

How to cope with anxiety in college

Whether you're a student, a parent, or an administrator, our tips on coping with anxiety in college may help. Even if you haven't yet started college, it can be useful to think ahead. The message that [anxiety is common and treatable](#) can reduce stigma for those who are struggling, and increase the likelihood that they will reach out for help

For students:

- **Approach don't avoid.** College is challenging and many students cope by avoiding stressors (skipping class, staying in bed all day). However, we know that avoidance tends to make anxiety worse over time. Instead, practice taking small steps to approach anxiety-provoking situations. If you're struggling in a class, try emailing the professor for help. If you're feeling lonely, try introducing yourself to someone in the dining hall. Not at college yet? Practice this skill by participating in pre-college programs on campus.
- **Practice self-care.** Many students struggle to maintain healthy eating habits, consistent exercise, and regular sleep without the structure of home. But self-care behaviors like these are extremely important for regulating mood and helping people [cope with stress](#). Try to establish your own self-care routine — preferably before you even start college. Good sleep hygiene is key. Set a consistent bedtime and wake-up time each day. Avoid using your bed for activities other than sleep, like studying. Limit caffeine in the evening and limit alcohol altogether, as it interferes with restful sleep.
- **Find resources on campus.** We offer resources to help students navigate the initial transition to campus and cope with stress. Investigate campus resources for academic advising, study support, peer counseling, and student mental health. If you've been diagnosed with a mental health issue, such as an anxiety disorder, you may also want to find a mental health provider near campus. If you struggle with anxiety and you'll be starting college next year, you may find it helps to establish a relationship with a therapist beforehand. (check out HCC Mental Health Community Resources)

For parents: You can help your child navigate the transition to college by supporting them in trying the tips described above. For example, you might ask your child about their worries for college and help them brainstorm an approach plan. You can also assist in researching campus resources and finding local mental health providers.