

# **Navigating Change**



## **Tips to Relieve Tension and Find Balance**

## **Note to Readers**

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This content is designed for teens, the adults who care for them, and the professionals who support them. This information offers the most value as a whole, but individual pages can be used to facilitate discussions, improve understanding of the included healing concepts, or remind those who have completed treatment of opportunities they have to improve their wellbeing.

We hope you find this information empowering as navigate changes in your life.

## **Acknowledgments**

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The California Area Indian Health Service offers thanks for the wisdom and guidance provided by our Tribal and Urban partners and for their unrelenting commitment to the Native youth and families in their communities.

## BLESSINGS

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Let me be thoughtful like the Bear.

Help me learn courage, strength,  
and good medicine.

I look for your blessing on me, on  
my family, on my community.

Let me seek health and reside in  
your comfort and protection.

Provide me with your healing.



# Change is Constant

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**Living the life you aspire to involves balancing the things you need to change with the things you need to accept.**

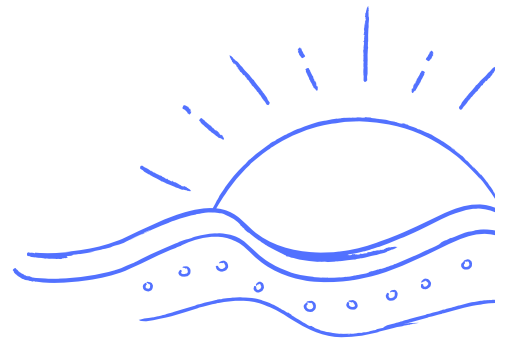


**You never step in the same river twice. The river is always changing, and so are you.**

Life has its ups and downs.

We CAN change our outlook, actions, and mindset.

We CANNOT change other people or how they respond to us.



# Connect to Culture

Learning about your ancestors can help you find inner strength and discover more about how you want to grow as a person.



**Embracing cultural practices can help you develop habits that bring you joy and lead to peace.**

**Here are some ways you might connect to culture:**

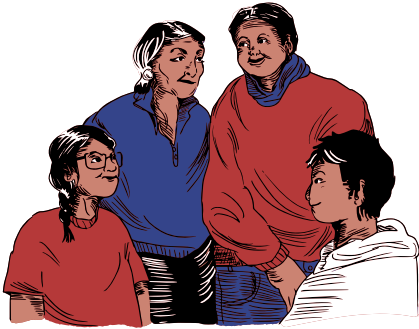
talk to an elder  
go to a pow wow  
walk in nature  
beading  
regalia making  
talking circle  
attend a ceremony  
fishing  
drumming

basket making  
traditional meal  
stick ball  
go to a sweat  
traditional dance or song  
listening to music  
praying  
learn your language  
canoeing



## Two Wolves

An Elder once told a story to a child about the two wolves that lived inside his heart. One wolf was fearful, vengeful, envious, deceitful, and angry. The other was compassionate, loving, generous, truthful, and peaceful. The child asked, "Which wolf will win the fight?" The Elder responds, "The one I feed."



"That doesn't mean we try to deny or hurt the angry wolf. If we did that, we would end up in a battle, all the while making that wolf more powerful through our hostility. Hating that wolf sucks away our strength. Instead, **we calmly pay attention to the angry wolf and let go of believing it has the answers.** If we can do that, the angry wolf will lay down beside us, no longer an enemy."

"We strengthen the kind and loving wolf by giving it nourishment and support, so we can follow it. The peaceful wolf can become a steady companion and show us through all different kinds of life experiences. **Restful or chaotic experiences, enjoyable or disappointing experiences, will come and go. Still, we can have a guide through it all.**"



Mindfulness allows us to see our thoughts and feelings as they are beginning. It is powerful to know what we are feeling as we are feeling it. Know what we are thinking as we are thinking it. With mindfulness, we can choose what we want to strengthen and what we want to gently let go. We don't have to be at the mercy of our old ways of thinking, our old ways of being. We are empowered. It just takes practice.

# Finding Calm

**One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is the space to meet our own needs.**

When seeking growth or healing, it helps to remember the basics: rest, breath, stillness, nourishment, nature, focus, and love.

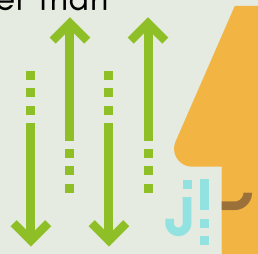
## Slow down.

