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mental health edition

hacks



Eagles Tips to Thrive

Prioritize your mental health...

This Mental Health Student Playbook is here to help you keep calm, feel prepared, and reduce stress and anxiety by empowering you with resources and exercises for well-being to boost your confidence.

**...AND self-care
this school year.**

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start the new school year with confidence

Want to feel less anxious and more confident from Day 1 of classes? We know that taking care of your mental health matters in every part of life, and starting the new school year can feel overwhelming. If this resonates with you, this practical Mental Health Student Playbook is here to help.

how to use your playbook

Start by carving out time for yourself to think about how you're feeling and plan strategies to enhance or improve your mental well-being. We encourage you to reflect on each of the exercises and resources within this playbook and go back to each as often as you need.

Tips and Techniques

This playbook is packed with tips and techniques designed to help you feel less stressed and more prepared to conquer the new school year. We know that the journey through higher education, particularly for Black students, comes with unique triumphs and challenges. Check out these strategies and see which ones resonate with you.

Checklists

We've created checklists to support you in managing stress and anxiety throughout the school year. Use them to test out different strategies, keep track of what's working, and maintain the activities that best support your mental well-being. This is about finding your rhythm.

what's in the playbook?

Visualization Activities

Take a moment to visualize what brings you peace, whether it's your campus community thriving, a quiet space in the library, or a favorite memory. Envision the goals you have for yourself, both academically and personally, and what genuinely makes you feel happy and confident. Doing this can help you feel grounded and empower you as you bring your aspirations to life.

Challenges

Embrace new experiences with an open mind. In this playbook, you'll discover self-care activities and challenges crafted to help you focus on your well-being. Use these pages as often as you need, and don't forget to track your progress. Find a quiet spot where you can be honest with yourself, whether it's your dorm room, a nice spot under a tree, or your favorite study nook, and use a journal or a notes app on your phone to record your thoughts and reflections.

wellness challenge checklist

You are your biggest competition and the best person to help you level up, so challenge yourself to something new, bigger, different, fun, and good for you. Try some of these challenges or create some of your own and see how small, mindful actions can significantly impact your day.

- ☐ Explore a new hobby or skill
- ☐ Try out some breathing exercises or take a fitness class
- ☐ Volunteer some of your time at an organization that resonates with you
- Interested in volunteering at **CRISIS TEXT LINE**? Check out our [volunteer program](#).
- ☐ Give a genuine compliment to a friend or a family member
- ☐ Write a thank you note or text to someone who helped you
- ☐ Start a conversation with a classmate you don't know well
- ☐ Make yourself a healthy breakfast before classes
- ☐ Keep a journal to write down your feelings
- ☐ Join an organization or activity on campus that interests you
- ☐ Organize a group walk around campus or a coffee outing with your friends
- ☐ Reorganize your room or study space
- ☐ Create your own challenge: _____

coping techniques

These simple and effective tips are here to help you handle life's ups and downs with more confidence and less stress. Whatever you choose to do, it's all about finding what works best for you. Share these techniques with friends and make self-care a part of your everyday routine.

Play with pets

It helps lessen feelings of loneliness and depression. If you don't have pets, visit a nearby shelter and show those little critters some love.

Listen to music

Pick some upbeat songs to feel energized or go for slower beats for a soothing and relaxing effect on your mind and body.

Take time to rest

Giving yourself time to rest both mentally and physically will help you recharge and clear your mind.

Connect with loved ones

Quality time with your squad is key. Find a moment to meet with them, talk, text, or joke together. Having a support system is a game-changer.

Let's get physical

Choose an activity that best suits you. Exercise can help boost your mood, decrease anxiety and depression, and improve sleep quality.

Get lost in a good book

It will help relax and distract your mind, and can significantly help decrease your stress.

Take it slow with meditation

Doing this can give you a sense of calm, balance, and relaxation. Find a quiet place to connect with yourself and your senses.

Play a video game

Turning on a video game is a way to temporarily step away from stressors so you can clear your mind and give yourself space to re-energize.

Tune into TV, videos or podcasts

Your favorite show can be a healthy temporary coping skill to lower anxiety. Some shows offer new perspectives and learning opportunities.

Seek mental health support

Need additional support? Consider reaching out to a live volunteer Crisis Counselor at Crisis Text Line by texting **EAGLE** to **741741** or contacting mental health professionals in your area.



Visualization activities help you feel grounded, be present, and reflect on what you want to achieve for yourself. Check out the playlist we've created which includes exercises to connect with your senses and ease any stress you are feeling.

adulthood 101: checklist

Navigating your college years means juggling a combination of your school-related responsibilities with adulthood – the tasks associated with being a responsible young adult. Balancing classes, study time, new activities, responsibilities at home, and possibly a job or internship can quickly become overwhelming. But we have your back. Use this checklist to help you take on adulthood with confidence.

Daily Responsibilities

- ☐ Create your own chore schedule to stay organized with your responsibilities.
- ☐ Learn to do all the basics: wash/dry clothes, clean a toilet, change your bedsheets, take out the trash, wash dishes/load a dishwasher, etc.
- ☐ Be able to cook at least a few meals that you like.
- ☐ Before you go grocery shopping, make a list of items and cook your favorite meals.

Self-Care

- ☐ Keep up with your basic hygiene.
- ☐ Stay active or exercise regularly.
- ☐ Eat balanced and nutritious meals.
- ☐ Seek proper treatment and support when you are experiencing physical or mental health issues.
- ☐ Create a routine for sleeping, eating, studying, working, socializing, etc. and try to stick to it as closely as possible.

