanations about the event, and more comfort and other positive physical contact such as hugs from loved ones.

![Image of child with special needs]

---

**Want to learn more?**

[https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/index.html)
The Coping Toolbox

What exactly is a Coping Toolbox?
It’s a collection of your various favorite and healthy items that you can use when you are feeling anxious, panicky or distressed.

Many therapists recommend to their patients to create a coping toolbox for those times when they need something to help them get through an anxiety attack, panic attack or any kind of distressed situation.

The items below are recommended by the members of High AnXieties. Of course it’s up to you what you add. Just keep in mind that you want things that will give you a positive distraction and that will help bring you through the difficult times.

- Dr. Bach’s Rescue Remedies
- A Card from a supportive person
- Healing Stones and Crystals
- Notebook or Journal
- Protein Bar
- MP3 player loaded with relaxing music
- Crossword Puzzles
- A rubber band to “snap yourself back” into the moment.
- Pictures of loved ones
- Crafts/Beads
- Peppermint, lemon and lavender calming oils.
- Playing Cards
- A soft blanket
- A beloved stuffed animal
- Tea
- Gum
- Scented Candles
- Affirmations
- Bottle of bubbles
- Hard Candy
- Meditation pillow
- Yoga DVD
**Diversions**
- Write, draw, paint, photography
- Play an instrument, sing, dance, act
- Take a shower or a bath
- Garden
- Take a walk, or go for a drive
- Watch television or a movie
- Watch cute kitten videos on YouTube
- Play a game
- Go shopping
- Clean or organize your environment
- Read

**Social/Interpersonal**
- Talk to someone you trust
- Set boundaries and say “no”
- Write a note to someone you care about
- Be assertive
- Use humor
- Spend time with friends and/or family
- Serve someone in need
- Care for or play with a pet
- Role-play challenging situations with others
- Encourage others

**Tension Releasers**
- Exercise or play sports
- Engage in catharsis (yelling in the bathroom, punching a punching bag)
- Cry
- Laugh

**Cognitive**
- Make a gratitude list
- Brainstorm solutions
- Lower your expectations of the situation
- Keep an inspirational quote with you
- Be flexible
- Write a list of goals

**Cognitive (continued)**
- Act opposite of negative feelings
- Write a list of pros and cons for decisions
- Reward or pamper yourself when successful
- Write a list of strengths
- Accept a challenge with a positive attitude

**Physical**
- Get enough sleep
- Eat healthy foods
- Get into a good routine
- Eat a little chocolate
- Limit caffeine
- Practice deep/slow breathing

**Spiritual**
- Pray or meditate
- Enjoy nature
- Get involved in a worthy causes

**Limit-Setting**
- Drop some involvement
- Prioritize important tasks
- Use assertive communication
- Schedule time for yourself

**COPING**

*There are nearly infinite ways to cope, and we all use the methods that suit our unique personalities and needs. An activity that causes stress in one individual might help another person cope.*

*No matter what you need in a given moment, there is probably at least one activity listed below that will help.*
Stress Management Tips

⚠️ Keep in mind that stress isn’t a bad thing.
Stress motivates us to work toward solving our problems. Reframing thoughts to view stress as an acceptable emotion, or as a tool, has been found to reduce many of the negative symptoms associated with it. The goal is to manage stress, not to eliminate it.

💬 Talk about your problems, even if they won’t be solved.
Talking about your stressors—even if you don’t solve them—releases hormones in your body that reduce the negative feelings associated with stress. Time spent talking with friends and loved ones is valuable, even when you have a lot on your plate.

 timeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
TimeZone
Timez
The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

Research has shown us that people who exercise regularly tend to be more resistant to many mental illnesses. Exercise can help treat current symptoms, and prevent future episodes.

