

2025

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE GUIDE



SKILES
GROUP

PREPARED BY SKILES GROUP

INTRODUCTION

At Skiles Group, we believe in a better way — not just a better way to *build*, but a better way to care for the people *who build*. That means being intentional about how we support one another, how we talk about mental health, and how we show up when things are hard.

Mental health matters. It matters on the jobsite, in the office, at home—everywhere life happens. This guide was created to offer real, practical support. Whether you need immediate help, want to strengthen your emotional resilience, hope to better understand someone else's struggle, or are simply curious about what's out there, you'll find something here for you.

We've gathered a wide range of resources—from hotlines and therapy directories to podcasts, playlists, books, and breathwork tools. It's not one-size-fits-all. You can explore what feels right for you, at your own pace.

Inside, you'll find:

- Practical tools for support and connection
- Resources for crisis response, coping strategies, and ongoing recovery
- Books, podcasts, apps, and online communities rooted in real-life experience
- Stories, insights, and science-backed approaches that are easy to access and apply

And that's just the beginning.

This guide isn't only for when things are hard (though it will help then). It's also for the everyday—checking in with yourself, building healthy habits, and being someone others can count on.

Support is out there—and closer than you think. We hope this guide helps you find what you need, when you need it.

Let's get started.



This guide was created by (and for) Skiles Group, but we welcome you to share it freely with anyone who might benefit.

A Quick Note About Links & Online Resources

The Internet is always changing — and sometimes, that means links stop working or pages move without notice. If you come across a broken link in this guide, we're sorry for the inconvenience. We encourage you to search for the resource name online to find the most current version.

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SECTION 1

Start with You: Self-Understanding & Mental Health Check-Ins

Awareness begins on the inside. Before you reach out for help, dive into research, or support someone else, it can be helpful to pause and ask: How am I, really? What's happening in my body? In my thoughts? What do I actually need right now? This section offers tools to help you better understand your own emotional landscape — how stress shows up for you, what might be going on under the surface, and what types of support might be the most useful. These are private, judgment-free, no-wrong-answer check-ins designed to help you name what you're feeling and what you might need next.

SELF-CHECK TOOLS & MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

- **Mental Health America – Free Online Mental Health Tests**
Screenings for depression, anxiety, PTSD, substance use, and more.
<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>
- **MindWise Innovations – Mental Health Screening Tools**
Clinically validated tools to reflect on stress, mood, substance use, and more.
<https://www.mindwise.org/what-we-offer/online-screening/>
- **Anxiety & Depression Association of America – Anxiety Self-Test**
A brief quiz to assess how anxiety may be showing up in your life.
<https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/ask-and-learn/screenings>

Start with You: Self-Understanding & Mental Health Check-Ins

- **Psychology Today – Personality & Emotional Health Tests**

Interactive tools for emotional intelligence, burnout, stress response, and more.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests>

EXPLORE YOUR PATTERNS & EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE

- **Emotion Identification Worksheet**

Helps identify specific feelings beyond “bad” or “stressed.”

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/identifying-emotions.pdf>

- **Feelings Wheel**

A visual tool for building emotional vocabulary and awareness.

<https://feelingswheel.com>

- **Cognitive Distortion Worksheet**

Spot unhelpful thinking patterns (like catastrophizing or mind reading) and begin to reframe them.

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/cognitive-distortions.pdf>

- **Stress Warning Signs Checklist**

Understand how chronic stress may be affecting your body, thoughts, and behavior.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-symptoms-signs-and-causes.htm>

- **Mental Health Continuum Tool**

Recognize where you fall — healthy, reacting, injured, or ill — and what steps may support you.

<https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/tools/mental-health-continuum>

FAST, EVERYDAY CHECK-IN TOOLS

- **The HALT Framework**

Ask yourself: Am I Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired?

These four states are common drivers of emotional distress — and they’re often fixable.

<https://insighttimer.com/blog/halt-technique/>

- **The Wheel of Needs**

Explore what’s truly unmet — from rest and autonomy to joy and purpose.

<https://humansystems.co/wheel-of-needs/>

- **Values Sort Activity**

Clarify what truly matters to you and how you want to show up — especially useful during burnout or indecision.

<https://www.mhs.com/MHS-Talent/Assessments/Personal-Values-Sorter>

GENTLE PROMPTS FOR REFLECTION

Use these as journaling starters, quiet thoughts in the car, or check-in texts with a friend.

- What’s something I’m pretending is fine that isn’t?
- What would support look like for me today?
- Where in my body do I feel stress or tension?
- What’s one thing I need more of? What’s one thing I could let go of?



SECTION 2

Get Help: Hotlines, Online Chats, & Other Resources

When you're struggling, or walking alongside someone who is, it can be hard to know where to turn, but help is always available. Whether the need is urgent or ongoing, no one should have to navigate it alone. This section offers free, immediate and confidential support through national and local helplines, text services, and online chat platforms, as well as other non-time-sensitive resources for finding help and good information.

24/7 NATIONAL SERVICES

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
Call or text 988 for free, confidential, 24/7 support from trained crisis counselors.
Call/Text – 24/7
<https://www.988lifeline.org>
- **Crisis Text Line**
Text “HOME” to 741741 to connect with a trained counselor any time, day or night.
Text – 24/7
<https://www.crisistextline.org>

ONLINE CHAT & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT PLATFORMS

- **7 Cups**
Free, anonymous support chats with trained volunteer listeners and therapists. Available anytime, anywhere.
Chat – 24/7
<https://www.7cups.com>
- **BuddyHelp**
Peer-based online emotional support via secure, confidential text chat with trained volunteers.
Text Chat – 24/7
<https://www.buddyhelp.org>
- **By My Side**
Confidential, free online text chats with trained listeners. Ideal for those who prefer not to speak aloud.
Text/Chat – 24/7
<https://www.bymyside.support>

DAILY SUPPORT TOOLS VIA TEXT

- **Cope Notes**
Sends daily text messages with positive prompts and journaling cues for emotional support.
Text – Daily Prompts
<https://www.copenotes.com>
- **RemedyLIVE**
Faith-based, free, confidential support through 24/7 text chat. Text “HOPE” to 494949.
Text – 24/7
<https://www.remedylive.com>

TEXAS-BASED RESOURCES

- **Texas Mental Health Hotline**
Call 866-903-3787 for free 24/7 crisis counseling and referral information statewide.
Call – 24/7
<https://www.mentalhealthhotline.org/texas>
- **Mental Health America of Greater Dallas**
Offers referral resources, local workshops, and mental health education throughout North Texas.
<https://www.mhadallas.org/resources>