Financial Tasks

- ☐ If you are living on your own or with roommates, keep a calendar for when bills are due (i.e. rent, utility bills, etc.), and who is responsible for making each payment.
- ☐ Consider opening a credit card with a spending limit to start establishing your credit.
- ☐ Learn about what a credit score is, how to check yours, and how to protect yourself from fraud.
- ☐ Research and seek additional support if needed on your options for taking out and paying back student loans.
- ☐ Consider taking a financial literacy course to better understand how to manage your finances.

Read more on [financial anxiety](#) and be aware of the signs, how to manage it, and resources available.



adulting 101: checklist

If you are feeling overwhelmed and need additional support, consider reaching out to a live volunteer Crisis Counselor at Crisis Text Line by texting **EAGLE** to **741741** or contacting mental health professionals in your area.

Career/Employment

- ☐ If you know the career path you want to pursue, do your research on skills and requirements, and plan accordingly.
- ☐ Have a resume and a LinkedIn profile. Update both regularly.
- ☐ Be prepared with a couple of outfits for interviews.
- ☐ Learn and practice interview skills. Consider watching videos or doing mock interviews with a friend.
- ☐ Connect with professionals or a mentor in your chosen field to gain valuable guidance and advice.



Legal and Medical

- ☐ Become a registered voter.
- ☐ Become familiar with your state's process for renewing your car registration, driver's license, or updating your personal information like your mailing address.
- ☐ Know where your important documents are, and keep them safe, including your birth certificate, social security card, and passport.
- ☐ Know your medical history—any allergies, blood type, vaccination history, and any medications you take.
- ☐ Keep a copy of any insurance cards you may have, and know your options should you need medical attention (ie. emergency room, urgent care, primary care doctor, etc.)



tips for managing your time

We understand that college students face an increased amount of responsibilities, and that effective time management levels up for you. But you've got this. Check out our tips on time management to help to stay organized, calm, and in control.

Say no if you need to

It's okay to turn things or people down if you're too busy or need time to reset.

Use tools to help you

Calendars, planners, or apps can help keep you organized and on track with due dates.

Time Block

Allocate specific blocks of time for particular tasks and stick to it.

Evaluate your tasks

Assess which tasks have absolute or flexible deadlines, if other people or tasks are affected by completion dates, and how important each one is compared to your other tasks.



Use your downtime wisely

Commuting, waiting in lines, or other downtime can be used to study flashcards, re-read a chapter, or listen to a video or audiobook related to your studies.

Combine a routine and focused task

Pair a less demanding task like folding laundry with a more focused one like re-listening to a lecture.

Remove any distractions

Find a quiet spot to focus and turn off notifications on your phone, watch, etc.

Begin with your priorities

Start with the most important or urgent tasks so you're not rushing to complete them.

Break large tasks into smaller ones

Divide large assignments into smaller, manageable ones to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

pro tips: studying for tests and finals

Wanting to perform your best for exams, quizzes, and finals can be super stressful. Check out our studying tips and tricks to help you stay calm, focused, and clear-minded so you can feel confident going into every test. You've got this.

Give yourself the proper nutrition

In order to feel your best, try to keep consistent and healthy eating habits. And drink plenty of water. Hydration is an easy way to take care of yourself when deep in an all-day study session.

Minimize "stress bragging" and keep it positive

Avoid bragging about how stressful exam time can be, like "Oh, I only slept for 2 hours last night." Glorifying stress is unhealthy and may cause others around you to feel stressed or anxious.

Identify your stress

Once you understand what specific things are stressing you out the most, like a particular chapter or concept from class, create a plan of action to address the issue, such as extra time with your professor.

Remember: this is all temporary

Your test score is not a reflection of your self-worth, and school does not determine the rest of your life. Things may get hard, but the stress is temporary and you can get through it.

Break it down and stay organized

Create to-do lists in order of importance and due dates. Check off each item as you complete it and don't forget to reward yourself for your small wins.

Reward yourself and celebrate the small wins

You may want to jump to the next task, project, or study session after you finish an exam, but give yourself a little time to recharge and celebrate what you just completed.

Protect your sleep

It may be tempting to pull an all-nighter for a big exam, but you should aim to get a good night's sleep so that you have enough time to get ready in the morning without being rushed.

Make plans with friends

One of the best things you can do for your mental health is socialize. Making plans ahead of time allows you to take breaks as well as check on friends who may be stressed as well.



pro tips for neurodivergent students

Studying for exams is tough in general, but for students who are neurodivergent, additional time and attention may be needed. Neurodivergent means having a brain that works differently from what's typical. It includes conditions like autism, ADHD, and others, and it's just one way people's minds can be unique. We're here to help. Here are some tips to make navigating classes and exams less stressful.



- Choose classes that **provide accommodations** for different learning styles or reach out to professors ahead of time for a detailed course syllabus.
- Make sure you have a **dedicated study area** that is comfortable and free of clutter and distractions; consider using a white noise machine to help you focus.
- **Create a study schedule** with breaks, spend extra time on tough subjects, and use your strengths—like flashcards, speaking out loud, or watching videos.
- **Use apps** that align with your learning style, such as Speechify or Evernote.
- **Join or form a study group** with classmates that have a similar learning style.



have your mental health crisis plan ready.

Your Mental Health Crisis Plan is your new go-to guide for navigating tough times with confidence and support. This plan is designed to be your safety net. Complete it and keep it handy so that you know what to do whenever you need help managing stress, anxiety and any other mental health hurdles that come your way. Remember: it's okay to ask for help, and you do not have to face struggles alone.

When I feel stress, here are three things I can do to feel more calm

Three people I can reach out to if I'm struggling

Resources I can turn to if I need support

Three things I do for self-care that often makes me feel better