What problems can exercise help with?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Illness</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Sleep Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Physical Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulimia</td>
<td>Low Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Disease</td>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beginning an exercise plan doesn’t have to be difficult. Walking for as little as 30 minutes, 3 times a week, has been found to be beneficial. Don’t worry too much about what exercise you choose. Aerobic and anaerobic exercises are both effective at improving mental health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anaerobic Exercises</th>
<th>Aerobic Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting</td>
<td>Walking, jogging, or biking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprinting (running, biking, etc.)</td>
<td>Elliptical or ski machines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interval training</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing</td>
<td>Dancing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you’re crunched for time, you might still be able to squeeze some exercise into your day. Two 15 minute walks work just as well as one 30 minute walk! Here are some tips to help:

- Need to make a phone call? Walk and talk.
- Get an exercise partner to hold you accountable.
- Park at the back of the parking lot and walk.
- Do an activity you enjoy, and it won’t be a chore.
- Skip the elevator and take the stairs.
- Head outside for 10 minutes during lunch.
The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

What days of the week can you find time to exercise?
Choose a minimum of three days per week to exercise. You should exercise for at least 30 minutes, but the time can be split up throughout the day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List three types of exercise you would like to try.
The best exercises are activities that you’ll genuinely enjoy, without having too many obstacles to get started.

1
2
3

What strategies can you use to make sure you remember to exercise?
It’s easy to put off exercise, prioritize other things, or simply forget about your plan. Circle the ideas that might help you stick to your plan.

- Plan to exercise with a friend so you can both hold one another responsible.

- Set an alarm to remind you when to exercise. If you’re using your phone alarm, set it to automatically repeat every day at the same time!

- Get into a routine by exercising at the same time every day. Try attaching exercise to a particular part of your day, such as walking every evening right after dinner.

- Reward yourself for a job well done. Treat yourself to something you enjoy when you exercise. However, you have to be honest! No exercise, no reward.
Mindfulness Exercises for Children

The Feeling Exercise

Collect a number of interesting objects such as feathers, putty, stones, or anything else that might be interesting to hold. Give each child an object, and ask them to spend a minute just noticing what it feels like in their hand. They can feel the texture, if their object is hard or soft, and the shape. Afterwards, ask the children to describe what they felt. With bigger groups, pair children off to take turns completing the exercise together.

The Seeing Game

Ask the children to spend one minute silently looking around the room. Their goal is to find things in the room that they've never noticed. Maybe there are some big things like a poster or a picture, or just little details like cracks in the ceiling or an interesting pattern on the door. After the minute is up ask the kids to share the most interesting new things they noticed.

Ocean Breathing

Have the children sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Ask everyone to slowly breathe in through their nose, and then out through their pursed lips (as if they are blowing through a straw). Point out that the slow and steady breathing sounds like ocean waves, gently crashing on shore. Let the children continue breathing and making the ocean sound for one to two minutes.

The Power of Listening

Ring a bell, a wind chime, or anything else that creates a long trailing sound. Ask each child to listen, and silently raise their hand when they can no longer hear the sound. After the ringing ends, ask the children to continue listening to any other sounds they can hear for the next minute. When the minute ends, go around the room asking everyone to tell you what sounds they heard.
Mindfulness Exercises for Children

Build a Stress Ball

If you’re feeling brave, and are prepared to clean up a mess, provide the children with balloons, flour, and funnels to build their own stress balls (you may want to double-layer the balloons). Some other filling options include rice, small beads, or the leftover dots from punched paper. Once the kids have built their own stress balls, try using them with The Feeling Exercise.

The Body Squeezing Exercise

Have the children sit or lie down in a comfortable position, and ask them to squeeze and relax each of the muscles in their body one-by-one. They should hold each squeeze for about five seconds. After releasing the squeeze, ask the kids to pay attention to how it feels when they relax. Children understand this exercise better if you help them visualize how they can squeeze a particular muscle using imagery, such as the following:

1. Curl your toes tight like you are picking up a pencil with your feet.
2. Tense your legs by pretending like you are standing on your tippy-toes, trying to look over a fence.
3. Suck in your stomach as if you are trying to slide through a narrow opening.
4. Make fists with your hands and pretend like you are trying to squeeze all of the juice out of an orange.
5. Pretend like a bug landed on your nose, and you’re trying to get it off without using your hands. Try to scrunch your face and move your jaw to make it fly away!

The Five Senses Exercise

Take the children outside if the weather is nice, and have them lie silently in the grass. Begin to call out each of the five senses in turn (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch), and ask the children to notice everything they can with that particular sense, until you call out the next one. This exercise can also work well on walks, and in a number of other situations.
Relaxation Techniques

When a person is confronted with anxiety, their body undergoes several changes and enters a special state called the *fight-or-flight response*. The body prepares to either fight or flee the perceived danger.