LOCAL TO NORTH TEXAS

- **NAMI North Texas**
Local support groups, education programs, and community events.
<https://www.naminorthtexas.org>
- **Mental Health America of Greater Dallas**
Regional advocacy and mental health education resources.
<https://www.mhadallas.org>

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OTHER RESOURCES & EDUCATION PORTALS

- **NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)**
Offers guides on mental health conditions, treatments, and support for families and individuals.
<https://www.nami.org>
- **SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)**
U.S. government agency providing education, treatment resources, and crisis intervention services.
<https://www.samhsa.gov>
- **Mental Health America (MHA)**
Offers mental health screenings, tip sheets, self-help tools, and advocacy materials.
<https://www.mhanational.org>
- **MentalHealth.gov**
Straightforward federal resource offering mental health basics, signs, treatments, and ways to get help.
<https://www.mentalhealth.gov>

CONSTRUCTION-SPECIFIC SUPPORT

- **Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP)**
Industry-specific tools, posters, and campaigns to prevent suicide and improve mental health.
<https://www.preventconstructionsuicide.com>
- **Construction Safety Week – Mental Health Resources**
Offers conversation starters, videos, and safety materials focused on mental health on the job.
<https://www.constructionsafetyweek.com/safety-culture/mental-health-resources>

*You don't have to see
the whole staircase, just
take the first step.*



Martin Luther King, Jr.



SECTION 3

Keep it Going: How to Access In-Person Therapy & Support

Sometimes you need more than a podcast, a quiz, or a crisis line. This section is about connecting with professional support you can see face to face — from therapists and counselors to support groups, trauma-informed specialists, and innovative treatment providers. Whether you're looking for traditional talk therapy, EMDR, group support, or cutting-edge approaches like ketamine therapy, these tools will help you find what you need, near you.

FIND A THERAPIST OR COUNSELOR

- **Psychology Today – Find a Therapist**
The most comprehensive national directory of therapists. Search by location, insurance, specialty, identity (LGBTQ+, BIPOC, veterans), or treatment type (e.g., EMDR, CBT, DBT).
www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists
- **Inclusive Therapists**
Centered on mental health care for marginalized populations — culturally responsive, LGBTQ-affirming, trauma-informed providers.
www.inclusivetherapists.com

Keep it Going: How to Access In-Person Therapy & Support

- **Therapy for Black Girls / Therapy for Black Men**
Offers platforms with curated therapist directories for the Black community, with culturally competent care.
www.therapyforblackgirls.com (women) or www.therapyforblackmen.org (men)
- **Latinx Therapy**
Find bilingual, culturally aware therapists with Latinx backgrounds. Also offers education and virtual events.
www.latinxtherapy.com
- **National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network (NQTTCN)**
Therapist directory and peer support designed by and for queer and trans people of color.
www.nqttn.com

FIND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE OR EMDR THERAPY

- **EMDR International Association (EMDRIA)**
Search for credentialed EMDR therapists in your area — often used for PTSD, grief, anxiety, and trauma.
www.emdria.org/find-an-emdr-therapist/
- **Trauma Therapist Network**
A directory of vetted trauma-informed professionals, including those trained in somatic therapy, EMDR, and more.
www.traumatherapistnetwork.com

EXPLORE KETAMINE CLINICS & PSYCHEDELIC THERAPY OPTIONS

- **Psychedelic Support**
Find ketamine clinics and licensed professionals offering integrative psychedelic care (legal options only, like ketamine-assisted therapy).
www.psychedellic.support
- **Ketamine Clinics Directory (Ketamine Advocacy Network)**
National listings with patient reviews and information about legal, medical ketamine treatments for depression and PTSD.
www.ketaminenetwork.org

FIND IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS: MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS & MOOD DISORDERS

- **NAMI Connection & Family Support Groups**
Peer-led support groups for adults living with mental health conditions and for their families. Available in-person and online across the U.S.
www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups
- **DBSA (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)**
Offers support groups (in-person and virtual) for people living with depression or bipolar disorder.
www.dbsalliance.org

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FIND IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS: ADDICTION, RECOVERY, & BEHAVIOR CHANGE

- **SMART Recovery**
A secular, self-empowerment approach to recovery from addiction and compulsive behaviors. Meetings are offered in person and online.
www.smartrecovery.org/local/
- **12-Step Programs (AA / NA / Al-Anon / CoDA)**
Recovery groups with a spiritual foundation offering support for addiction (AA, NA), affected loved ones (Al-Anon), and codependency (CoDA).
 - Alcoholics Anonymous: www.aa.org
 - Narcotics Anonymous: www.na.org
 - Al-Anon Family Groups: www.al-anon.org
 - Codependents Anonymous: www.coda.org

FIND IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS: GRIEF AND LOSS

- **GriefShare**
Offers grief recovery support groups across the U.S., providing help and healing for those mourning the loss of a loved one.
www.griefshare.org/findagroup
- **Postpartum and Perinatal Support - Postpartum Support International (PSI)**
Provides in-person and online support groups for parents experiencing postpartum depression, anxiety, and related challenges.
www.postpartum.net/get-help/locations

FIND IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS: VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

- **Wounded Warrior Project – Peer Support Groups**
Facilitates peer-led support groups for veterans and service members dealing with physical or mental injuries.
www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/peer-support
- **Combined Arms – Texas Veterans Network**
Connects veterans and military families in Texas with a network of support organizations offering various services.
www.combinedarms.us/texasveteransnetwork

FIND IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS: LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

- **Resource Center (Dallas, TX)**
Offers support groups and community programs for LGBTQIA+ individuals and families in North Texas.
www.myresourcecenter.org
- **PFLAG**
Provides support and resources for LGBTQ+ individuals and their families through local chapters nationwide.
www.pflag.org/findachapter

*You don't drown by
falling in the water.*

*You drown by
staying there.*



Edwin Louis Cole



SECTION 4

You're Not Alone: Online Communities & Support Groups

Real People. Real Talk. Real Support. These online spaces are built by and for people navigating mental health challenges. They're judgment-free zones where you can connect with others who truly understand. Whether you're looking to share your story, hear from others, or simply know you're not alone — these communities are here for you.

REDDIT COMMUNITIES

r/MentalHealth

A broad space for sharing experiences and resources on all mental health topics.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/mentalhealth/>

r/Depression

A supportive environment for those coping with depression to vent, connect, and find solidarity.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/depression/>

r/Anxiety

Focused on tools, discussions, and shared experiences of living with anxiety.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/Anxiety/>



r/SuicideWatch

A compassionate forum offering peer support for those in crisis or close to it.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/SuicideWatch/>

r/PTSD

Dedicated to those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder, from veterans to survivors of trauma.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/PTSD/>

ANONYMOUS CHAT & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**7 Cups**

24/7 anonymous conversations with trained listeners and therapists; includes support forums and self-help guides.

