



Mental Health Awareness  
Breaking the Stigma  
Student Workbook

## **Athens State University Resources**

### **Accessibility Services**

Accessibility Services is committed to providing students with disabilities equal access to Athens State University. The office aims to remove social and environmental barriers by working collaboratively with students, faculty, staff and the community. To achieve this goal, reasonable academic accommodations, assistive technology, and support services are utilized.

It is the student's responsibility to self-disclose his/her disability, provide adequate documentation (if required), and to request academic accommodations/services.

For questions regarding services, contact Dr. Patrice Broaden, Director of Student Wellness and Accessibility Services, at 256-233-8143 or via email at [Patrice.broaden@athens.edu](mailto:Patrice.broaden@athens.edu).

Accessibility Services is located in Sandridge Student Center, Room 121.

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/accessibility-services/>

### **Accounting Lab**

The mission of the Accounting Lab is to provide assistance to students to strengthen their understanding of foundational accounting concepts. To fulfill this mission, the Accounting Lab provides in-person and remote tutoring to students who voluntarily seek the services. The Accounting Lab is staffed by knowledgeable accounting majors selected by the faculty and offers a variety of equipment and instructional resources that support accounting courses in distance and campus-based formats. The Accounting Lab is committed to fulfilling the goal of improving students' understanding of accounting concepts.

Students can drop in during the regularly scheduled lab hours. Students can also make an appointment by calling the Accounting Lab directly (those students with appointments will be given priority). While most students visit the Accounting Lab in person for tutoring, online tutoring is available through email, fax, and phone.

The Accounting Lab is located in Sanders Hall, Room 309. The phone number is (256) 216-5379. The email address is [accounting@athens.edu](mailto:accounting@athens.edu).

The hours of operation for campus tutoring are Monday from 10 am to 4:30 pm, and Wednesday from 10 am to 4:30 pm. Virtual tutoring is available on Tuesday from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm. For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/business/lab-information/>

### **Active Minds**

Active Minds empowers students to change the perception of mental health on college campuses. Active Minds supports a network of campus-based chapters across the United States and Canada that consist of students who are passionate about mental health advocacy and education. Chapter goals are to educate peers

about mental health, connect students to resources, and change negative perceptions about mental health disorders.

The chapter is open to all students. For more information, contact Dr. Patrice Broaden at [Patrice.broaden@athens.edu](mailto:Patrice.broaden@athens.edu) or Carolyn Carthen at [Carolyn.carthen@athens.edu](mailto:Carolyn.carthen@athens.edu).

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/clubs/active-minds/>

### **Adult Degree Program (ADP)**

The mission of the Adult Degree Program (ADP) at Athens State University is to serve the adult working student who has completed some college coursework without completing a baccalaureate degree. To encourage student success, the ADP is designed to reduce or eliminate barriers for returning adult students while providing academically sound alternative methods to apply knowledge gained from the integration of work and classroom experience and to assist the student in the timely achievement of their professional and career goals.

ADP is for students 25 or older, who have at least 5 years of work experience, have some college credit, and have never received a B.S. degree. The degree options available through ADP are B.S. in Management of Technology, B.S. in Liberal Studies, and B.S.Ed. in Technical Education (non-certification tracks only). Non-traditional credit may be awarded by Athens State University for military training/experience, completion of nationally-recognized exams such as CLEP/DSST, or for prior learning for those students who have acquired knowledge through legitimate means outside an academic environment (employment certifications, seminars, training programs, work experience, civic activities, and volunteer services). Prior learning assessment requires completion of a professional portfolio where students must describe, reflect, and synthesize their learning experiences carefully.

For questions regarding services, contact Felicia Mucci, Director for Adult Degree Completion Program: 256-233-8281 or email: [Felicia.Mucci@athens.edu](mailto:Felicia.Mucci@athens.edu) .

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/adp/>

### **Career Development Center**

The Career Center provides assistance to Athens State students and Alumni in career planning, development and job seeking strategies. The department serves as a major link between students/Alumni and potential employers. We are here to assist students in identifying and fulfilling their future goals and aspirations.

