

## Helpful strategies for young people



# SELF CARE

**Create a plan.** Having a physical plan helps us remain focused and accountable. Write down the activities that you enjoy and schedule them into your day.

**Use humour.** Laughter is free, easy and acts to reverse our response to stress. Laughter helps bring us into the present moment, releases tension and promotes the production of feel-good chemicals. Read a funny book, watch a movie or share a joke with a friend.

**Stay in the present moment.** There are many ways to stay mindful and it's important you find a way that works for you. Walking, listening to music, taking a bath, practicing meditation or yoga are all effective ways to practice mindfulness.

**Get enough sleep.** Young people need 9 hours of sleep to ensure healthy functioning and mental well-being. Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day, reduce screen time before bed or take an afternoon nap to increase your sleep quality.

**Focus on what you can control.** Spending our time and energy on aspects of our life that we have control over helps bring a sense of wellbeing and productivity. Try to let go of unproductive worries that you cannot change.



Stop      Take      Observe      Proceed

*Stop* where you are, try not to let your emotions take control, e.g. don't react or become defensive.

*Take* three deep breaths.

*Observe* your body. Are you ready to proceed?

*Proceed* mindfully.

### Self-compassion

Treating yourself as you would a friend.



Notice the way you talk to yourself during adverse events.

Notice negative self-talk and replace it with positive self-talk.



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# STRESS + ANXIETY

**Exercise.** Research highlights that those who exercise have lesser rates of depression and anxiety. Try a light walk, dance off with your mates, or even yoga.

**Try mindfulness meditation.** Studies have found that redirecting your attention to what is actually happening in the present moment by engaging in mindfulness practise can reduce stress and anxiety. Make it your own and do what relaxes you, listen to music, calm your body and free your mind from thoughts.

**Find ways to increase your intake of healthy foods.** Fuelling your body with healthy food like fruits, grains, protein and vegetables helps you maintain your mental health. Try cooking a homemade meal! It can be fun.

**Write it out.** Journaling is an effective way to express emotions, and has been found to enhance both mental and physical well-being. Try writing down how you are feeling or what's important to you.

### Ask for help!

There are many organisations supporting Canberra youth. Try organisations such as YWCA:

- » Phone 02 6185 2000
- » [www.ywca-canberra.org.au](http://www.ywca-canberra.org.au)

**"When I'm getting anxious, mindfulness meditation helps me just to settle that anxiety down. But everyone's different. You have to find what works for you."**

– Cass, MIEACT Volunteer Educator living with depression

### Build positive self-talk by:

1

**Acknowledging a particularly challenging or unhelpful thought and reminding yourself that thoughts aren't facts.**

2

**Consider the evidence for and against this thought.**

3

**Challenge the thought by speaking to yourself with compassion.**

4

**What would you say to a friend thinking the same thing?**

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# TRAUMA CARE



**Talk to a trusted adult about how you are feeling.** If you aren't confident to share with someone you know there are supports and people you can call free and confidentially such as Lifeline 13 11 14.

**Remember you are not alone.** Don't be afraid to ask for help, there are many supports available. Check out our website for the Mental Health and Me digital program [www.mieact.org.au](http://www.mieact.org.au)

**Stay in the present moment.** There are many ways to stay mindful and it's important you find a way that works for you. Walking, listening to music, taking a bath, practicing meditation or yoga are all effective ways to practice mindfulness.

**Practice positive self-talk.** Try turning your thoughts into more positive ones. Be kind to yourself and tell yourself out loud!

**Use humour.** Laughter is free, easy and acts to reverse our response to stress. Laughter helps bring us into the present moment, releases tension and promotes the production of feel-good chemicals. Read a funny book, watch a movie or share a joke with a friend.

**Be aware of your physical and emotional state of being.** Understand symptoms in your body, know your body so you are better able to respond.

**"Right now we remind ourselves that we can't control everything, but my daughter and I have a plan if we are impacted, so that increases our comfort"**

– Jodie, MIEACT Volunteer Educator and carer

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# HELP SEEKING

**Be aware** of your physical and emotional state of being. Remember that mental illness is common and there is support available, you are not alone, and your feelings are valid. Remember to talk to someone about your experiences, there are people who understand and can refer you to the best supports.

**Visit your GP.** A doctor is a great place to start when seeking help. Write down your emotional and physical symptoms so that you can remember all you want to discuss.

**Identify five people that you could go to for help.** These could be friends, family members, community leaders, teachers, or professional services.

**Keep trying.** Sometimes it takes a few visits to different professionals before you find the help that you need. Don't give up!

**Make discussions about your emotional wellbeing** in your friendship circle as normal as asking what your mates got up to on the weekend! The more we talk openly, the less impact stigma has on our social circles and our ability to seek help.

**Increase your knowledge** about mental health by engaging in education. MIEACT's Mental Health & Me is a good start. It includes everything you wanted to know but didn't know how to ask.

Go to [mieact.org.au/portal/](https://mieact.org.au/portal/)



### For help, reach out to:

<b>Kids Help Line</b> 1800 55 1800 <a href="https://kidsline.com.au">kidsline.com.au</a>	A free and private counselling service specialising in young people aged 5-25 years.
<b>Lifeline</b> 13 11 14 <a href="https://lifeline.org.au">lifeline.org.au</a>	Provides access to crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health services.
<b>Headspace</b> 1800 650 890 <a href="https://headspace.org.au">headspace.org.au</a>	National youth organisation helping young people with mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety.
<b>Junction Youth Health Services</b> 02 6232 2423	Free health and support service for young people aged 12-25 years in Canberra.
<b>QLIFE</b> 13 11 14 • <a href="https://qlife.org.au">qlife.org.au</a>	LGBTIQ+ support service.