<https://www.7cups.com>

BuddyHelp

Peer-based emotional support with trained volunteers. No app required.

<https://www.buddyhelp.org>

By My Side

Free, confidential, text-based support. No registration needed — just type and connect.

<https://www.bymyside.support>

ADDICTION & RECOVERY COMMUNITIES**SMART Recovery**

A science-based alternative to 12-step programs with peer-led groups for addiction recovery.

<https://smartrecovery.org>

LifeRing Secular Recovery

Peer-led support for those seeking sobriety with a focus on empowerment and community.

<https://lifering.org>

Gamblers Anonymous

A fellowship supporting those struggling with compulsive gambling. Online and in-person meetings.

<https://gamblersanonymous.org/virtual-meetings/>

Gam-Anon

Support for family and friends affected by someone else's gambling.

<https://www.gam-anon.org>

FAMILY & CAREGIVER SUPPORT**NAMI Family Support Groups**

Peer-led support spaces for family members of individuals with mental illness.

<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups/NAMI-Family-Support-Group>

DBSA Parent & Caregiver Support

For those caring for a child or young adult with a mood disorder.

<https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/for-friends-family/for-parents/>

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BPDFamily.com

A support and education site for people with loved ones living with borderline personality disorder.
<https://bpdfamily.com>

LGBTQ+ & IDENTITY-BASED COMMUNITIES

Rest for Resistance

Mental health resources and storytelling for queer and trans people of color.
<https://restforresistance.com>

Sad Girls Club

A mental wellness community supporting women of color through virtual events, storytelling, and peer connection.
www.sadgirlsclub.org

BEAM (Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective)

Offers Healing Circles, online trainings, and culturally grounded mental health education for Black communities.
www.beam.community

Strong Family Alliance

Offers resources and support for parents to help them understand and support their LGBTQ+ children.
www.strongfamilyalliance.org

VETERAN & MILITARY SUPPORT

Shoulder to Shoulder (via SANE)

Co-designed with veterans and their families, this community supports peer mental health and resilience.
<https://www.sane.org/peer-support/shoulder-to-shoulder>

NAMI Homefront

A free, six-session online program tailored for families, caregivers, and friends of military service members and veterans dealing with mental health conditions. It offers education and support to help navigate the unique challenges faced by military families.
www.nami.org/Support-Education/Mental-Health-Education/NAMI-Homefront

Wounded Warrior Project – Peer Support Groups

Provides peer-led support groups for veterans and service members who have incurred physical or mental injuries. These groups offer a community of shared experiences, fostering mutual support and resilience.
www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/peer-support

FORUMS FOR BROAD MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental Health Forum

A globally accessible, web-based forum covering depression, anxiety, OCD, PTSD, and more.
<https://www.mentalhealthforum.net>

HealthUnlocked

A platform hosting hundreds of condition-based communities, including mental health.
<https://healthunlocked.com>

*The wound is the place
where the light enters you.*



Rumi



SECTION 5

Watch & Reflect: Documentaries, Talks, & Movies

Visual storytelling can be a powerful tool for understanding mental health. This section features a selection of documentaries and talks that offer personal insights, expert perspectives, and social context related to mental health. These are designed to deepen empathy, raise awareness, and reflect real experiences.

DOCUMENTARIES

Man Up

BBC's Jack Rooke explores male suicide, grief, and masculinity with honesty and humor.

Topics & Themes: Suicide, grief, loss

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmF9nE422vI>

The Mind, Explained

A Netflix docuseries that breaks down anxiety, mindfulness, memory, and more in accessible language.

Topics & Themes: Mental illness, trauma-related terms

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81098586>

Bedlam

Offers a raw, unflinching look at America's mental health crisis.

Topics & Themes: Severe mental illness, institutionalization

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/bedlam/>



Anxiety and Me

Nadiya Hussain discusses her lifelong struggle with panic disorder in this intimate BBC documentary.

Topics & Themes: Anxiety, trauma

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLUmNKaVCcQ>

The Secret Life of Lele Pons

Social media star Lele Pons opens up about living with OCD and Tourette's.

Topics & Themes: OCD, self-harm, mental health stigma

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbpi6ZahtOH7r2jzF6PzXwYgkN7j6yA3F>

The Mask You Live In

Investigates how boys in the U.S. are socialized to suppress emotions, and the cost of that repression.

Topics & Themes: Toxic masculinity, identity, emotional trauma

<https://www.therepresentationproject.org/film/the-mask-you-live-in>

Untold: Breaking Point

Tennis player Mardy Fish reveals his experience with anxiety at the height of his career.

Topics & Themes: Performance pressure, panic attacks

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81026437>

Bo Burnham: Inside

Filed during the pandemic, this introspective special reflects on isolation, creativity, and existential dread.

Topics & Themes: Depression, loneliness, suicide reference

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81289483>

Finding Balance

A reflective film on the importance of self-care, pacing, and emotional regulation in everyday life.

Topics & Themes: Burnout, anxiety

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnttDp_C6FE

The Clubhouse: A Year with the Boston Red Sox

MLB player Jarren Duran shares his journey through depression and a suicide attempt, aiming to inspire openness in professional sports.

Topics & Themes: Suicide, depression, performance anxiety

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81602059>

Out of Mind, Out of Sight

Explores the lives of four patients at a forensic psychiatric hospital, shedding light on the complexities of mental illness and the criminal justice system.

Topics & Themes: Severe mental illness, institutionalization, violence

www.amazon.com/Out-Mind-Sight-John-Kastner/dp/B07FPXL7RD

Boy Interrupted

A filmmaker-mother's heartbreaking film about the suicide of her 15-year-old son, offering an intimate look at childhood bipolar disorder.

Topics & Themes: Suicide, bipolar disorder, grief

www.hulu.com/movie/boy-interrupted-1a780d48-070c-4fe9-980f-fb418a106fd5

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The Wounds We Cannot See

An unflinching true story of one woman's life battling addiction, PTSD, and mental illness in a search for redemption.

