



**Mental Health
Recovery Board**
Clark | Greene | Madison

Pathways for everybody, every family.

When life gets taxing

As you're breathing a sigh of relief after filing your taxes, you might feel more overwhelmed than usual. Like taxes, stress and anxiety can accumulate at the end of the year. If ignored or glossed over, the additional burden continually takes a toll as we go about our daily lives.

It's not an exact analogy but staying on top of our mental wellness requires a little diligence and awareness, like tracking our receipts throughout the year. When we make a habit of checking in and tracking our mental wellness, too, we hopefully won't be left with a bigger problem later down the line.

But how do we do this? When we feel stress and anxiety building up, or are overwhelmed, these small practices can help get through a difficult moment – but note that they are no replacement for everyday and long-term general wellness habits like talking to your doctor, taking a screening, or seeing a therapist on a regular basis.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Method

Take a deep belly breath and shift your awareness to your breathing. Once you're focused there, start to explore your senses one by one.

5 – **Sight**: Look around for five things within your visual range and say them out loud. For example, "I see a pen. I see a picture frame. I see my coffee cup."

4 – **Touch**: Pay attention to your body and identify four things you can feel and say them out loud. For example, "I feel the rug under my feet. I feel the cool desk. I feel a breeze from the window."

3 – **Hearing**: Listen for three sounds and say them out loud. "I hear someone on the phone. I hear the traffic outside. I hear my stomach grumbling."

2 – **Smell**: Name two things you can smell. If possible, move to smell things. If you can't, name two of your favorite smells.

1 – **Taste**: Say one thing you can taste. It might be coffee, your lunch, or the breath mint you had a minute ago. If you can't, name your favorite flavor or thing to taste.

While there's no silver bullet to finding mental health, these tips can help you feel grounded quickly, no matter where you are or what's running through your mind.

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