Students receive support in creating professional documents (resumes, cover letters and social media profiles) and learning effective interview and job search techniques. We offer a variety of opportunities to come face-to-face with hiring employers and graduate school recruiters at career fairs, employer workshops, information sessions and at campus recruiting events.

Handshake is a new service that Athens State provides where you can review and apply to job announcements, have your resume reviewed, view events and various other resources. To activate your account, visit [athens.joinhandshake.com](http://athens.joinhandshake.com)



The Federal Work-Study Program (FWS) is available to undergraduate students if they have financial need. The students must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to qualify. Students must also be in good academic standing and enrolled at least half-time.

The Campus Student Worker Program is open to all currently enrolled students (undergrad and graduate) who are in good academic standing and taking at least one class. To view and apply for Work-Study opportunities, visit Handshake or contact [Hannah.DeVine@athens.edu](mailto:Hannah.DeVine@athens.edu).

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/career-development-center/>

### **Counseling Services**

A licensed professional counselor is available by appointment to discuss personal issues with currently enrolled students and Athens State University faculty and staff, on a brief-counseling basis. All counseling services are provided with your confidentiality in mind and offered at no charge to you.

Personal Counseling Services can help you:

- Develop study skills
- Get better organized
- Replace bad habits with healthy ones
- Learn how to relax during stressful times
- Balance academics, work, and family/social life
- Solve a personal problem
- Improve communication skills
- Learn coping skills to deal with anxiety, depression, addictions, grief or other emotions that might interfere with your activities of daily living
- Locate mental health services, resources and support groups in your local community

Services are provided through a partnership with the Mental Health Center of North Central Alabama.

Counselors are on campus once a week from 8 am to 4 pm to services enrolled Athens State Students. The Counseling Services Office is located in Sandridge Student Center, Room 123. They can be reached at [Counseling.services@athens.edu](mailto:Counseling.services@athens.edu) or 256-233-8144.

## **Help Desk**

The Help Desk is a centralized point of contact for technical support services for the students of Athens State University. They can help with questions about your email account, online courses, password resets or any other technical questions.

As a new student, the website has videos to help you in a variety of ways. For example, a video will show you the overview of Blackboard.

The Help Desk is located in Classroom Building Room 102. The hours are Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. If you need help by phone:256-216-6698, or you can email [helpdesk@athens.edu](mailto:helpdesk@athens.edu).

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/helpdesk/>

## **Library**

The Library supports the academic mission of the University by providing an organized collection, delivering access to instruction and research services, offering usable physical and virtual spaces, and hiring and retaining highly qualified employees.

The purpose of the Athens State University Library is to support students, faculty, staff and the community through:

- developing and maintaining a high quality, responsive, useful and timely collection of materials and services to support academic programs and the institution.
- the utilization of instruction in information literacy and research services.
- providing and maintaining useable physical and virtual spaces.
- retaining and hiring highly qualified employees who are committed to the continued success of the university

The Library operating hours are as follows, but hours may vary between semesters.

**Monday - Thursday** 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**Friday** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Saturday** Closed

**Sunday** 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/library/>

## **MCNS Learning Lab**

The Mathematical, Computer and Natural Sciences (MCNS) Learning Lab offers individual or small-group tutorials, providing access to technology and access to reference materials. Students enrolled in traditional and distance learning mathematics, computer science and biology related classes may visit the lab for personal tutoring, to watch or checkout mathematics DVD's, or have access to printed resources.

The Mathematical, Computer and Natural Sciences (MCNS) Learning Lab is located in Waters Hall, Room S-300. The phone number is (256) 233-6547.

