

beating your back-to-school stress

Wellness Checklist for the First Week Back

Identify what's causing you stress

Before figuring out how to manage stress, the first step is to understand and identify the source of the problem. Once you've identified what stresses you out the most, create a plan of action with specific steps to overcome it.



Practice gratitude and stay calm

Recognize that you're doing your best. It's great to aim for success, but remember your grades don't define you or determine the rest of your life. Take a moment to appreciate the journey and focus your energy on starting strong. You've got this!



Break down your to-dos

Make a detailed list of your tasks and action items, and be specific. Writing everything down helps clear your mind by putting it all in one place where you can see exactly what needs to be completed.

Create new routines

A new school year means new tasks and responsibilities, but setting up a daily routine for before, during, and after classes can help reduce the stress and anxiety of figuring out your schedule and to-do list.

Stay organized

Staying organized during the first week of school is crucial for a smooth start. It helps you relieve stress by ensuring you're prepared for each day, and allows you to focus more on learning and connecting with classmates and teachers.

Make time for self-care

Heading back to school can feel overwhelming. Simple daily actions, like taking a quick walk, listening to your favorite playlist, or practicing daily meditation or affirmations can make a big difference.



how to help a friend with school stress

Going back to school can be just as stressful for those around us. That's why it's so important to check in with the people in your life and know how to offer meaningful support when they're feeling overwhelmed. Here's a quick guide to help you support others as they navigate feelings of anxiety and stress this school year.

Stressors to look out for

Bullying

The issue of bullying has been steadily on the rise, and the school environment is often where bullying may occur. Signs include avoiding friends or social situations, dropping grades, decreased self-esteem, or skipping school. [Learn more](#).

Body image

For some, reconnecting with classmates and friends may bring up negative feelings about one's appearance. Body image struggles can lead to issues like [eating disorders](#), so it's important to recognize the signs and [what you can do as a friend](#) to help and support.

Loneliness

Despite being around so many people during the school year—classmates, friends, teachers, coaches, etc., individuals may still experience feelings of [loneliness](#). Students may struggle with loneliness during transitional periods, such as starting at a new school or going from middle school to high school, or high school to college.

Homesickness

Moving to a new home or school, like going from high school to college or living in a dorm, can bring feelings of anxiety, stress, and sadness. This may affect sleep, appetite, mood, and social or academic life. To feel better, students can build routines, join activities, and stay connected with friends and family.

School refusal

When stressors become too overwhelming, [school refusal](#)—an intense feeling of anxiety or fear that causes absolute refusal to go to school—can materialize for various reasons. Anxiety, a new school, insecurities, bullying may contribute to this issue. [Learn more](#).

Financial stress

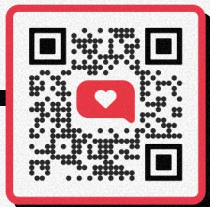
For students who are becoming upperclassmen in high school, and especially for those starting college, [financial stress and anxiety](#) might be a new experience. New responsibilities like a first job, managing money, student loans, or moving out can bring unfamiliar stress.

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What to do

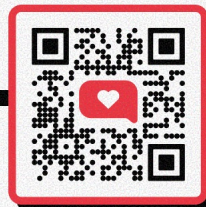
- ✓ Listen first and with empathy.
- ✓ Reassure and validate their feelings.
- ✓ Help them identify triggers or causes of stress.
- ✓ Do self-care together. Go for a walk, listen to music, or take an art class.
- ✓ Encourage them to seek additional help. They can text **MLB** to **741741** to connect with a volunteer Crisis Counselor - Free, 24/7, confidential.



Add contact

What NOT to do

- ✗ Force confrontation.
- ✗ Try to relate by sharing your own story about a similar feeling or situation.
- ✗ Suggest solutions or give advice if you're not well-informed about the issue.
- ✗ Expect an immediate change in their behavior while they're experiencing stress or anxiety.
- ✗ Get frustrated or angry when they're going through a difficult moment.



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