Topics & Themes: PTSD, trauma, addiction, sexual abuse

www.primevideo.com/detail/The-Wounds-We-Cannot-See/ORIDIO6XDBBDKXY6W2SOVPKB7I

TED TALKS

TED Playlist: The Struggle of Mental Health

Talks on personal journeys, scientific insights, and tools for managing mental illness.

https://www.ted.com/playlists/175/the_struggle_of_mental_health

Heather Wokusch - “Protecting Mental Health in Crazy Times”

Offers a practical to-do list for staying mentally well in tough periods.

https://www.ted.com/talks/heather_wokusch_protecting_mental_health_in_crazy_times_a_to_do_list

Glenn Close - “My Mission to Change the Narrative of Mental Health”

Actress Glenn Close shares her family's story and discusses stigma.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5UTOK_NEig

Johann Hari: This could be why you're depressed or anxious

Journalist Johann Hari explores the underlying causes of depression and anxiety, suggesting that disconnection from meaningful values and relationships may be significant contributors.

www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_this_could_be_why_you_re_depressed_or_anxious

Lisa Damour: 3 steps of anxiety overload — and how you can take back control

Psychologist Lisa Damour outlines a three-step process to manage overwhelming anxiety, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and addressing stressors effectively.

www.ted.com/talks/lisa_damour_3_steps_of_anxiety_overload_and_how_you_can_take_back_control

Wendy Suzuki: How to calm your anxiety, from a neuroscientist

Neuroscientist Wendy Suzuki shares evidence-based techniques, including physical activity and mindfulness, to transform anxiety into a tool for enhancing performance and well-being.

www.ted.com/talks/wendy_suzuki_how_to_calm_your_anxiety_from_a_neuroscientist

Nikki Webber Allen: Don't suffer from your depression in silence

Producer and activist Nikki Webber Allen discusses the stigma surrounding mental health and the importance of open conversations to foster understanding and support.

www.ted.com/talks/nikki_webber_allen_don_t_suffer_from_your_depression_in_silence

Eleanor Longden: The voices in my head

Psychologist Eleanor Longden recounts her experience with schizophrenia, challenging misconceptions and advocating for a more compassionate approach to mental illness.

www.ted.com/talks/eleanor_longden_the_voices_in_my_head

Phillip J. Roundtree: Black Mental Health Matters

An impassioned talk on the impact of trauma on Black identity and wellness, and why America's current conversation on mental health is inadequate.

www.ted.com/talks/phillip_j_roundtree_black_mental_health_matters

Kevin Breel: Confessions of a depressed comic

Comedian Kevin Breel offers a candid look at his struggle with depression, highlighting the contrast between outward appearances and internal battles.

www.ted.com/talks/kevin_breel_confessions_of_a_depressed_comic

Sangu Delle: There's no shame in taking care of your mental health

Entrepreneur Sangu Delle discusses the challenges of seeking mental health support in African communities and emphasizes the importance of self-care.

www.ted.com/talks/sangu_delle_there_s_no_shame_in_taking_care_of_your_mental_health

Jeremy Forbes: How to start a conversation about suicide

Community leader Jeremy Forbes shares strategies for initiating conversations about suicide, aiming to reduce stigma and encourage open dialogue.

www.ted.com/talks/jeremy_forbes_how_to_start_a_conversation_about_suicide

Hailey Hardcastle: Why you should take a break: Prioritizing mental health in schools

Student advocate Hailey Hardcastle discusses the implementation of mental health days in schools, promoting the idea that taking breaks is essential for well-being.

www.ted.com/talks/hailey_hardcastle_why_you_should_take_a_break_prioritizing_mental_health_in_schools

Kelly McGonigal: How to make stress your friend

In this insightful talk, health psychologist Kelly McGonigal challenges the conventional view of stress as purely harmful. She presents research suggesting that changing our perception of stress can actually make us healthier. By embracing stress and viewing it as a positive, we can improve our well-being and resilience.

www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend

Jelan Agnew: Black Folk Mental Health: Generational Trauma, Traditions & Truth

Discusses generational trauma in the Black community and the importance of acknowledging and healing from it.

www.ted.com/talks/jelan_agnew_black_folk_mental_health_generational_trauma_traditions_and_truth

MOVIES

Movies can entertain while also shedding light on mental health themes. This section presents a selection of films that explore emotional challenges, personal transformation, and the realities of mental health through powerful storytelling. Some are based on true stories; others use fiction to bring real struggles to life.

My Dead Friend Zoe

A darkly humorous drama about a veteran coping with PTSD, survivor's guilt, and the lingering presence of her deceased best friend.

Topics & Themes: PTSD, grief, military trauma

www.mydeadfriendzomovie.com

Silver Linings Playbook

A man with bipolar disorder and a woman coping with loss form an unexpected connection.

Topics & Themes: Bipolar disorder, grief, emotional volatility

www.amazon.com/Silver-Linings-Playbook-Bradley-Cooper/dp/B00BYKIKJS

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Short Term 12

A young supervisor at a group home for at-risk teens finds her own unresolved trauma mirrored in the lives of the youth she cares for. A deeply empathetic and quietly powerful portrait of pain, trust, and resilience.

Topics & Themes: Childhood trauma, foster care, abuse recovery, self-harm, trust-building

www.amazon.com/Short-Term-12-Brie-Larson/dp/B0010V05JA

Pariah

A quietly powerful story of a 17-year-old Black lesbian navigating identity, repression, and coming out in a conservative Brooklyn household.

Topics & Themes: Repression, family rejection, LGBTQ+ identity, depression, self-acceptance

www.amazon.com/Pariah-Adepero-Oduye/dp/B007JP4LZC

Tarnation

A genre-defying autobiographical film blending home videos and surreal editing, exploring the filmmaker's childhood trauma and his mother's schizophrenia.

Topics & Themes: Childhood trauma, family mental illness, artistic self-expression

www.amazon.com/Tarnation-Jonathan-Caouette/dp/B001APKL2Q

It's Kind of a Funny Story

A teenager checks himself into a psychiatric ward, where he finds humor and healing among new friends.

Topics & Themes: Depression, suicide ideation

www.amazon.com/Kind-Funny-Story-Keir-Gilchrist/dp/B004GBFF5Y

The Machinist

A factory worker suffering from insomnia experiences psychological unraveling.

Topics & Themes: Delusion, psychosis, insomnia

www.amazon.com/Machinist-Brad-Anderson/dp/B0DWLSSLRV

Waves

An emotionally intense story about a suburban Black family unraveling after a traumatic event, focused on a teen boy under emotional pressure.

Topics & Themes: Emotional repression, toxic masculinity, grief, guilt, Black family dynamics

www.amazon.com/Waves-Kelvin-Harrison-Jr/dp/B082PZJ2P5

Lars and the Real Girl

A socially awkward man enters a delusional relationship with a life-size doll, prompting his community to show deep compassion.

Topics & Themes: Delusional disorder, loneliness

www.tubitv.com/movies/306935/lars-and-the-real-girl

The Beaver

A man struggling with depression begins communicating through a hand puppet, using it as a coping mechanism.

Topics & Themes: Depression, family conflict

www.justwatch.com/us/movie/the-beaver

Little Miss Sunshine

A dysfunctional family embarks on a road trip to support their daughter's beauty pageant dreams, revealing personal struggles along the way.