The hours of operation are Monday-Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/arts-sciences/mathematics/math-lab/>

### **Safe Zone**

The Safe Zone Athens program is designed to provide a visible network of support to sexual and gender minority students. Members of Safe Zone Athens are allies who have been trained on the issues and terminology affecting the LGBT+ community and are prepared to offer a safe, non-judgmental environment for students who need assistance. Allies are trained to listen and offer support, but they may also help connect students with campus and local resources such as the University Counselor and/or Tide IX coordinators. The Safe Zone symbols found around campus identify the allies who are trained to provide a safe place to assist students. <https://www.athens.edu/safezone/>



### **Student Success Center**

The Student Success Center provides a central location to receive academic guidance, information, and bachelor's degree advising/planning. As an upper-division institution, every student attending Athens State brings with them transfer credit, the center helps to provide appropriate course of action for every student's individualized situation. The center partners with other university offices to offer a broad set of resources and services to empower students to excel personally and academically. The center also facilitates and coordinates strategic initiatives to support student success.

Appointments can be made in person or over the phone from the Department's web page: <https://www.athens.edu/tssc/#prospect>. The Student Success Center is located on the first floor of Sandridge Student Center.

## TimelyCare

# Your Virtual Health and Well-Being Resources

Available on the TimelyCare app or [timelycare.com/athens](https://timelycare.com/athens)

The image displays the TimelyCare app interface on a smartphone and five service icons. The app interface shows a user named Alex with a 'Get Care' button, a 'Self-Care' section with 'Journey' and 'Slider' options, and a bottom navigation bar with 'Home', 'Community', 'Self-Care', 'Messages', and 'Account'. The five service icons are: TalkNow (24/7 on-demand emotional support), Scheduled Counseling (choose preferred day, time, and provider), Health Coaching (develop healthy behaviors), Self-Care Content (guided self-care content), and Peer Community (share experiences with a network of students). Below the icons is a QR code, App Store and Google Play download buttons, the TimelyCare logo, and social media handles @timelycare and @timely\_care.

### What is TimelyCare?

TimelyCare fosters student success and improves the health and well-being of campus communities. As a virtual extension of campus health and counseling center resources, TimelyCare is committed to ensuring quality, on-demand, equitable access to care.

Athens State University is partnered with TimelyCare to deliver a virtual health and well-being platform for students. The service provides 24/7 access to virtual care at no cost! Students can use the TimelyCare services when they feel stressed or overwhelmed.

### How can students access TimelyCare?

Students can go to [timelycare.com/athens](https://timelycare.com/athens) or directly download the TimelyCare app from the app store to register with their school email address. Students can then start visits from any web-enabled device – smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop – anywhere in the United States. We've also been able to integrate it with Canvas, so they can access it directly from there as well (it should show in the left side navigation pane – see attached screenshot).

### Who can use TimelyCare?

Any enrolled student.

### What services are available?

- TalkNow - 24/7, on-demand emotional support.
- Scheduled Counseling - Select the day, time, and mental health provider of your choice. (6 visits per year)
- Health Coaching - Support for developing healthy behaviors.
- Self-Care Content - 24/7 access to self-care tools and resources, such as meditation and yoga sessions, helpful videos, and short articles from experts.

**How much does a visit cost?** TimelyCare services are available at no cost to students.

## **Writing Center**

The Athens State University Writing Center provides free services to help both graduate and undergraduate students at any stage of the writing and communication process. Knowledgeable peer consultants conduct writing center sessions either in face-to-face sessions or online. We offer individual and group tutoring for many types of projects, including essays, research papers, presentations, and digital writing (such as blogs, wikis, & websites).

The Writing Center is located on the first floor of the Athens State University Library in the Learning Commons Area; turn right when you enter the library.

We provide face-to-face and live online sessions. Face-to-face sessions are preferred, as they offer the most useful way to facilitate communication between the client and consultant. Live online sessions are conducted either by video or by a "chat" feature quite like instant messaging. Online sessions must be scheduled in advance, and students must "show up" online at the scheduled time to keep an appointment. View instructions on the website.

The Writing Center is staffed with consultants-students at Athens State-who work with their peers on various academic and professional writing assignments. Consultants engage clients in conversation about their projects, pose questions, and discuss revision strategies; they use a variety of methods-both directive and non-directive-to help clients successfully complete their projects. Consultants do not edit, proofread, or write texts for their peers-although they do have productive, educational ways to discuss grammar, editing skills, and proofreading.

