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# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

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facing your future with a healthy mindset

TIPS AND TRICKS  
FOR A SMOOTH  
TRANSITION AFTER  
HIGH SCHOOL

# INTRODUCTION

## Author's Note

They say that your time after high school is the best time of your life. I'm not sure if they're right yet, but I do know that for the first time in your life, you get to call all the shots. Maybe this is everything you've been waiting for, or maybe the thought of all that responsibility is terrifying. Whatever you're feeling, I promise it's natural. You'll work hard, you'll fail, you'll have fun, and you'll thrive. But you don't have to do it alone. Our Minds Matter is here to support you with challenges you face along the way. Hopefully, this guidebook will leave you with some strategies and a sense of reassurance for your upcoming transition!

## Our Goal

Provide guidance and strategies for creating & maintaining a healthy mindset during your transition out of high school

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## Relationships

The end of high school marks a huge change in our relationships with others, with new relationships blooming and old ones adapting. This is a scary thought, and it's ok to be nervous about this. But it doesn't have to be a bad thing! Here are some things to keep in mind:

You will grow and change; so will your personality.

It's ok if your friendships from high school change, and it's ok to grow apart.

Remember that this is a big transition for your parents as well. Be patient and set new boundaries.

Other people your age are probably feeling the exact same way! It takes time to make new friends, but you will.

Make your own decisions about what you want your dating and romantic relationships to look like; don't worry about expectations.

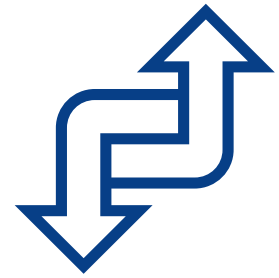
Meet people through your interests such as clubs, exercise classes, hobbies, and even work or class.

You might not feel happy right away, and that's ok.

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## Shifting Priorities



Once you enter this next chapter, your priorities are bound to shift. In high school, most people have guardians, teachers, and other adults that tell you what most of your priorities should be. That might still be the case for some people, but now it's really up to you to set those priorities.

If your next step is college, you are in charge of your own schedule. Pick your class times wisely and even if you don't get your first choice, find a way to make it fun!

Got stuck with an unwanted 8 am? Treat yourself to your fav kind of coffee or breakfast!

If you're heading to work or joining the military, you might not have as much control over your schedule. Carve out time for yourself at least once a day, even if it's only a few minutes.

Check out our mindfulness tips below for ideas!

No matter your path, your priorities are about to change. School, work, and responsibility will be important, but don't forget to prioritize your needs AND wants.

Life is about so much more than your to-do list.

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## Making Choices

Now that you're officially an adult, you have a lot more choices to make. While some choices may feel make or break, remember that we all make mistakes and we all learn. No mistake is the end of the world, but it is good to try to think ahead so you can feel more prepared for upcoming decisions.

What matters to you? When faced with a tough choice, ask yourself if it aligns with those values.

Make your choices for YOU, not what your friends, parents, and others want you to do.

Now that you're getting older, it might be more common for the people around you to drink or use other substances. We're not here to tell you what choice to make, but we do want you to be safe.

You can always ask for help before AND after making decisions.

Check out the [Safer Partying Checklist](#)

It's ok to change your mind.

# MANAGING MINDFULNESS

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## Why Mindfulness?

Big transitions usually come with a fair amount of stress. You have just been handed a ton of freedom and a ton of responsibility, and it can be hard to figure out what to do with it all. Practicing mindfulness is an easy way to help manage and reduce stress. Try out some of these strategies:

### Connect With Nature

Instead of worrying, as you walk around focus on nature and the beauty around you; this will help you enjoy the moment and destress.

### Deep Breathing

Inhale for 3 count.

Exhale for 5.

Practice deep breathing when you are stressed or anxious to engage your parasympathetic nervous system.

### Three Good Things

If you find yourself focusing on the negatives, writing down three positive parts of your day can help remind you that not everything is all bad.

### Prioritize Tasks

Prioritizing your tasks and working on them one at a time will increase efficiency and decrease stress.

### Visualize

Visualizing your goals and what matters to you, whether in your head or on a physical vision board.

# MENTAL HEALTH ALWAYS MATTERS

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## Finding Support

No matter how well we take care of ourselves, prioritize our self-care, and practice mindfulness, we all need support sometimes. When you leave high school, your mental health support changes, especially if you move and cannot see the same therapist or be around the same support people. Check out these tips for finding mental health support after high school.

### Military

Call  
Military OneSource  
at 1-800-342-9647  
for mental health  
support

### Gap Year

If you're taking some  
time off and plan to  
travel internationally,  
research that country's  
mental health services.  
When in doubt and need  
immediate help text  
MIND to 741741

### Working World

Don't be afraid to ask  
about insurance  
benefits for mental  
health! Check out  
Psychology Today.

### College

- Your school should have counseling services for students to access, usually for free. Not sure? Ask your RA or a professor!
- Psychology Today has a feature where you can find a therapist who will offer income-based prices

# OMM ALUMNI ADVICE

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"Don't compare yourself to anyone for any reason.

Everyone will come from different backgrounds, have different skill sets, be better at certain things. Just do the best that you can do. Comparing yourself is wasted energy and will destroy your confidence."

"Your friends will become your family. Spend your time with people who have your best interest in mind and that lift you up."

"Imposter syndrome is real and totally normal. If you find yourself questioning your qualifications remember that you got in for a reason and you wouldn't be there if someone didn't believe in you."

"Your style is probably gonna change... That doesn't mean you have to spend a fortune on a new wardrobe though. Try swapping pieces with your friends or wearing old things in new ways."



# OMM ALUMNI ADVICE

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"The people you meet the first week of freshman year might be your best friends, but they might not be."

"Make the life you want. If you have a friend that isn't good for you, drop them. Take the courses you want. Sign up for interesting clubs. This is one of the rare chances in life that you have a completely fresh start."

"Go to class!! It might be tempting to skip those 8ams but even just listening to the lecture will help when it's time to study. Plus, just think of all that tuition money."

"There are so many resources you can reach out to for help. You'd be surprised how eager professors are to help you when you email a simple question. TAs are happy to help you with homework. Writing workshops can help you with hard papers. Mental health professionals are available if you need them. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask for help!"

# OTHER RESOURCES

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## for crisis

Text "MIND" to 741741

Hopeline

Call 1-800-Suicida for Spanish speakers

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 1-800-273-TALK(8255)

The Trevor Project - LGBTQ Crisis

Hotline

Call 1-866-488-738

## for finding help

Teen Online: Teens helping teens in online chats

Find a Therapist: Search Psychology Today to find a professional to see in your area

Inclusive Therapist: Therapy for & from BIPOC

Start Your Recovery: Drug & Alcohol Recovery

NEDA Helplines: Connect with eating disorder specialists

## for everything else

Our Minds Matter Resources

Jed Foundation's Transition for

Students Guide

Healthy Relationships with

One Love

Queering Sex Ed

Planned Parenthood

Healthcare

Safer Partying Checklist

Ted Talk: How to Find Your

Path after High School

## for supplies

Find affordable professional clothes

Ways to get your textbooks at a lower price

Free mental health apps