Topics & Themes: Depression, suicide, family dynamics

www.amazon.com/Little-Miss-Sunshine-Abigail-Breslin/dp/B000M2SM92



Infinitely Polar Bear

A father with bipolar disorder attempts to care for his daughters while their mother completes her education.

Topics & Themes: Bipolar disorder, parenting challenges

<https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/infinitely-polar-bear/umc.cmc.5l8wkzbfz9z3m4l9asjtdx27b>

Beautiful Boy

Based on the real-life story of a father and son navigating the son's addiction and relapse cycles.

Topics & Themes: Substance abuse, overdose, relapse

www.amazon.com/Beautiful-Boy-Timothee-Chalamet/dp/B08B4XGYGC

Gun Hill Road

A Puerto Rican father returns from prison to discover that his teen child is transitioning. A moving portrait of family, identity, and emotional upheaval.

Topics & Themes: Gender identity, family conflict, masculinity, trauma, cultural barriers

www.amazon.com/Gun-Hill-Road-Esai-Morales/dp/B0062F03YW

The Skeleton Twins

Estranged twins reconnect after separate suicide attempts, discovering humor and healing in their pain.

Topics & Themes: Suicide, depression, family dysfunction

www.peacocktv.com/watch-online/movies/the-skeleton-twins/d401e49b-426e-3730-85de-b907d1bbaeb2

To the Bone

A young woman with anorexia enters a group treatment home. Candid and respectful of complexity.

Topics & Themes: Anorexia, family pressure, recovery, identity

www.netflix.com/title/80171659

The Unsaid

A psychologist grieving his son's suicide becomes involved in the treatment of a teenage boy with a disturbing past.

Topics & Themes: Suicide, grief, PTSD, trauma recovery

www.amazon.com/Unsaid-Andy-Garcia/dp/B000065V34

Los Lobos

A poetic semi-autobiographical film about two young Mexican-American boys navigating displacement and loneliness while their single mother works to provide for them.

Topics & Themes: Immigration stress, childhood resilience, emotional suppression, maternal mental health

www.amazon.com/Los-Lobos-Maximiliano-Najar-Marcado/dp/B093RZ5ZMN

Imaginary Heroes

After the suicide of a high-achieving son, a suburban family fractures and begins to rebuild, uncovering long-buried emotional truths.

Topics & Themes: Suicide, family dynamics, suppressed emotion, grief

www.amazon.com/Imaginary-Heroes-Sigourney-Weaver/dp/B0007ZGHAU



SECTION 6

Listen In: Podcasts, Music, & Playlists

Sometimes the right voice, the right story, or even the right melody can shift your whole day. This section offers a curated lineup of podcasts and playlists that bring insight, comfort, perspective, and calm — no matter where you are. From expert advice and mental health education to relatable conversations and mood-soothing sounds, these audio resources are made to meet you where you are — whether you're walking, driving, working, or winding down.

PODCASTS: EDUCATIONAL / EXPERT-LED

The Happiness Lab (Dr. Laurie Santos)

Based on her Yale course, Dr. Santos unpacks the science of happiness and why our brains get it wrong.
<https://www.happinesslab.fm>

The Hardcore Self Help Podcast (Dr. Robert Duff)

A psychologist explains mental health concepts in everyday language, answering real listener questions.
<https://www.duffthepsych.com/hardcore-self-help-podcast>

Dear Therapists (Lori Gottlieb & Guy Winch)

Two leading therapists help guests work through real issues in real time — with action plans.
<https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1119-dear-therapists-68577312>

PODCASTS: THERAPIST-LED & MINDFULNESS-BASED**Calm It Down (Chad Lawson)**

A musician uses music and mindfulness to ease anxiety and invite stillness.

<https://www.calmitdownpodcast.com>

The Mindful Kind (Rachael Kable)

Shares short, practical mindfulness tips and reflections on emotional wellness.

<https://www.rachaelkable.com/podcast>

PODCASTS: MARGINALIZED VOICES & MENTAL HEALTH**Latinx Therapy (Adriana Alejandre)**

Therapist Adriana Alejandre hosts conversations on mental health topics relevant to the Latinx community, with cultural nuance and clinical insight.

www.latinxtherapy.com/podcast

InRecovery (Dr. Nzinga Harrison)

A Black psychiatrist dives deep into addiction and recovery — from opioids to workaholism — with science, empathy, and cultural awareness.

www.lemonadamedia.com/show/inrecovery

Busy Being Black (Josh Rivers)

Explores the mental and emotional realities of queer Black life through interviews with artists, activists, and thinkers.

www.busybeingblack.com/podcast

PODCASTS: STORYTELLING & HUMOR**The Hilarious World of Depression (John Moe)**

Comedians and creatives talk about living with depression — it's honest, relatable, and surprisingly funny.

<https://www.hilariousworld.org>

The Mental Illness Happy Hour (Paul Gilmartin)

A raw and often hilarious look at the invisible struggles we carry, with guests from all walks of life.

<https://www.mentalpod.com>

Anxiously Ever After (Sarah Fader)

Real stories of anxiety and survival told with honesty, vulnerability, and sarcasm.

<https://www.sarahfader.com/>

PODCASTS: ADDICTION & RECOVERY**The Addicted Mind (Duane Osterlind, LMFT)**

Features expert interviews and personal stories about addiction, trauma, and healing.

www.theaddictedmind.com

Recovery Rocks (Tawny Lara & Lisa Smith)

Two women in recovery talk sobriety, mental health, and pop culture — funny, feminist, and unfiltered.

www.recoveryrockspodcast.com

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PODCASTS: TRAUMA & RESILIENCE

The Trauma Therapist Podcast (Guy Macpherson)

Interviews with therapists, advocates, and survivors about healing trauma and building resilience.
<https://www.thetraumatherapistproject.com/podcast>

Finding Mastery (Dr. Michael Gervais)

Focuses on mindset and performance psychology in high-pressure environments — athletes, leaders, and more.
<https://www.findingmastery.com>

PODCASTS: GRIEF & LOSS

Terrible, Thanks for Asking (Nora McInerney)

Honest, emotionally layered conversations about grief, trauma, and the messy parts of life — often funny, always real.
www.ttfa.org

Griefcast (Cariad Lloyd)

Comedians and guests talk about death, loss, and grieving — candid and compassionate, with British wit.
www.cariadlloyd.com/griefcast

SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS

Songs About Mental Health

A collection of tracks that talk about anxiety, healing, and hope.
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1TTCw7iOjjMdMDccN70edu>

You're Not Alone: Songs About Mental Health

A curated playlist reminding listeners that connection and understanding are out there.
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/33hDMHUTiLwSiB5XvWIkHe>