The Writing Center can be contacted by phone: 256-216-6665 or email: [writing.center@athens.edu](mailto:writing.center@athens.edu). During unstaffed hours, please allow time until the Writing Center re-opens to receive a response to a voicemail or email.

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.athens.edu/writingcenter/>

# ACCEPTING REALITY



Sometimes in life we end up in situations that we just can't change. Radical acceptance is all about fully accepting your reality in situations that are beyond your control. This doesn't mean you approve of the situation, are giving up, or that it isn't painful. You are still allowed to (and should!) feel however you feel, but by accepting that it is what it is, you give the problem less power over you and you can begin to move forward.

## Tips for success



**Notice when you're fighting against reality.** The first step in accepting reality is gaining awareness that you're resisting it. It may seem like this would be easy to spot, but there are actually a lot of subtle ways that people push against reality. If you're feeling bitter or resentful, wishing things were different, or thinking about how life isn't fair, you might be fighting reality.



**Remind yourself that you can't change what has already happened.** Before you can make peace with reality, you have to acknowledge that there's no going back to the way things were. Doing this may be challenging and painful, but by identifying what you can and can't control, you can turn your energy towards coping with the things you can't change.



**Embrace your feelings.** You might still be angry, scared, overwhelmed, or lonely – that's okay. Accepting reality includes everything that you're feeling, too. When you accept these feelings and let yourself experience them without any judgement, you can work through them in a healthy way.



**Pretend that you're accepting reality.** Even if you're still struggling to fully accept reality, think about what it would look like if you *did*. How would you act if you simply accepted things as they are? What would your next step be? Changing your behaviors and actions to reflect "pretend acceptance" can help you to actually shift your thoughts.



**Relax your body.** If you're feeling stressed or are pushing against the reality of your situation, there's a good chance your body is tense. This is often associated with resistance and keeps your mind on high alert. Physically relaxing your body can help you feel more ready to accept what is reality. Try yoga, taking a hot bath or shower, deep breathing exercises, or getting a massage to help you relax.



**Use coping statements.** These are sentences that remind you that different, healthier ways of thinking are possible. Repeating them can help you get through difficult moments – you can focus on just one or make a long list of your own. Some examples are: *It is what it is. I can't change what has already happened. I can accept things the way they are. I can only control my own actions and reactions.* If it helps, write your coping statements on Post-It notes and put them in places where you will see them multiple times a day, or set an alarm/create an event on your phone with a coping statement to pop up with a reminder every now and again.



**Know that it takes practice.** Radical acceptance is a great tool to cope with hard situations that we can't control, but it can take a while before it comes easily. Don't get down on yourself if you don't master it immediately. Start by trying it out in smaller situations, like when you're stuck in traffic or your internet is acting up during a call. By practicing radical acceptance on a daily basis, it will be easier to use as a coping tool when bigger, tougher challenges come your way.

## FAST FACTS



Practicing radical acceptance has been shown to reduce feelings of shame, guilt, and



Acceptance coping skills are linked to lower rates of mental illness and



Radical acceptance can reduce distress in dealing with negative thoughts or events.<sup>3</sup>

Taking a mental health screen is one way to work on your mental health. Visit [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) to check your symptoms.



It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and resources to help

## Sources

- 1Goerg, N., Priebe, K., Bohnke, J., Steil, R., Dyer, A., & Kleindienst, N. (2017). Trauma-related emotions and radical acceptance in dialectical behavior therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder after childhood sexual abuse. *Borderline Personality Disorder and Emotion Dysregulation*, 4(1), 15–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40479-017-0065-5>
- 2Li, Ziyao, and Jie Zhang. "Coping Skills, Mental Disorders, and Suicide Among Rural Youths in China." *The journal of nervous and mental disease*, 200.10 (2012): 885–890. Web.
- 3Iverson, K. M., Follette, V. M., Pistorello, J., & Fruzzetti, A. E. (2012). An investigation of experiential avoidance, emotion dysregulation, and distress tolerance in young adult outpatients with borderline personality disorder symptoms. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, 3(4), 415-422. <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1037/a0023703>



# PRACTICING RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

Many times bad things happen and we have no control over the situation. We can't change people's behaviors or the reality of what is happening, and these experiences are painful. Radical acceptance is a practice that helps us evaluate situations and work to reduce the emotional burden of the reality of the situation like resentment, anger, hatred, or shame. Use the following prompts to help you practice radical acceptance.

