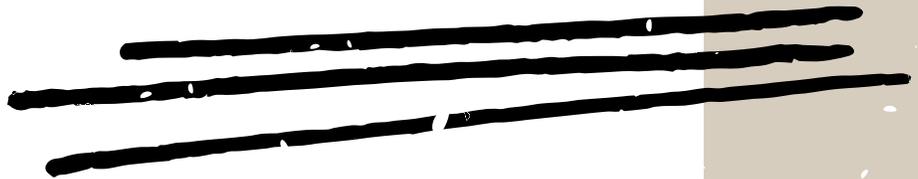




BEST THERAPIES

holiday
mental health
resource guide





de-stress strategies

try some journal prompts (we like these!)

set aside time each day for a relaxing hobby
(some we love: painting, reading, gaming,
puzzles, cross-stitching, & more!)

take a stroll or a drive and listen to music,
audiobooks, or podcasts!

drink a nice hot beverage (peppermint
mocha, herbal tea, or black coffee anyone?)

get some rest! take a warm & cozy nap.

use some awesome mindfulness apps such
as Headspace, Calm, and Insight Timer!

use some grounding techniques (check out
the next pages for some of our favorites!)

grounding techniques

USING YOUR SENSES

5-4-3-2-1

Identify 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

Colors

Look around the room and find an item for each color of the rainbow or pick one color and identify everything in the room that is that color!

Familiar Scents

Smells, especially familiar ones, are powerful sensations. These can help you come back to the present moment. Pick a candle, a lotion, a cologne, an essential oil, or a hot beverage to smell when you need to ground yourself.

Mindfulness Chair

Pick a cozy chair in a quiet space in your home. Sit in it and think about how it feels as you sit. How does the material feel on your skin? How does your body fit into it? Lean back in the chair and imagine all of the negative emotions spilling out of your feet and onto the floor and relax every muscle on the way down.

Grounding Object

Carry a small object (a small rock, ring, piece of cloth, etc) in your pocket or purse that you can touch whenever you feel unpleasant emotions rising.

grounding techniques

USING YOUR BODY

Tense & Release

Focus all the negative and nervous energy to your hands. Clench them into fists, squeeze, and let go. Do this 10 times and think about how your body feels as you release the tension. Feel the blood flow back into your fingers.

Take a Walk

Concentrate on your steps – you can even count them. Notice the rhythm of your footsteps and how it feels to put your foot on the ground and then lift it again.

Body Stretching

As you stretch, focus on the areas of the body that are holding your emotions and tension. Pay close attention to your back, shoulders, and neck– these are places where we hold tension. Think about how your body feels and try implementing breathing exercises.

Mindful Shower

Take your time in the shower or bath. Feel the water; notice the temperature, pressure, and sound. How does it feel? Wash your body and/or hair slowly, noticing all the different sensations,

Leave Painful Feelings

Picture yourself gathering the emotions, balling them up, and putting them into a box. Picture yourself walking, swimming, biking, or jogging away from painful feelings. Imagine your thoughts as a song or TV show you dislike–change the channel or turn down the volume – they're still there, but you don't have to listen to them.

grounding techniques

USING YOUR BREATH

4-7-8 Breathing

Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 7 seconds, and exhale slowly for 8 seconds.

Belly Breathing

Place one hand on your stomach, and the other on your chest. Breathe slowly and deeply into your belly, letting it expand like a balloon while keeping your chest still. Slowly breathe out, feeling the hand on your stomach lower like the balloon is deflating.

Mindful Breathing

Choose a "calming focus" (such as a sound, positive word, or phrase) to repeat silently as you inhale or exhale. Let go and relax. When you notice your mind has drifted, take a deep breath and gently return your attention to the present.

Box Breathing

Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, repeat.

Draw Your Breath

Grab a pencil and some paper. Close your eyes and pay attention to your breath. Allow your breath to dictate where you move your pencil. Use different line styles to represent your breath. Open your eyes and look. Now close your eyes again, take some deep breaths, and continue deep breathing while you draw. Notice any differences.



IL food insecurity resources

Chicago Food Pantries, Soup Kitchens & Food Banks

Northwest Food Partners Network

Greater Chicago Food Bank

Illinois Department of Human Services: Apply for Food Assistance

ICNA Relief: Illinois

Lakeview Pantry: Food Access and Pickup

The Love Fridge Chicago

Community Kitchen Chicago

(list of resources, including map of mutual aid groups in Chicagoland)

queer + home + holidays = ??????

The fact that there is
"no place like home for the
holidays" can be a wonderful thing...
and/or it can be a painful thing.

If it's more of the latter for you, here are
some tips and reminders:

**Know what boundaries you need
in order to feel safe.**

**Have an "exit plan" or excuse ready so you can
leave when you need.**

**Give yourself permission to leave at any time, or
do what you need to do to feel okay.**

**If able, create a space in the home where you can
decompress. If you are at someone else's home,
identify a spot where you can take a break.**

Leave conversations that are harmful to you.

**Plan ahead how you will address and cope with
others' homophobic and/or transphobic
comments.**

crisis support

The Trevor Project for LGBTQ+ Youth

Text "START" to 678-678, call 1-866-488-7386, or chat online!

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: call 1-800-273-TALK or chat

Crisis Text Line: text "START" to 741-741 (or Facebook or WhatsApp)

Trans Lifeline: call 877-565-8860 (4pm CST - 12am CST)

The National Alliance for Eating Disorders

free, weekly, therapist-led virtual support groups for folx with eating disorders, including an LGBTQ+ specific group!

in Illinois:

Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS)
deescalation, emergency housing for youth up to 17

Thresholds: The Living Room (Peer-Run Crisis Respite)
Open Mon-Fri from 2-9pm; Call 773-537-3601

NAMI Chicago Helpline: call 833-626-4244 to be connected to local resources; see some online

Not in Illinois? Try the national NAMI Helpline: 1-800-950-6264, M-F, 9-9 CST

happy holidays

from all of us at



find us at:

www.besttherapies.org

IG @besttherapies