

**2023  
HOUSINGIOWA  
CONFERENCE**

**Anxiety Reduction and  
Self-Care for Leaders**

# ANXIETY REDUCTION AND SELF-CARE

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**PROJECT RECOVERY IOWA**

# ANXIETY

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- Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood pressure.
- Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness.

# ANXIETY

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- Can be a normal reaction to stress. For example, you might feel anxious when faced with a difficult problem at work, before taking a test, or before making an important decision.

# COMMON ANXIETY SIGNS

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- Feeling nervous, restless or tense.
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom.
- Having an increased heart rate.
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
- Sweating.
- Trembling.
- Feeling weak or tired.
- Trouble concentrating or thinking about anything other than the present worry.

# ANXIETY

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- Anxiety is something we all encounter as a normal part of life. Anxiety can actually be a motivator... helping us accomplish a task at hand that needs to be done.
- But, many times we experience the negative side of anxiety.

# WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH A PERPLEXING 3 YEARS

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## You may have experienced:

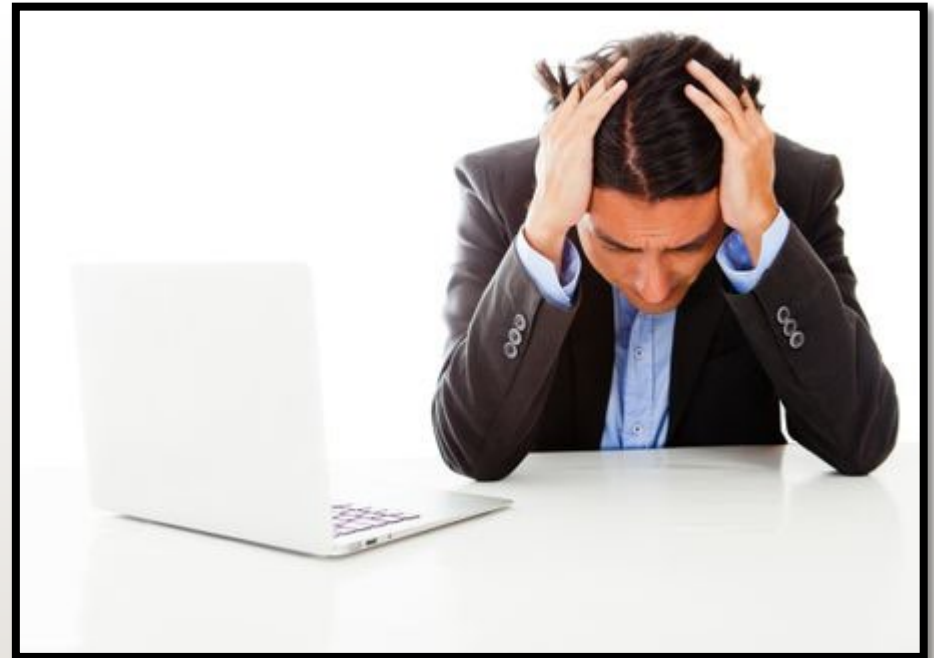
- Lack of motivation, decreased energy or inability to focus.
- Sleep disturbance such as insomnia, nightmares, or not sleeping through the night.
- Increased use or abuse of alcohol, prescriptions and over the counter drugs.
- Cannot shake distressing images from your mind – due to the sounds of strong winds, the invisible fear of the COVID VIRUS or over exposure to the media.
- Feeling less confident or inadequate due to loneliness, isolation or changes in your support system.
- Suffered from headaches, memory loss, have had difficulty making decisions, or experienced fogging.
- Profound sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event.



# STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

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- Initially, stress reactions are helpful.
- As stress reactions increase, there is a greater chance they will become maladaptive and disruptive.





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## WHICH WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS HAVE YOU SEEN?

Your partner threatens to throw your cell phone out the window after you answer a work call or email for the tenth time during your lunch or dinner.

You have so much on your mind, you forget to go to the bathroom unless it's on your schedule.

Your best friends think you have moved away because they have not heard from you in so long.

You fall asleep during trips to the dentist's office because it's the only time you put your feet up.

## WARNING SIGNS

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Chronic exhaustion

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Cynicism

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Avoidance

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Anger

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Diminished self-care

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Poor boundaries

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Loss of productivity

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Survival coping

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Isolation

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## HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU:

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Had little interest or pleasure in doing things?