During the fight-or-flight response it’s common to experience a “blank” mind, increased heart rate, sweating, tense muscles, and more. Unfortunately, these bodily responses do little good when it comes to protecting us from modern sources of anxiety.

Using a variety of skills, you can end the fight-or-flight response before the symptoms become too extreme. These skills will require practice to work effectively, so don’t wait until the last minute to try them out!

**Deep Breathing**

It’s natural to take long, deep breaths, when relaxed. However, during the fight-or-flight response, breathing becomes rapid and shallow. Deep breathing reverses that, and sends messages to the brain to begin calming the body. Practice will make your body respond more efficiently to deep breathing in the future.

Breathe in slowly. Count in your head and make sure the inward breath lasts at least 5 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of the air filling your lungs.

Hold your breath for 5 to 10 seconds (again, keep count). You don’t want to feel uncomfortable, but it should last quite a bit longer than an ordinary breath.

Breathe out very slowly for 5 to 10 seconds (count!). Pretend like you’re breathing through a straw to slow yourself down. Try using a real straw to practice.

Repeat the breathing process until you feel calm.

**Imagery**

Think about some of your favorite and least favorite places. If you think about the place hard enough—if you really try to think about what it’s like—you may begin to have feelings you associate with that location. Our brain has the ability to create emotional reactions based entirely off of our thoughts. The imagery technique uses this to its advantage.

Make sure you’re somewhere quiet without too much noise or distraction. You’ll need a few minutes to just spend quietly, in your mind.

Think of a place that’s calming for you. Some examples are the beach, hiking on a mountain, relaxing at home with a friend, or playing with a pet.
Relaxation Techniques

Paint a picture of the calming place in your mind. Don’t just think of the place briefly—imagine every little detail. Go through each of your senses and imagine what you would experience in your relaxing place. Here’s an example using a beach:

- **Sight:** The sun is high in the sky and you’re surrounded by white sand. There’s no one else around. The water is a greenish-blue and waves are calmly rolling in from the ocean.
- **Sound:** You can hear the deep pounding and splashing of the waves. There are seagulls somewhere in the background.
- **Touch:** The sun is warm on your back, but a breeze cools you down just enough. You can feel sand moving between your toes.
- **Taste:** You have a glass of lemonade that’s sweet, tart, and refreshing.
- **Smell:** You can smell the fresh ocean air, full of salt and calming aromas.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

During the fight-or-flight response, the tension in our muscles increases. This can lead to a feeling of stiffness, or even back and neck pain. Progressive muscle relaxation teaches us to become more aware of this tension so we can better identify and address stress.

Find a private and quiet location. You should sit or lie down somewhere comfortable. The idea of this technique is to intentionally tense each muscle, and then to release the tension. Let’s practice with your feet.

- **Tense** the muscles in your toes by curling them into your foot. Notice how it feels when your foot is tense. Hold the tension for 5 seconds.
- **Release** the tension from your toes. Let them relax. Notice how your toes feel differently after you release the tension.
- **Tense** the muscles all throughout your calf. Hold it for 5 seconds. Notice how the feeling of tension in your leg feels.
- **Release** the tension from your calf, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs.

Follow this pattern of tensing and releasing tension all throughout your body. After you finish with your feet and legs, move up through your torso, arms, hands, neck, and head.
Coping Skills
Anxiety

Deep Breathing
Deep breathing is a simple technique that’s excellent for managing emotions. Not only is deep breathing effective, it’s also discreet and easy to use at any time or place.

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises. Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation
By tensing and relaxing the muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you spot anxiety by teaching you to recognize feelings of muscle tension.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. For each area of the body listed below, you will tense your muscles tightly, but not to the point of strain. Hold the tension for 10 seconds, and pay close attention to how it feels. Then, release the tension, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the feeling of tension.

- **Feet**: Curl your toes tightly into your feet, then release them.
- **Calves**: Point or flex your feet, then let them relax.
- **Thighs**: Squeeze your thighs together tightly, then let them relax.
- **Torso**: Suck in your abdomen, then release the tension and let it fall.
- **Back**: Squeeze your shoulder blades together, then release them.
- **Shoulders**: Lift and squeeze your shoulders toward your ears, then let them drop.
- **Arms**: Make fists and squeeze them toward your shoulders, then let them drop.
- **Hands**: Make a fist by curling your fingers into your palm, then relax your fingers.
- **Face**: Scrunch your facial features to the center of your face, then relax.
- **Full Body**: Squeeze all muscles together, then release all tension.
Coping Skills
Anxiety

Challenging Irrational Thoughts
Anxiety can be magnified by irrational thoughts. For example, the thoughts that “something bad will happen” or “I will make a mistake” might lack evidence, but still have an impact on how you feel. By examining the evidence and challenging these thoughts, you can reduce anxiety.

