

Coping Strategies

The NAN Project works tirelessly to promote emotional well-being. A large part of maintaining your emotional well-being is taking the time to utilize a coping strategy when you feel worked up. Coping strategies are ways we learn to manage various stressors, and everyone copes with stress differently. Some examples of possible coping strategies are:

MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

Mindfulness is defined as the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something. Many people adapt this into many different exercises that can be used when a person may experience Anxiety. A few examples of these are Mindful Breathing, Mindful Observation, and Mindful Listening. Mindfulness teaches us how to respond to stress with an awareness of what is happening in the present moment, rather than simply acting instinctively, unaware of what emotions or motives may be driving that decision.

If you'd like to give some mindfulness strategies a try, check out a guide by UC San Diego [here](#) to get some practice anywhere.



EXERCISE

Aerobic exercises such as walking, bicycle riding, and swimming have been proven to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Some of the beneficial effects of physical activity are that it offers a distraction, social interaction, and promotes self-capability. It is also proposed that physical exercise increases one's mood because it increases the blood-flow to the brain.



Though it may be difficult to get started, exercise can make a huge difference. Even just taking a walk can be a great start to incorporating exercise into your self-care. Start with a ten-minute workout, and find what works for you! If aerobic exercise isn't your thing, many people support their mental health by practicing yoga.

If you're looking for an exercise and recovery community, check out [The Phoenix](#).

HEALTHY EATING

A change in one's diet, such as drinking more water or eating more fruits and vegetables can increase your mood, energy levels, and overall health and wellbeing. Limiting caffeine and sugar might have a more dramatic impact than you'd think! For tips on how to best fuel your body, check out this breakfast through dinner guide on [Eating with Mental Health in Mind](#). For healthy recipes that consider your limited time and budget, check out [Mealtime.org](#).



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PETS



Taking care of an animal is a great way to relieve stress and reduce isolation. Pets have been shown to increase one's feeling of responsibility and feelings of being needed. Animals can bring comfort to those who may need it, and caring for a furry or scaly friend can give you a sense of purpose.

If you've noticed that caring for animals improves your mental health, see if a local animal shelter needs volunteers!

SLEEP

A lack of sleep can contribute to a higher rate of depression in young people. Make sure you are getting plenty of sleep, so your body can recuperate after a stressful day.

If you're having trouble getting an average of eight hours of sleep each night, try limiting your screen time and caffeine before bed. To get you used to a healthy sleep schedule, try apps like [Sleep Cycle!](#)



SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS



Social connection improves physical health as well as mental and emotional wellbeing. Take a moment to call family, message a friend, or find some ways to get involved in your neighborhood. Reaching out and connecting with others is just as important for our health as eating well and getting exercise.

Try the app [Meetup](#), to see what's going on in your area, or check your town's local calendar for free ways to connect with people.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Expressing yourself creatively can give people an outlet for their emotions. Creative expression can be a variety of things including painting, dancing, poetry, etc. Art is utilized as a tool in various psychological practices.

There are several drop in and community centers who create space for young adults to get creative. [Raw Arts](#) in Lynn, for example, provides artistic instruction at no cost for young adults. If you're new to artistic expression, a quick google search can guide you to printable coloring pages.



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HOBBIES



There is an old saying that if you want a new hobby, think back to what you liked to do when you were ten years old. Hobbies can allow people to unwind after a stressful day, and enjoy doing something they love.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is defined as *the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things*. This doesn't necessarily have to mean a belief in a Higher Power. Spirituality is doing anything that makes our soul happy. This again means different things for different people. Some examples could be meditating, prayer, hiking, or fishing.



MUSIC



Music offers a way for people to relate something to their emotions. Many people will say that nothing is better than blaring one of their favorite songs after a long day.