Mental Health, Recovery & Healing Journey

Designed to support reflection and self-care throughout your emotional wellness journey.
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/71bNGfMH2WnBrWUNH8ojOV>

Mental Health Awareness Week

A mental wellness campaign playlist featuring a blend of spoken word and music.
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0qeKw2uSRikRsBNA5juvaC>

Mental Health Songs

A soft, thoughtful set of tracks about mental health struggles and finding peace.
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2dHZPtwhfNURdnyQxm5qm>

Resilience & Recovery

Empowering and contemplative songs to remind you of your strength through hard times.
[www.spotify.com/playlist/1AO3zkk1r4o1OL3Ud3qgM](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1AO3zkk1r4o1OL3Ud3qgM)



*You can't go back and
change the beginning, but
you can start where you are
and change the ending.*



C.S. Lewis



SECTION 7

Read & Explore: Articles, Blogs, & Books

Reading offers a pathway to understanding, empathy, and personal growth. This section includes a curated collection of articles, personal blogs, and books that explore various aspects of mental health — from expert insights and lived experience to practical strategies for support and resilience.

ARTICLES

“The Anxious Generation” by Jonathan Haidt

On how smartphones and social media are reshaping youth mental health.

<https://jonathanhaidt.com/anxious-generation/>

“My Teen’s Life Was Ruined by Social Media” – People Magazine

A mother’s powerful account of loss and online harm.

<https://people.com/my-daughter-overdosed-on-fentanyl-laced-drugs-she-bought-on-facebook-exclusive-11716915>

“Suicide Survivor Stories Empowered Me to Live” – Speaking of Suicide

A mental health advocate reflects on the impact of others’ survival stories.

<https://speakingofsuicide.com/2023/01/29/survivor-stories-empowered-me/>

“Growing Up With a Mentally Ill Parent” by Vinita Mehta – Psychology Today

Six common emotional experiences for children of mentally ill parents.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/head-games/201709/growing-up-with-a-mentally-ill-parent-6-core-experiences>



“Parenting with Mental Illness” – Behavioral Health News

Discusses stigma, strength, and support for parents with a diagnosis.

<https://behavioralhealthnews.org/parenting-with-mental-illness-breaking-the-silence-and-navigating-the-challenges/>

“The Challenges of Having a Parent With Mental Illness” – Parents.com

A candid look at how kids adapt and cope when a parent struggles.

<https://www.parents.com/health/mental/the-challenges-of-having-a-parent-with-mental-illness/>

“My Experience of Addiction and Recovery” – Medical News Today

A personal narrative of surviving substance abuse and finding clarity.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/323978>

“How I Learned to Love Life After Surviving Suicide” – Them Magazine

A queer writer shares their journey from despair to healing.

<https://www.them.us/story/i-survived>

“What I Learned from My Mother’s Mental Illness” by Liza Long – NAMI

A writer and advocate reflects on the legacy of mental illness in her family.

<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/June-2021/What-I-Learned-from-My-Mother-s-Mental-Illness>

“Surviving the Impossible: Reflections on Suicide Loss” by Andrew Devendorf – Psychology Today

Honest insight into what suicide loss feels like for those left behind.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/deeper-mental-health/202502/surviving-the-impossible-reflections-on-suicide-loss>

Harvard Health Blog – Mental Health Section

Research-backed articles covering everyday mental wellness topics.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/mental-health>

The Guardian – “The Promise of Diagnosis” by Moya Sarner

Reflects on how a diagnosis can provide clarity, identity, and hope.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/apr/21/the-promise-of-diagnosis-how-it-can-open-a-door-to-true-self-understanding>

Verywell Mind – “The Importance of Mental Health”

Explains how mental health affects all aspects of life and how to support it.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/the-importance-of-mental-health-for-wellbeing-5207938>

BLOGS**Anxious Lass by Kelly Jean**

Kelly Jean candidly shares her experiences with social anxiety, offering advice, personal stories, and resources to help others navigate similar challenges.

<https://anxiouslass.com/>

Sober Señorita by Kelly Fitzgerald Junco

Kelly chronicles her journey to sobriety, discussing the realities of addiction recovery and providing support.

<https://sobersenorita.com/>

Sanity Daily by Priyanka Joshi

Priyanka offers insights into mental health, self-care, and personal growth, drawing from her own experiences to support and empower readers.

<https://sanitydaily.com/>

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The Blurt Foundation Blog

This blog shares personal stories and resources aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of depression and mental health challenges.

<https://www.blurtitout.org/blog/>

Walking in Sober Boots by Damian

Damian shares his journey through addiction recovery, offering reflections, poems, and encouragement for those on similar paths.

<https://soberboots.org/>

More Than Bipolar by Carolina Díaz Pimentel

Carolina, a Peruvian journalist and mental health activist, shares her experiences living with bipolar disorder and autism, aiming to destigmatize mental health conditions.

<https://www.masqueunabipolar.com/Wikipedia>

Cope Notes by Johnny Crowder

Johnny, a musician and mental health advocate, offers daily mental health support through text messages and shares his personal journey with mental illness.

<https://copenotes.com/>

The Food Medic by Dr. Hazel Wallace

Dr. Hazel combines her medical expertise with personal experiences to provide insights into nutrition, mental health, and overall well-being.

<https://www.thefoodmedic.co.uk/>

The Worry Games by Anna Lisa

Anna Lisa shares her journey with anxiety disorders, offering practical advice and personal stories to help others manage their mental health.

<https://theworrygames.com/Health Improve>

Lawrence Lindell's Blog

Lawrence, a cartoonist and educator, uses his art to discuss his experiences with bipolar disorder and PTSD, aiming to create a supportive community.

<https://www.lawrencelindell.com/>

BOOKS - EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIVE

Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression – and the Unexpected Solutions

By Johann Hari

An exploration of the underlying causes of depression and anxiety, challenging traditional narratives.

<https://thelostconnections.com/buy-the-book/>

Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror

By Judith Lewis Herman

A foundational text that explores the profound effects of trauma on individuals and society, outlining a path to healing through understanding and empowerment.

<https://www.amazon.com/Trauma-Recovery-Aftermath-Violence-Political/dp/0465061710>

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma

By Bessel van der Kolk

Explores how trauma affects the body and mind, and offers innovative treatments.

<https://www.besselvanderkolk.com/resources/the-body-keeps-the-score>

Man's Search for Meaning

By Viktor E. Frankl

A Holocaust survivor's reflections on finding purpose through suffering.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529385/mans-search-for-meaning-by-viktor-e-frankl/>

The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity

By Nadine Burke Harris

Examines the impact of childhood trauma on long-term health and offers solutions.

