



Coping in Times of Uncertainty:

A Resource for Immigrant Youth

The world may feel uncertain right now, and if you are an immigrant teen, you may feel extra stress. Yet, remember you have already shown strength and resilience in navigating challenges. Times of uncertainty can impact many parts of our lives: personal safety, finances, access to resources, and both physical and mental well-being. This stress puts added pressure on young people to find new ways to cope and survive. This resource provides practical tips to take care of yourself and support others during difficult times, offering ways to nurture your body, mind, heart, relationships, and spirit.

What might be happening to me? What may be supportive strategies?

While no two young people may have the same experience, below is a list of common reactions and tips that may be helpful in times of stress and uncertainty. Some of these strategies may feel hard or even impossible when you are feeling stuck and scared but trying one thing or spending a few minutes on a strategy could make a big difference in how you feel or could help a friend. If these reactions persist or intensify, talking to a trusted adult or seeking professional help, such as from a counselor or pediatrician, can be helpful.



Body → Focus on **physical** well-being

Common Reactions

- Headaches, stomachaches, muscle tension, exhaustion.
- Trouble falling/staying asleep or oversleeping.
- Changes in appetite or eating habits.
- Feeling 'on edge,' jittery, or can't relax.
- Feeling pressure in your chest and/or difficulty breathing.

Helpful Tips

- Maintain healthy habits: regular sleep, balanced eating, and movement.
- Engage in movement-based activities (e.g., playing sports, taking walks, exercise, stretching).
- Practice self-soothing activities like yoga, deep breathing, or listening to music.
- Avoid using substances (smoking, vaping, drinking) as a way of coping.
- Limit screen time and make sure to take breaks from your devices (phone, video games) and social media.



Heart & Mind → Notice your **feelings** and **thoughts**

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Relationships → Maintain social support and connection

Common Reactions

- Keeping to yourself or wanting to be alone; Ignoring calls or texts or feeling scared to be alone.
- Avoiding school, work, or responsibilities; skipping class
- Increased conflict, picking fights, feeling easily irritated.
- Losing interest in things you used to enjoy.
- Feeling extra responsibility and pressure to support yourself and your family.
- Participating in risky activities to manage new stress.

Helpful Tips

- Stay connected via text, phone, or spending time with family and friends.
- Try to express how you are feeling, including your worries, with trusted adults and friends.
- Engage in activities and people that make you feel good even when it feels hard (e.g., game nights, shared meals).



Spirit → Find opportunities for meaning, joy, and belonging

Common Reactions

- Feeling lost, disconnected from identity or purpose.
- Loss of motivation or feeling like what's the point (about yourself, activities you enjoyed, and/or your future)
- Feeling hopeless or empty
- Struggling to engage with faith, traditions, or spirituality.
- Feeling like having to do things you don't want to do and/or that don't feel like yourself to get by.

Helpful Tips

- Continue celebrating cultural and personal traditions that bring comfort.
- Watch or read about people and stories with similar experiences and/or that give you hope.
- Engage in spiritual practices (prayer, meditation, nature walks).
- Find meaning in community efforts, volunteering, or creative expression.

Resources for additional support for you and your child:

- **988 Mental Health Lifeline**: Call or text 988 for immediate support and crisis intervention (<https://988lifeline.org>)
- **UnitedWeDream**: List of free or low-cost mental health services for undocumented immigrants (<https://unitedwedream.org/our-work/undocuhealth-wellness/>)

This resource was developed by the Boston Children's Hospital Trauma and Community Resilience Center. For more information please visit:
<https://www.childrenshospital.org/programs/trauma-and-community-resilience-center>