

ADVICE FROM RACHEL TO YOU



Rachel is an alum, a millennial, an adult, a writer, a mental health advocate, and a human doing her best to navigate life. She passes along the following pieces of advice. She also extends the invitation — to any students who feel like they have no one to talk to — to DM or email her. **“I never want anyone to feel as alone as I felt, and no matter what they are going through, my virtual door is open.”**

You can also access free healing tools, journals, and workshops on her [website](#); and follow her through her [memoir](#), on [Instagram](#) or [TikTok](#).

RACHEL: I know it seems absolutely terrifying, and my invitation is for you to talk to someone. I’m not suggesting whoever you talk to will have answers or even understand — but to get someone in your corner, someone on your team, and someone to whom you can say, “I’m really struggling right now, and I don’t need you to fix me, I just need someone who knows what’s going on while I figure this out,” can be incredibly powerful.

R: Remember, “All of us are doing the best we can to cope with the uncertainty of life.”

R: In general, I think approaching people with an open-ended offer for support can be helpful. Saying something like, “I’ve noticed you seem a little different lately.”

R: I think focusing on the person and their emotional world and NOT their body is a good approach with eating disorders. Telling someone “you look sick” or “your weight sure has gone up/down a lot” or something body-related is just sending a message to the eating disorder, not the person struggling with it.

R: **I wish a friend had told me they were worried about me** and offered to talk to a teacher or counselor with me — having a buddy can be a great way to stay accountable but also feel less alone and reduce the narrative of being “broken.”

R: Skills, coping tools, therapy, journaling, reading, or anything that is “action-oriented” is absolutely helpful, but without support, it feels meaningless.

R: I have a list of some resources I like here:

<https://www.rachelhavekost.com/hotlines-resources?rq=hotlines>

R: Five mantras that help me on a weekly basis:

- In this moment, I am safe
- I do not need to prove myself to people who love me
- I am loved, I am wanted, I belong
- What is meant for me will find me
- The universe made me on purpose

HEALTHY WAYS TO HELP

How does a student examine what normal levels of stress/anxiety/depression are, and what are unhealthy levels? Rachel says:

If the stress/anxiety/depression makes it hard for you to do your regular daily activities, I would invite you to get support and take a break. For example, if you can’t focus on any of your assignments, if you cancel plans often, can’t sleep or eat, are struggling to pay attention in conversations or stay present in social situations. Or, if you generally feel like the things you normally enjoy are difficult or unenjoyable, it’s a good time to ask for some help and get some rest.

Regardless of diagnosis or established disorders, if an individual is experiencing stress, anxiety, depression or other deviations from normal daily frustrations — this is the right time to put some energy and attention inward.

Here are five ways to help:

1. Education
 - a. Resources from rachelhavekost.com
 - b. Resources from therapistaid.com
2. Reach out to friends and family
3. Skills, coping tools, therapy, journaling, reading, or anything that is “action-oriented” is absolutely helpful (don’t forget to couple it with a support network)
4. Create a support network
5. Talk to school counselors

“I really think the best action, or at least first action, is to talk to someone you trust,” Rachel says. “Whether that’s a friend, teacher, therapist, or family member, knowing that someone else is in your corner or on your team can be a massive pivoting point to receiving the help you deserve.”

SAAS counselors are available to chat with Middle and Upper School students at any time. Their contact information is below.

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