<https://www.nadineburkeharris.com/the-deepest-well>

It's Not Always Depression: Working the Change Triangle to Listen to the Body, Discover Core Emotions, and Connect to Your Authentic Self

By Hilary Jacobs Hendel

Introduces the Change Triangle tool for emotional health and healing.

<https://www.hilaryjacobshendel.com/its-not-always-depression>

The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression

By Andrew Solomon

A comprehensive study of depression, blending personal narrative with scientific research.

<https://andrewsolomon.com/books/the-noonday-demon/>

Complex PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving

By Pete Walker

Provides insights and tools for recovering from complex post-traumatic stress disorder.

<https://www.amazon.com/Complex-PTSD-Surviving-Pete-Walker/dp/1492871842>

The Happiness Trap: How to Stop Struggling and Start Living

By Russ Harris

Introduces Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help readers reduce stress and find fulfillment.

<https://thehappinesstrap.com/>

Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide

By Kay Redfield Jamison

A comprehensive examination of suicide, blending personal experience with scientific research to explore its causes and prevention.

<https://www.amazon.com/Night-Falls-Fast-Understanding-Suicide/dp/0375701478>

BOOKS - MEMOIRS & PERSONAL NARRATIVES**While You Were Out: An Intimate Family Portrait of Mental Illness in an Era of Silence**

By Meg Kissinger

A journalist's exploration of her family's struggle with mental illness and the broader societal implications.

<https://www.megkissinger.com/about-the-book>

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Furiously Happy: A Funny Book About Horrible Things

By Jenny Lawson

A humorous and honest account of living with mental illness.

<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250077028/furiouslyhappy>

An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness

By Kay Redfield Jamison

A clinical psychologist's personal journey with bipolar disorder.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/87271/an-unquiet-mind-by-kay-redfield-jamison/>

Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness

By William Styron

An intimate portrait of the author's battle with depression.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/174292/darkness-visible-by-william-styron/>

The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness

By Elyn R. Saks

A law professor's account of living with schizophrenia.

<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/elyn-r-saks/the-center-cannot-hold/9781401309442/>

Just Like Someone Without Mental Illness Only More So: A Memoir

By Mark Vonnegut

A candid narrative of the author's experiences with mental illness.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/180709/just-like-someone-without-mental-illness-only-more-so-by-mark-vonnegut/>

Hello I Want to Die Please Fix Me: Depression in the First Person

By Anna Mehler Paperny

A journalist's candid account of her experiences with major depressive disorder and suicidal ideation.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/600964/hello-i-want-to-die-please-fix-me-by-anna-mehler-paperny/9780735272828>

The Wounds Within: A Veteran, a PTSD Therapist, and a Nation Unprepared

By Mark I. Nickerson and Joshua S. Goldstein

An exploration of a veteran's struggle with PTSD and the systemic challenges faced by those seeking help.

<https://www.amazon.com/Wounds-Within-Veteran-Therapist-Unprepared/dp/1632204193>

Blackout: Remembering the Things I Drank to Forget

By Sarah Hepola

A memoir detailing the author's journey through alcoholism and recovery.

<https://www.sarahhepola.com/blackout>

Lit: A Memoir

By Mary Karr

An account of the author's struggles with alcoholism and her path to sobriety.

<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/lit-mary-karr?variant=40908367257698>

*It's never too late to be
what you might have been.*



George Eliot



SECTION 8

Mental Health Apps: Tools for Daily Support

Accessible, evidence-based, and easy to use. These apps are designed to support your mental health wherever you are — whether you're managing anxiety, tracking moods, building resilience, or just need help winding down. All are available on both Apple and Android devices.

Headspace

Focus: Meditation, sleep, stress relief

What it offers: Guided meditations, daily check-ins, sleep sounds, and stress-reduction tips for everyday users.

<https://www.headspace.com>

Calm

Focus: Relaxation, sleep, mindfulness

What it offers: Guided meditations, breathing exercises, bedtime stories, and daily calm routines.

<https://www.calm.com>

Insight Timer

Focus: Mindfulness, anxiety relief, sleep support

What it offers: The world's largest library of free meditations, music tracks, talks, and body scans.

<https://insighttimer.com>



PTSD Coach

Focus: PTSD management (originally developed for veterans, now open to all)

What it offers: Education about PTSD, tools for tracking symptoms, grounding exercises, and crisis plans.

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach>

Sanvello

Focus: Stress, anxiety, and depression

What it offers: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) tools, journaling prompts, guided journeys, and progress tracking.

<https://www.sanvello.com>

Happify

Focus: Building resilience and positive psychology

What it offers: Activities and games designed by psychologists to reduce stress and increase happiness.

<https://www.happify.com>

MoodTools

Focus: Depression management and suicide prevention

What it offers: Mood tracking, safety plans, video guides, thought journaling, and self-assessment tools.

<https://www.moodtools.org>

Youper

Focus: Self-guided emotional support

What it offers: AI-powered conversations that help users reflect on thoughts, track moods, and reduce anxiety.

<https://www.youper.ai>

Daylio

Focus: Mood and habit tracking

What it offers: Track your daily moods and activities without writing a single word — just tap and go.

<https://daylio.net>

7 Cups

Focus: Peer connection and active listening

What it offers: 24/7 anonymous text chats with trained listeners, group support, and access to professional therapists.

<https://www.7cups.com>

Spiral Up

Focus: Stress management

What it offers: Free neuroscience-based app that helps you process emotions and release stress in minutes

<https://www.spiralup.org>

I Am Sober

Focus: Sober lifestyle support

What it offers: Break bad habits, build new ones, and connect with others who understand what you're going through.

<https://iamsobber.com/en/site/home>



SECTION 9

Mind & Body: Movement, Breath, & Balance

Small Practices. Big Impact. You don't need involved routines or long meditations to support your mental health. These simple actions — most of them under five minutes — can help reset your nervous system, reconnect to your body, and re-center your mindset wherever you are: at your desk, in the trailer, in the car, or at home.

BREATH & AWARENESS

- Box breathing: inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat.
- 5 Deep breaths: inhale deeply into your belly. Exhale slowly. Repeat five times.
- Name 3 things you hear: helps break racing thoughts and shift to the present moment.
- Silent 60: one minute of quiet breathing. Eyes closed. Hands relaxed.
- Body scan: close your eyes and mentally scan from head to toe. Where are you holding tension?
- Sigh it out: take a deep breath in and exhale with an audible sigh. Repeat. Your body will understand the signal to release.

MOVEMENT & PHYSICAL RESET

- Neck rolls: slowly circle your head to release shoulder and jaw tension.
- Shoulder shrugs: shrug up, hold, release. Repeat three times.
- Wrist circles: great if you've been holding tools, typing, or texting.