**Put thoughts on trial.** Choose a thought that has contributed to your anxiety. Gather evidence in support of your thought (*verifiable facts only*), and against your thought. Compare the evidence and determine whether your thought is accurate or not.

**Use Socratic questioning.** Question the thoughts that contribute to your anxiety. Ask yourself:

- “Is my thought based on facts or feelings?”
- “How would my best friend see this situation?”
- “How likely is it that my fear will come true?”
- “What’s most likely to happen?”
- “If my fear comes true, will it still matter in a week? A month? A year?”

Imagery
Your thoughts have the power to change how you feel. If you think of something sad, it’s likely you’ll start to feel sad. The opposite is also true: When you think of something positive and calming, you feel relaxed. The imagery technique harnesses this power to reduce anxiety.

Think of a place that you find comforting. It could be a secluded beach, your bedroom, a quiet mountaintop, or even a loud concert. For 5 to 10 minutes, use all your senses to imagine this setting in great detail. Don’t just think fleetingly about this place—really imagine it.

- What do you see around you? What do you notice in the distance? Look all around to take in all your surroundings. Look for small details you would usually miss.
- What sounds can you hear? Are they soft or loud? Listen closely to everything around you. Keep listening to see if you notice any distant sounds.
- Are you eating or drinking something enjoyable? What is the flavor like? How does it taste? Savor all the tastes of the food or drink.
- What can you feel? What is the temperature like? Think of how the air feels on your skin, and how your clothes feel on your body. Soak in all these sensations.
- What scents are present? Are they strong or faint? What does the air smell like? Take some time to appreciate the scents.
Use this workbook to help you feel better whenever you need it. Talk with your parents about how you feel. And always remember, what happened is not your fault!

Sometimes bad things happen. It’s okay if you feel sad, mad, or scared. Grown-ups sometimes feel this way, too.

Can you unscramble the words below?

EBHRTAE
OROLC
CDANE
RADW
IFENISEG
PLHE
SGHU
SLETIN
PYAL
EDAR
SERT

Answers: breathe, color, dance, draw, feelings, help, hugs, listen, play, read, rest, sing, smile, talk

How do you feel right now? Circle the face that matches how you’re feeling. If none of those are right, fill in the blank face to show how you’re feeling instead.
Do something fun to help you feel better. You can dance, listen to music, tell a story, play with toys, read, draw, or even play outside with friends. If you still don’t feel better, imagine you are blowing up a balloon. Breathe in slowly and then try to blow your balloon as big as it can be in one breath. Repeat two more times.

What do you like to do for fun? Color in your favorite fun activity. If your favorite fun activity is missing, draw it in!
SELF-CARE during COVID-19

Set social media boundaries and avoid excessive exposure to media coverage.

Read a book on mindfulness (Pema Chödrön’s books are my fave).

Drink tea (echinacea, green tea, ginger, etc.) and stay hydrated.

Look for a guided meditation on YouTube.

Journal or draw.

Practice good hygiene habits.

Practice gratitude.

Reach out to your support system, call friends and loved ones and share your concerns and hopes, or talk about something else.

Listen to a beautiful podcast (I love Yoga Girl’s).

Move your body. Look for yoga or workout videos on apps/YouTube.

@PSYCHOLOGYANDLOVE
Self-care checklist:

- Stay hydrated
- Meditate/Deep breaths
- Eat when hungry
- Body scan
- Take it easy
- Chat with a loved one
- Move your body
- Make time to get enough sleep
**Self talk**

“I shouldn’t be crying over this”

“Other people have it worse”

“I should feel ___”

“All of this is too much”

**Better self talk**

(It’s okay to cry)

(Your experience is still valid)

(The way you’re feeling makes sense)

(You don’t have to figure it all out at once. It’s okay to take things slow)

(Kind, compassionate, and validating)