**What's bothering you?** Use the following lines to write down your thoughts.

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## Understanding Reality

1. Look at the above statements. Is there something here that is a reality you *have to* accept (vs a judgement or opinion)? For instance - "It shouldn't be this way." Write it here.

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2. Think about this reality and just sit with it. For instance - "This is what happened. It can't change. It is what it is."

3. What happened, or what events led to this reality? ("This is how things happened").

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## Accepting reality

1. Think about this reality. Can you accept it in your thoughts? What can you tell yourself to help you accept this reality? Imagine what it feels like to accept it.

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2. Imagine how you'd change your behaviors or actions if you accepted this reality? Imagine how the world would feel if you could let go.

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3. Think about this reality. Can you accept it in your body? Where are you carrying the resistance to accept this reality? Do you carry that weight in your shoulders or your back? Is there tension or physical pain? Can you practice feeling your emotions in your body and then practice releasing them from your body?

4. Do you feel disappointment, sadness, or grief right now? Sit with that, acknowledge it, allow yourself to feel these feelings and understand it is ok and expected to feel disappointment, sadness, or grief. Write down anything specific about these thoughts and feelings.

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5. Despite the pain of this reality, what makes life worth living? Remind yourself of those things here.

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6. If you find yourself struggling at this point, write down some pros and cons of accepting or not accepting this reality. Then start back at #1 above for your next troubling situation.

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# DEALING WITH ANGER AND FRUSTRATION



In challenging times, you may find that you have little patience with other people or get upset over minor things. Anger and frustration are complicated emotions that often stem from other feelings, like disappointment, fear, and stress. Taking some extra steps to decrease your overall tension can prevent your feelings (and the reactions that they cause) from spiraling out of control.

## Tips for coping



**Pause before reacting.** When you feel yourself getting mad, take a moment to notice what you're thinking, then take a few deep breaths or count to ten in your head. By giving yourself even just a few seconds before reacting, you can put some emotional distance between you and whatever is upsetting you – and you might even realize that you're actually tense because of something else.



**Change your surroundings.** Anger can make you feel trapped. Whether you're mad at someone in the same room as you or just angry at the world, sometimes physically relocating yourself can help you start to calm down. Go to another room or step outside for a few minutes of fresh air to help disrupt the track that your mind is on.



**Get it all out.** Keeping your feelings bottled up never works, so allow yourself time to be angry and complain. As long as you don't focus on it for too long, venting can be a healthy outlet for your anger. You can open up to a trusted friend or write it all down in a journal. Sometimes it feels better to pretend to talk directly to the person (or situation) that you're angry at – pick an empty chair, pretend they're sitting in it, and say what you need to get off your chest.



**Release built up energy.** Anger is a high-energy emotion, and we store that energy and tension physically in our bodies. Exercise is a great way to get rid of extra energy and can improve your mood. Some people find grounding exercises (like meditation or deep breathing) helpful to calm intense feelings, while others prefer more high impact activities like running or weightlifting. Think about what you usually do to decompress, like taking a hot shower or blasting your favorite music and use the tools that you know work for you.



**Get organized.** When things around you feel chaotic, it's often a lot easier to get frustrated and snap at people. Dedicate a few minutes each day to tidying, planning, or reorganizing. Implementing a routine can also help you feel more on top of things by adding structure and certainty to your daily life.



**Eliminate stressors if possible.** Sometimes there's no way to completely get rid of a big problem, but there's often more than just one issue contributing to your frustration. Things like an overwhelming workload or unhealthy relationship can make you feel on edge. Pay attention to how and why you're feeling stressed and see if you can make small changes to improve a challenging situation to make it less burdensome.



**Manage your expectations.** Negative feelings often stem from people or situations not meeting your standards or assumptions. It's frustrating to feel let down but recognize that you can't fully predict anyone else's behavior or how situations will play out. Shift your mental framework so that you aren't setting yourself up for disappointment.