- Toe wiggles: a surprising way to reconnect with your body. Try it with shoes on or off.
- Wall stretch: press your palms into a wall and lean in. Opens your chest and breath.
- Stand tall: plant your feet, lift your chin, pull your shoulders back. Power pose.
- Walk to reset: one slow lap around your space — no phone. Just walk and breathe.
- Shake it out: arms, legs, shoulders — release pent-up tension with a full-body shake.
- Touch something cool: a coffee cup, desk surface, wall — a sensory way to ground your body.

GROUNDING & REGULATION

- Drink a full glass of water: hydration supports mood, energy, and attention.
- Wash your hands slowly: pay attention to temperature, texture, and motion.
- Step outside for fresh air: one minute in natural light can shift your internal state.
- Notice 5 blue things: visual grounding helps reset focus and pull you into the present.
- Run cold water on your wrists: calms the nervous system — especially useful during panic or overload.
- Put your hands on your heart: notice your heartbeat. Feel the rhythm of being alive.
- Grip something with intention: hold onto a sturdy object — a railing, your seat, a cool bottle. Feel the stability in your hand.
- Notice one scent: coffee, lotion, fresh air — scent is a direct line to calming the nervous system.
- Look at something still: watch a tree, cloud, or object that isn't moving fast. Let your brain take a visual break.

PRESENCE & GRATITUDE

- Say one thing you're grateful for: aloud or silently. Doesn't need to be profound — just real.
- Notice what feels ok right now: not perfect — just okay. Anchor in what's working.
- Repeat a centering phrase: "this moment is temporary." "I've survived every hard day so far."
- Check in with your body: ask: what do I need right now? Food? Movement? Quiet?
- Smile gently — even if you don't feel like it: facial feedback loops can help your nervous system soften.
- Go tech-free for 1 hour: let your mind reset from constant alerts and inputs.
- Write down 3 things you're proud of: acknowledgment is self-support. Small wins matter.
- Name a tiny joy from today: a good song, warm socks, a moment of quiet. Small joys anchor you to life.
- Revisit a compliment you've received: let it land again. You earned it then — it still counts now.

CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

- Text a friend and ask how they're really doing: a check-in can change someone's day — or yours.
- Share a resource from this guide with someone: pass it on. Someone in your circle may really need it.
- Tell a coworker they're doing a good job: be specific. "Hey, I saw you handle that — nice work." Uplifting others builds resilience in you, too.
- Ask someone what they're looking forward to: a question that invites connection and optimism.
- Say thank you with eye contact: a moment of sincere appreciation goes a long way.
- Wave or nod at someone today: a tiny moment of human recognition — it matters more than it seems.
- Ask: "need anything?" — and mean it: a powerful, simple phrase that opens the door without pressure.



SECTION 10

Support at Work: Showing Up for Each Other

Mental health is a team effort. Whether you're working from a construction trailer, a desk, or remotely, we spend a huge part of our lives alongside coworkers. And just like physical safety, emotional wellbeing is something we all shape together. This section offers ways to support each other, notice when something's off, and build a culture where people feel seen, valued, and safe to ask for help.

WAYS TO SHOW SUPPORT AND BUILD TRUST

- Check in — and mean it - ask how someone's really doing. Be willing to listen if the answer isn't "fine."
- Notice what's unsaid - if someone seems withdrawn, unusually quiet, distracted, or irritable, don't ignore it. A simple "you doing okay lately?" can make a difference.
- Let people know you're a safe person - saying "if you ever need to vent or talk something out, I'm here" opens a door — especially for someone who might otherwise stay silent.
- Make room for someone's hard day - show grace when a coworker is off their game. Ask if they want help prioritizing. Offer to take one thing off their plate, if you can.
- Recognize what's going well - acknowledge effort, resilience, and growth — not just productivity. Try: "I see how much you've been juggling this week. Just wanted to say I notice."
- Respect boundaries - support doesn't always mean engagement. Sometimes it means space. Check in without pushing.
- Normalize conversations about mental health - say things like "mental health is part of health" or "we all have tough seasons." You don't need a script — just start the conversation.

- Lead by example - take your breaks. Set boundaries. Be open about using therapy, needing rest, or hitting a wall. When leaders model care, others feel permission to do the same.
- Don't worry about having the perfect words - you can say "I'm not sure what to say, but I care about you" — and that's enough.
- Share a resource that helped you - if something in this guide resonated with you, pass it along. A personal recommendation means more than a mass email.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SUPPORT COWORKERS HOLISTICALLY

- Create moments of micro-connection - not everything needs to be deep. "Want coffee?" Or "how's your kid doing?" can build trust over time.
- Check in on new hires or quiet team members - help them find their rhythm and know they're not invisible. Ask: "how's it feeling here so far?"
- Bridge the office-to-field divide - if you're in the office, check in with field teams (and vice versa) outside of formal updates. "Anything you need from our end?" can mean a lot.
- Frame mental health as safety - especially for field teams, reinforce that a clear head protects hands, feet, and lives: "taking care of yourself is part of the job."
- Celebrate the good moments, too - laugh together. Share a playlist. Mark milestones. Joy builds emotional resilience.
- Model what recovery looks like - if you've been through burnout, therapy, or crisis and come out the other side, it's okay to say so. Real stories reduce stigma.

HOLDING SPACE WITHOUT OVEREXTENDING YOURSELF

You can care deeply without carrying everything. Being there for someone who is struggling with their mental health is an act of courage and connection. You don't need a psychology degree, a perfect response, or all the answers. Most of the time, your presence — calm, steady, and judgment-free — is what matters.

Boundaries and empathy go hand in hand. Setting healthy limits doesn't mean you're backing away — it means you're making space that's safe, honest, and real. Trying to "fix" someone can unintentionally add pressure or create imbalance. But walking alongside them — listening, validating, and helping them access other resources — can be life-changing. If someone's story feels too heavy, or you're not the right person to hold it, try:

- Thank you for trusting me with this. You're not alone in this — even if I can't fix it, I'll help you find someone who knows how.
- This sounds really heavy, and I don't want to say the wrong thing. Would it be okay if we looked together for someone who's better equipped to help?
- I care about you, and I want to make sure you get the kind of support that you deserve. I can stay with you while we figure out who that could be.
- I'm really honored you told me. I'm not qualified to help with this, but I can help you find someone who is.
- Let's not try to do this alone. You don't have to figure it all out right now — just the next step. I can help with that.

Remember: you are not the solution — you are a bridge.

And bridges don't carry all of the weight. They help make it possible to cross.

*What we achieve inwardly
will change outer reality.*



Plutarch