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Felt down, depressed or hopeless about a situation?

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Felt nervous, anxious or on edge?

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Not able to stop or control worrying?

- **NOT AT ALL?**
- **SEVERAL DAYS?**
- **MORE THAN HALF THE DAYS?**
- **NEARLY EVERY DAY?**

**REFLECTION:**

**What areas  
have you  
suffered, due  
to life  
situations?**

**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
Good health by occupying  
pleasant, stimulating environments  
that support well-being

**INTELLECTUAL**  
Recognizing creative abilities  
and finding ways to expand  
knowledge and skills

**PHYSICAL**  
Recognizing the need  
for physical activity, diet,  
sleep and nutrition



**FINANCIAL**  
Satisfaction with current  
and future financial  
situations

**SOCIAL**  
Developing a sense of  
connection, belonging,  
and a well-developed  
support system

**SPIRITUAL**  
Expanding our sense of  
purpose and meaning in life

# IT IS NORMAL

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It's important to recognize that it's normal in a situation of great uncertainty and chronic stress to get exhausted and to feel ups and downs, to feel like you're depleted or experience periods of burnout.

*~ Anne Masten, PhD*

# SELF-CARE

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**Self-care is the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's well-being and happiness, during periods of stress.**



# HOW TO STOP CATASTROPHIZING

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- We can easily jump to the worst-case scenario.
- Fearful thoughts often come in the form of “What if this \_\_\_\_\_ happens?” Breathe in through your nose and out your mouth. This will help relax the tension you’re carrying.
- Move around. Fear has a way of closing in around us and making us freeze. Break out of your paralysis by getting up and moving. Stand up and stretch. Shake your hands and feet. Let the body cue your mind to move.
- When we fear the worst, we resist the possibility of what we’re afraid of could happen. Once we accept that possibility of what could happen, we can begin to solve the problem.



# HOW TO STOP CATASTROPHIZING AND SEE YOURSELF COPING

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- We are most afraid that we will not be able to deal with an extreme situation, but we are built to solve problems and do hard things. You're alive because your ancestors were really good at living through challenges. Consider what challenges you've already made it through.

**Many of the things we worry about never happen. (*False Evidence Appearing Real!*)**





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# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF AND THINGS TO DO.

What helps me feel most at peace?

What brings me joy?

What brings me a sense of purpose?

Where do I find meaning and value in my life?

