

A Mental Health Checklist for College Students

Here's how to start off the school year strong, by taking steps to support your resilience and well-being.



Build realistic self-care habits that you can stick to.

Here are some attainable goals:

- Get enough sleep a few nights a week to help balance out those late nights and all-nighters.
- When you're in the dining hall, grab some fresh fruit for later.
- Make time to walk around campus to get to classes and the dining hall, rather than driving or taking a shuttle. That builds in both exercise and time outdoors, which also benefits mental health.



Be proactive about finding ways to get connected on campus.

Here are some approaches:

- Consider joining affinity groups, theater or musical groups, dance troupes, or other clubs focused on special interests you share.
- Set up study sessions with classmates before an exam.
- For students of color, classes that explore race and ethnicity can provide a forum in which to discuss the mental health effects of structural racism in a safe context.
- Don't forget about the resources you have outside of school as well—consider setting up a weekly check-in with a close friend at home or at another college.



Set aside a little time to do things you love that aren't school related.

Take a few minutes, a few times a week, to do something that boosts your mood, such as:

- Writing in a journal
- Sketching or making a collage
- Playing an instrument
- Reading something that isn't for a class
- Watching a video that makes you laugh



Find out what services are available at the college counseling center.

Here are some questions to ask:

- How many times and how often can you attend a session?
- Is help available via call or text outside of regular business hours?
- Are there disability support services available for college students with mental health issues?
- What happens if a student needs to take a leave of absence due to mental health issues?



Use technology to support your mental health.

- Try a mindfulness app with guided meditations
- Use online tools to stay organized
- Reduce time spent on social media
- Create group text threads to stay connected to friends on and off campus
- Set a timer when you're studying to remind you to take a stretch break



Practice self-compassion.

Try this exercise:

- When you hear your inner self-critic starting up, pause and take a deep breath.
- Notice what's underneath the self-judgment—why are giving yourself a hard time?
- See if you can think of a kinder, more caring way to speak to yourself.
- Try using language that a loving friend, parent, teacher, or mentor might use when speaking to you—or imagine how you would talk to a friend who needs support.
- Do this every time you're hard on yourself. Over time, it will become natural to offer yourself compassion rather than criticism.

For more resources for young adults, visit prairie-care.com or reach out to us at **952-826-8475**.



PrairieCare
A Division of Newport Healthcare



About PrairieCare

At PrairieCare we believe that mental illness is real, common, and treatable. Our programs and services span the full continuum of care, knowing that each patient has their own unique experiences, stages in life, and set of needs. Whether a patient needs perinatal psychiatric care or managing anxiety in school, our clinicians are accredited and trained to help. We support patients during their time with us and create sustainable outcomes for them to reach their goals.