**Don't be afraid to ask for help.** If you're working to cope with your anger but feel like you can't get it under control, it's time to get some extra

## FAST FACTS



Of people who took an anxiety screen at [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) in 2020, 71% felt easily annoyed or irritable at least half of the time or nearly every day.<sup>1</sup>



Of people who took a bipolar screen at [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) in 2020, 82% reported being so irritable that they shouted at people or started fights or arguments.<sup>2</sup>



One poll found that 91% of respondents said that they feel people are

**Taking a mental health screen is one way to work on your mental health. Visit [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) to check your symptoms.**



It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and resources to help

support. Anger can fester and become explosive if not resolved. A number of mental health conditions can manifest as anger, so this may actually be a sign of depression or anxiety – treating an underlying condition can help heal your anger as well.

#### Sources

<sup>1</sup>Proprietary data. MHAScreening.org. 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>IBM Watson Health-NPR Health Poll. November 1-14, 2018. <https://www.ibm.com/downloads/cas/2YQ8NLD5>



# MANAGING FRUSTRATION AND ANGER

Anger and frustration are both common emotional responses that everyone faces. However, if these feelings become too intense, they can lead to both mental and physical distress, and cause problems in relationships. This worksheet can help you identify the emotions and thoughts behind your anger and frustration, and help you determine what you need to feel better.

**Describe the event and identify specific things someone said or did that brought on your anger or frustration.**

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**List out any emotions that were underlying your feelings of frustration or anger.**

For a list of emotions, visit <http://bit.ly/emotionsunderneath>

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**What parts of the description above are focused on facts, actions, or behaviors (and not a judgement or opinion)? Write it down.**

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Take some time to think about what needs to happen for you to be less angry. Focus on what you can do and what you need others to do.

**What can you do to feel better?**

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**What do you need someone else to do to help you feel better?**

*Remember - we can only control our own actions. However, writing down what you need from others can help you advocate for yourself.*

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**The next time you feel angry or frustrated, walk yourself through these same steps to help you process your feelings. Ask yourself these questions:**

**WHAT HAPPENED?**



**WHAT DO I FEEL?**



**WHAT DO I NEED?**

Disclaimer: This material is adapted from NVC  
<https://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/learn-nonviolent-communication/4-part-nvc/>



# GETTING OUT OF THINKING TRAPS



It's easy to fall into negative thinking patterns and spend time bullying yourself, dwelling on the past, or worrying about the future. It's part of how we're wired – the human brain reacts more intensely to negative events than to positive ones and is more likely to remember insults than praise. During tough times, negative thoughts are especially likely to spiral out of control. When these thoughts make something out to be worse in your head than it is in reality, they are called cognitive distortions.

## Common Cognitive Distortions

**Overgeneralization:** Making a broad statement based off one situation or piece of evidence.

**Personalization:** Blaming yourself for events beyond your control; taking things personally when they aren't actually connected to you.

**Filtering:** Focusing on the negative details of a situation while ignoring the positive.

**All-or-Nothing Thinking:** Only seeing the extremes of a situation.

**Catastrophizing:** Blowing things out of proportion; dwelling on the worst possible outcomes.

**Jumping to Conclusions:** Judging or deciding something without all the facts.

**Emotional Reasoning:** Thinking that however you feel is fully and unarguably true.

**Discounting the Positive:** Explaining all positives away as luck or coincidence.

**"Should" Statements:** Making yourself feel guilty by pointing out what you should or shouldn't be doing, feeling, or thinking.

## Tips for Challenging Negative Thoughts



**Reframe.** Think of a different way to view the situation. If your negative thought is "I can't do anything right," a kinder way to reframe it is, "I messed up, but nobody's perfect," or a more constructive thought is "I messed up, but now I know to prepare more for next time." It can be hard to do this when you're feeling down on yourself, so ask yourself what you'd tell your best friend if they were saying those things about themselves.