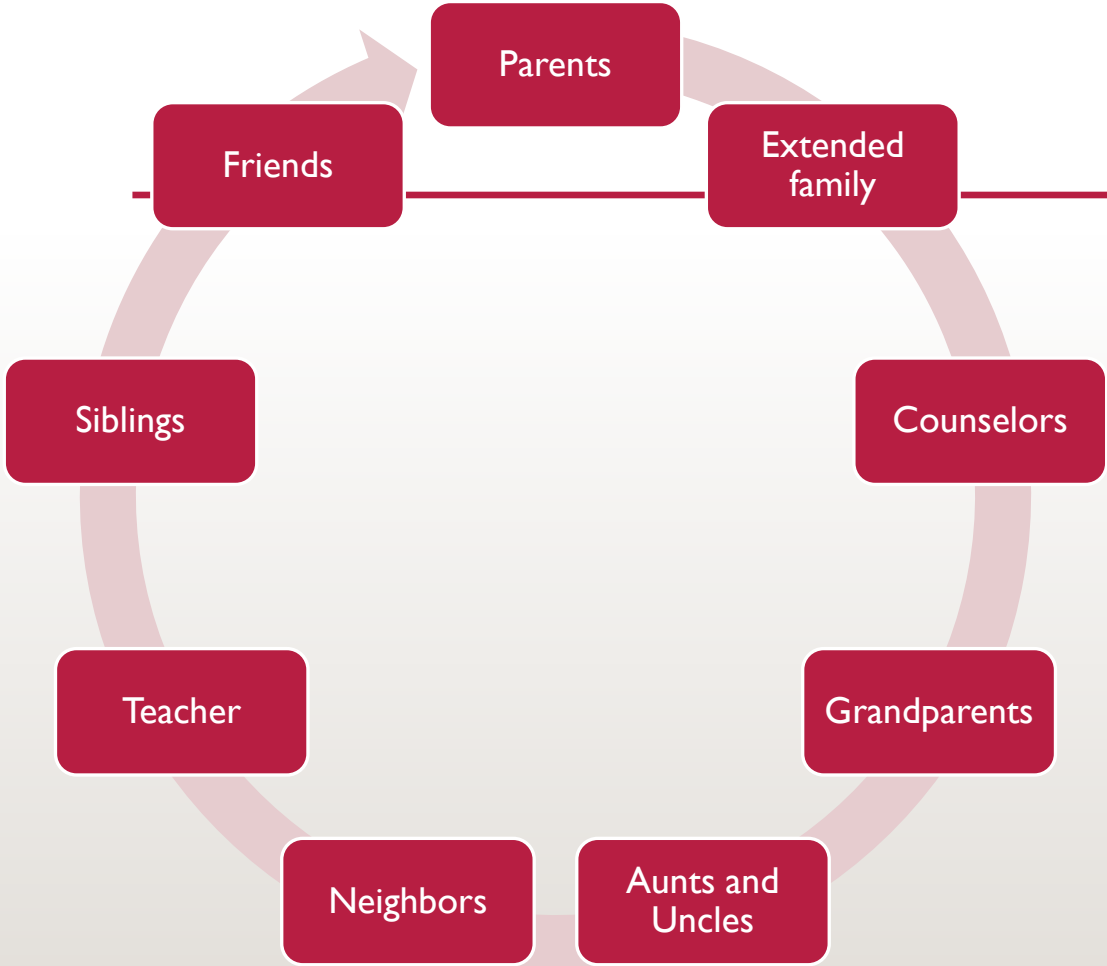
Make a List

Journal

Create Art

Anything you like!!!

- Helpful apps: Habitica (iOS & Google Play), Aloe Bud (iOS), Habit Tracker (Google Play)



**WHO ARE THE HUMANS  
WHO MAKE YOU FEEL  
BETTER?**



# USING YOUR SENSES

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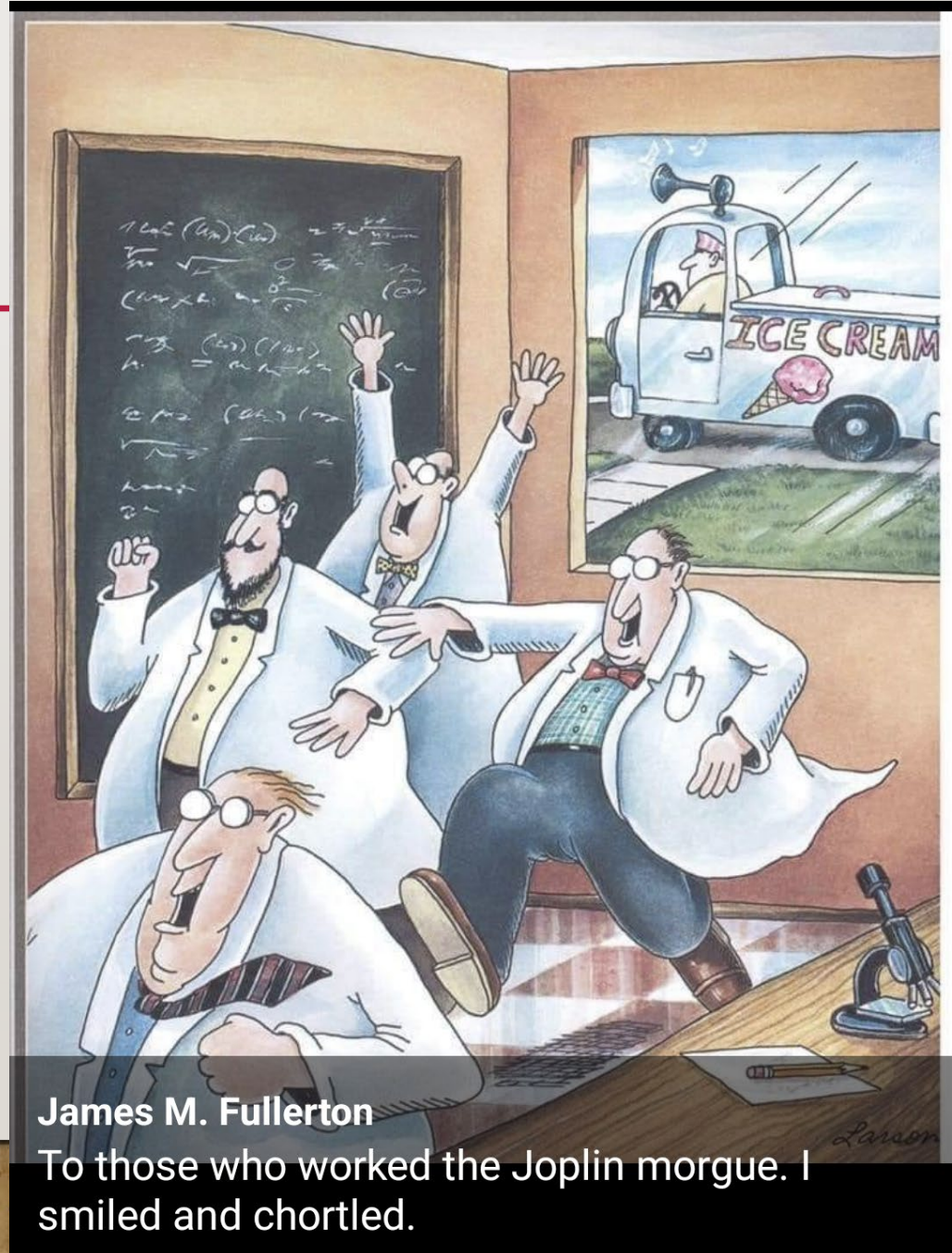
- **SMELL** - What are the smells that make you happy and relaxed?
- **SIGHT** - What images make you smile?
- **TOUCH** - What items bring you comfort?



