TAKING CARE OF *you*

To do a good job helping others, you need to take care of yourself. Learning positive self-talk and how to be caring and kind to yourself helps you feel good.

Anger, sadness and fear can make us feel anxious when we think about the future. We can also make ourselves feel bad when we allow our inner voice to tell us mean, untrue things. (Example: I can't do this, I'll never be good enough, no one cares.)

Being aware of where you are and what you are feeling right now is a good way to avoid getting lost in negative feelings. Try using these Mindful Awareness exercises to tune in to the present moment through sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.

Squeeze and release

This exercise is a great way to slow yourself down so you can relax and think clearly. Some people even like to do this exercise before they go to sleep at night.

1. Think of your feet and squeeze the muscles in them. Hold the squeeze for a few seconds.
2. Stop squeezing those muscles and let them relax.
3. Move up from your feet to your shin muscles. Tighten, then relax them.
4. Move up to your thigh muscles. Tighten, then relax them.
5. Continue squeezing and releasing your muscles all the way to the top of your head.

Deep breathing

Deep breathing is a great way to get your mind and body to relax.

1. Breathe in through your nose while counting to three in your head.
2. Hold your breath for a second or two.
3. Breathe out through your mouth to the to the count of three.
4. Repeat this three times.

As you inhale through your nose, pretend that you are breathing in positive energy and emotions. As you exhale through your mouth, imagine you are breathing out anything negative. Picture those bad feelings leaving your body.

Think happy thoughts

Your brain can be trained to feel good. Just think about places, people and memories that make you feel safe and happy. When you need a boost, close your eyes and picture your "happy place." Write down a place, person and event that makes you feel happy.

Place: _____

Person: _____

Event: _____

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