**Prove yourself wrong.** The things you do impact how you feel – what actions can you take to combat your negative thoughts? For instance, if you're telling yourself you aren't smart because you don't understand how the stock market works, learn more about a subject you understand and enjoy, like history. If you feel like no one cares about you, call a friend. Give yourself evidence that these thoughts aren't entirely true.



**Counter negative thoughts with positive ones.** When you catch your inner dialogue being mean to you, make yourself say something nice to balance it out. This may feel cheesy at first and self-love can be hard, so don't give up if it feels awkward in the beginning. Name things you love, like, or even just don't hate about yourself – we all have to start somewhere!



**Remember: thoughts aren't facts.** Your thoughts and feelings are valid, but they aren't always reality. You might feel ugly, but that doesn't mean you *are*. Often times we can be our own worst enemies – other people are seeing us in a much nicer light than how we see ourselves.

## FAST FACTS



Of people who took an anxiety screen at [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) in 2020, 64% felt afraid, as if something awful might happen at least half of the time or nearly every day.<sup>1</sup>



Half of people who took a depression screen at [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) in 2020 felt that they were a failure or had let themselves or their families down nearly every day.<sup>2</sup>



One study found that 85% of what we worry about never happens at all, and in the 15% of times where worries came true, 79% of people

Taking a mental health screen is one way to work on your mental health. Visit [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) to check your symptoms.



It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and resources to help



## Sources

1Proprietary data. MHAScreening.org. 2020.

2Ibid.

3Matthews, G., Wells, A. (2000). Attention, automaticity, and affective disorder. *Behavior Modification*, 24, 69-93.

# DEALING WITH THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO

Going to the worst-case scenario (aka catastrophic thinking or thinking the worst) is one of the most common thinking traps we fall into. Thinking about the worst-case scenario can help you feel like you're preparing to protect yourself from getting hurt in the future or to imagine what is the worst thing that can happen so you can reflect and know you can survive no matter what.

Unfortunately, problems come up when you have worst-case scenario thoughts and you're not aware of them enough that they control you, vs you controlling them. This pattern of thinking can result in circular thinking (or ruminating) in ways that pull you into a rut, bring your feelings down, make depression worse, cause you to avoid your responsibilities, and increase anxiety.

## examples of worst-case scenario thoughts:



Use the lines below to list out any and all worst-case scenario thoughts you find yourself having. Don't worry about whether it's "truly" a worst-case scenario thought...if it's bothering you and you want to jot it down, jot it down.

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**Look at the thoughts above. Pick three that stand out that you want to address. Write them below.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Question each thought by exploring the following questions.**

- Are you sure the thought is true or will happen?
- Is there any evidence it is true?
- Is there evidence that it is not true?
- Is the thought more rooted in your feelings or reality?
- If it is reality, are you able to cope with it? Have you coped with it before?

## Finding healthier thoughts

Looking at the three thoughts above, what do you need to say to yourself or how can you change the above thoughts so that you feel better instead of worse? These are called "reframed thoughts."

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Write your reframed thoughts on paper or post its and put them where you are most likely to struggle with worst-case scenario thinking. Examples include by your bed, in the bathroom, in your car, on your phone, or in a journal.

# TAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF



There are always a handful of roles that each of us are juggling. If you are a parent, a student, an employee, a caretaker, someone struggling with a mental health concern, or are just feeling overwhelmed with the responsibilities of day-to-day life, the idea of taking time for yourself may seem unimaginable. Sometimes it can be difficult to even take basic care of ourselves - but there are small things that can be done to make self-care and taking time for ourselves a little bit easier.

## Tips for Taking Care of Yourself



**Accept yourself as you are.** Remember that you are running your own race. Try not to compare your life and what it looks like right now to anyone else's. When you start comparing yourself to others, it's easy to feel inadequate, which makes it hard to even take the very first step in self-care. Instead, try your best to accept the person that you are and where you are in life right now.



**Focus on the basics.** Sometimes being an adult is not easy and it can feel impossible to get even the littlest things done. Taking time for yourself doesn't necessarily mean treating yourself to special things. One of the most important things you can do is focus on steps to ensure you're living a healthy lifestyle. Showering and brushing your teeth every day, eating nutrient-rich food, moving your body, and getting good sleep are all building blocks of good self-care.