# WHAT IMAGES MAKE YOU SMILE?



# WHAT IMAGES MAKE YOU SMILE?




**James M. Fullerton**

To those who worked the Joplin morgue. I  
smiled and chortled.

# WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

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**Mindfulness** is the ability for us to be **completely present**, meaning totally aware of where we are, what we are doing, and how we are feeling.



If you've ever gone through part of your day on "auto-pilot" behaving out of habit, not paying attention to what is going on around you, dismissing or ignoring feelings - there is a lack of mindfulness.

Studies show that students who meditate before an exam perform better than students who don't.

Mindfulness has been proven to reduce the symptoms of anxiety, stress and depression.

**WHY MINDFULNESS?**

# MINDFULNESS STRATEGIES

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# WHAT IS RESILIENCE

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**RESTORATION:** The ability to restore form, function and balance to recover, even learn and grow



**ADAPTATION:** Restoring a sense of control; defusing conflict; creative use of relationships; turning crisis into opportunity.



**EQUILIBRIUM:** Maintaining dynamic balance



**MOVEMENT FORWARD:** Avoid getting stuck



**A POINT ON A CONTINUUM:** Resistance, Resilience, Recovery

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**PERSONAL  
RESILIENCE  
SCORECARD  
RATE EACH TRAIT  
1=LOW TO  
10=HIGH**

**I am physically healthy**

**I know how to let go of stress**

**I adapt to change quickly**

**I am active, not passive**

**I am confident and under control**

**I love to tackle new problems**

**I have strong social support**

**I find meaning in adversity**

**I have always been optimistic**

**I am financially comfortable**

**0-100 TOTAL SCORE**

# BE AWARE OF NEGATIVE ENERGY

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- You probably know what negative energy feels like. It can come from negative people, from your surroundings, or from your own psyche. It leaves you feeling exhausted both mentally and physically.
- Signs of Negative Energy: Your critical, you complain a lot, your health is suffering, and you cannot sleep.
- How to deal with negative energy: You will be happier with positive people which may mean re-thinking your support system! Declutter your home, workplace and car, get regular exercise, eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of water, be aware of negative self-talk, and spend time in nature.
- You might find value in meditation, prayer or mindfulness.



## SIMPLE WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

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- **Take A Walk** – Go outside and take a walk. Bundle up if it's cold and head out with intention of noticing the beauty of the seasons. Don't worry about burning calories or tracking steps, just enjoy yourself.
- **One in, one out** – Stay clutter-free, or at the very least, avoid adding to your clutter by sticking with a one in, one out rule. Apply this rule to gifts, clothing, events and decorations



# SIMPLE WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

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- **Don't Say Yes When Your Heart Says No** – We've all said yes, when we wanted to say no. Whether we say it out of guilt, for fear of missing out, or out of habit, it's important to note that saying yes, when your heart says no is a disservice not only to you, but to everyone you say yes to. If your heart says no, it will fight the yes all the way through. You won't give your best, and you may end up resenting the commitment or the person who asked you to commit.
- **Quiet Time** – Everyday make a little time for yourself. Find a quiet place to relax, sit in a comfortable chair or lay-down, be sure the lights are low, put your feet flat on the ground or put them up, close your eyes and meditate and relax for 20 minutes.



# SIMPLE WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

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- **Laugh** - Call or spend time with the person that makes you laugh harder than anyone else. Then laugh until you cry.
- **Write** – Emotion can run high during the holidays, but much of what goes through our heads never needs to be said out loud. Instead, write it down how you are feeling, and what makes you happy, sad, angry, or frustrated. Putting it on paper gives you a chance to clear your mind and move through your day with less bottled-up stress.
- **Be Grateful** – Directing more of our attention toward gratitude for things that make our lives wonderful is scientifically proven to make us healthier, more energetic, less stressed and anxious, and help us get better sleep.
- **Give** – There are so many opportunities to give and so many people and organizations in need. Pick something close to your heart and give the way you want to give.



# SIMPLE WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

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- ★ Declutter
- ★ Walk away
- ★ Stop drinking for 30 days
- ★ Turn off the phone
- ★ Power down
- ★ Throw away your scale
- ★ Give up being right
- ★ Just do it your way!

- How To Say “NO”

- ★ Know what matters to you
- ★ Keep it short, do not overexplain
- ★ Be graceful and grateful while saying no
- ★ Overcommitting can make you too scattered
- ★ Believe in yourself and do what is best for your life and say no to guilt

# TOP TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER YOU

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- Optimize Your Vitamin D
- Up Your Intake of Key Immune-Boosting Nutrients
- Boost Your Liver Health
- Eliminate ALL Seed (Vegetable) Oils
- Boost Your Magnesium Intake
- Filter Your Water
- Optimize Your Sleep
- Limit the Media and Social Media
- Intermittent Fasting
- Combat Chronic Inflammation
- Detox



# HOW DO WE BUILD RESILIENCE?

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BUILD  
CONNECTIONS



FOSTER  
WELLNESS



FIND PURPOSE



EMBRACE  
GRATITUDE



ASK FOR HELP



**REFLECTION:  
WHAT DO WE DO NOW?**

**Iowa has experienced 47 presidentially  
declared disasters from 1990 to 2022**

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- **Iowa's leading hazards are those associated with severe weather**, including heavy rains and flooding, tornadoes, high winds, ice storms, blizzards and heavy snow.
- **Iowa has also been affected by hazardous material and chemical spills** both at fixed facilities and those associated with transportation accidents.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic 2020 to Present**

**BUILDING  
RESILIENCE OVER  
100 YEARS –  
WITH A LOOK AT  
THE LAST 22 YEARS!**




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## WAYS TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

**Know the signs.**

**Learn the actions.**

**Be a lifeline for someone else.**

- Mental health problems are **COMMON**
  - **STIGMA** is associated with mental health problems
  - **PROFESSIONAL HELP** is not always at hand
  - Individuals with mental health problems often do NOT **SEEK HELP**
  - Many people are not well informed and don't know **HOW TO RESPOND**
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# MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

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Learn how to **NOTICE** when someone needs help

Promote **UNDERSTANDING**

Encourage community members to **SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER**

Help more people **GET THE HELP THEY NEED**

Learn how to **INTERVENE**. You might **SAVE A LIFE!**

[www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)

# 9 HOURS NATURE SOUNDS: RIVER IN THE SHIRE

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- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Nwn-TZfFUI&t=43s>

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BREATHING AND ANXIETY

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- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHEEtVNBkJ4&t=1145s>

## Project Recovery Iowa Resources

### Project Recovery Iowa Resources

Website: [projectrecoveryiowa.org](http://projectrecoveryiowa.org)

### Social Media: Project Recovery Iowa

- Facebook
- Instagram:
- Linked in
- Twitter
- You Tube

### Iowa Concern Hotline at 800-447-1985

### Iowa Warm Line at 844-775-WARM

24 x 7 days a year, 24 hours a day