**Find what makes you happy.** If you're caught up in taking care of all of your responsibilities — rather than taking care of yourself — you may not even really know what kind of self-care you need. What works for someone else may not work for you. Take time to think about what things you can do to make yourself feel happy or accomplished and include them in building the self-care routine that makes the most sense for you, your schedule, and your health overall.



**Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness is one of the best ways to make the most out of any amount of time that you do have to care for yourself. Take a few slow, deep breaths, focus on each of your senses, and try to be fully present in whatever you're doing. Not only does mindfulness reduce stress, it also has the power to help you slow down and really take care of yourself — even in the midst of all of life's challenges and responsibilities.



**Make small goals.** Unfortunately, taking time for yourself doesn't just happen overnight, so try to be patient. Instead of putting pressure on yourself to immediately have the perfect self-care routine established, set small goals that you want to accomplish for yourself. Focus on small, daily tasks like wanting to take a 15-minute walk outside each day, or journaling for 10 minutes every night — rather than a complete overhaul of your life, all at once.



**Set some boundaries.** Sometimes, the only way to really be able to make time for self-care is to lessen the amount of time or energy that you are giving away to other people. Having the sometimes tough conversations with people that set boundaries around your time, your emotions, your things, your other relationships, your health, and your opinions can give you an opportunity to devote more time and effort to yourself and your own mental health.



**Remember that you are not alone.** Everyone struggles to take time for themselves, so try not to get down on yourself for not having everything perfectly balanced all of the time. As circumstances change, you'll probably have to rethink your routines and how you use your time many times throughout your life. There will always be people that understand where

## FAST FACTS



On average, people only spend 15 minutes a day on health-related self-care.<sup>1</sup>



Self-care is proven to reduce stress and anxiety levels while increasing self-compassion.<sup>2</sup>



Of people who took a depression screen at [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) in 2020, 73% felt tired or

Taking a mental health screen is one way to work on your mental health. Visit [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) to check your symptoms.



It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and resources to help

you're coming from and are willing to help. Ask your friends and family for help when you need to take some time for your mental health. They may even be able to offer you some guidance on how they manage self-care and take time for their own well-being.

## Sources

- 1Yaribeygi, H., Panahi, Y., Sahraei, H., Johnston, T. P., & Sahebkar, A. (2017). The impact of stress on body function: A review. *EXCLI journal*, 16, 1057–1072. <https://doi.org/10.17179/excli2017-480>
- 2Shapiro, S., Brown, K., & Biegel, G. (2007). Teaching Self-Care to Caregivers: Effects of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on the Mental Health of Therapists in Training. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 1(2), 105–115. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1931-3918.1.2.105>
- 3Proprietary data. MHAScreening.org. 2020.



# PRIORITIZING SELF-CARE

When we have a lot on our plates or we are facing mental health challenges, it can feel easy to push our own needs to the side. However, making time for ourselves is essential to our overall well-being. Use this worksheet to help you better understand what is holding you back from taking time for yourself and your needs.

**What are some things that would make you feel better, but you cannot seem to do?**

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Write out some thoughts and expectations that are preventing you from doing the self-care that you need. Don't worry about whether these thoughts or expectations are true. Instead, write down anything that comes to mind.

## Thoughts

Examples: I don't have time; my needs don't matter

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Expectations

Examples: I should be better at \_\_; I would do \_\_ if it helped me

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pick one thought or expectation from either list above and re-write it here.

### Thought or expectation

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Focusing in on this specific thought or expectation, answer the following questions.

**Where does this thought, or expectation come from? Who sets it?**

**How does it get in the way of taking care of yourself?**

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Now that you have answered the questions above, rewrite this thought so that it supports you and your self-care needs.

### NEW Thought or expectation

Examples: If I do \_\_ I may feel better; It is ok to take time for myself

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our negative thoughts and expectations prevent us from taking care of ourselves regularly. On a separate sheet of paper, follow these same steps with the other thoughts and expectations you listed in the first set of boxes.