Set aside a few minutes in a calm place. Find a comfortable position or peaceful activity, like walking.



## Notice.

Pay attention to your breath. Exhale slightly slower than you inhale.



## Repeat.

Find enjoyable ways to incorporate mindfulness into your routine, like mindful eating, walking in nature, or following along with an app.



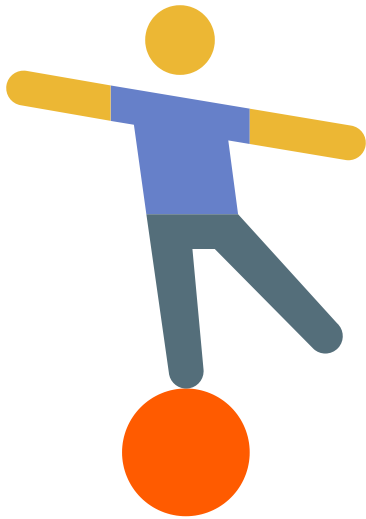
## Gently refocus.

Be kind to your wandering mind. Gently notice thoughts and return your attention back to your breathing.



# Patience & Practice

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Spend time getting to know your authentic self and determine what matters to you most.

Align the way you think and act to live your life on purpose.

Consider spending more time around people and places that support that path you decide. This process takes time and effort—but **you are worth it.**



**How would your days look different if you intentionally planned each part according to your values?**

**What would you do more?    What would you do less?**



**Be generous in your view toward others.** Everyone has hardships that influence them in ways others don't know about. Believing that others are doing their best with what is available to them and under their specific circumstances can make it easier to move forward without blame.

**Invest in yourself.** Decide to make an effort to solve your problems even if you weren't alone in causing them.

**Listen to understand, and be gentle** with your words.

**Be patient**—new habits and mindsets take time to form and practice to master.





# Choose Your Path

Growth begins with a decision to walk a different path. There are usually many ways to get to a destination. **It is up to you** how you want to get there. Test out different strategies to reach your goals. If one technique doesn't work, try a different one. The important thing is to just keep going.



Just like in life, you may discover that some roads you choose only get you part of the way. **Don't get discouraged** if you hit a roadblock. Recognize the value in the journey and find another way.

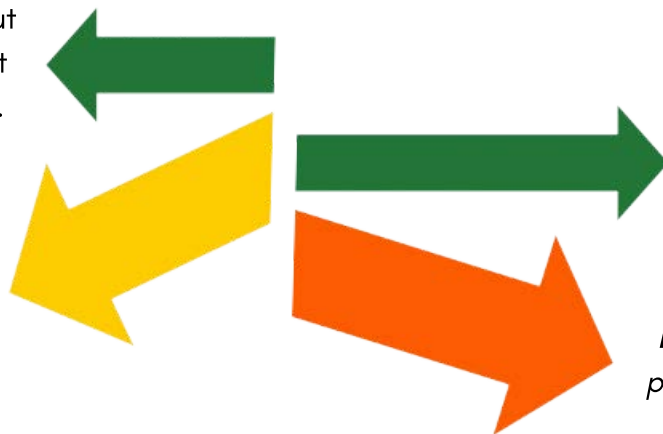
Remember to *rest* when you are tired, *ask for help* when you get lost, and pack plenty of snacks to enjoy along the way.

**Everything is connected. The way we think affects how we feel.  
In turn, our feelings influence our behaviors.**

You always have a choice.

**Change your mindset,**  
or how you think about  
the problem, to adjust  
how you feel about it.

**Learn to tolerate  
the problem**  
because nothing  
lasts forever.



**Do something**  
differently to solve  
the problem.

***Do nothing*** and your  
problem will continue.

## (re)Connect with Others

*You can show you support someone by being a good listener.*

Listening tips to remember:

- give others your full attention
- be aware of your body language and posture
- be patient and empathetic
- acknowledge feelings without judgment
- listen to understand (do not give advice)
- offer reassurance
- ask if they want your opinion before sharing it
- thank them for confiding in you



**Set up your conversations for success by asking, "I'd like to talk to you about how I've been feeling, but I'm not looking for advice. Are you ok with just listening?"**

Improve your interactions and relationships by:



- saying what you need
- asking for what you want
- having boundaries and giving yourself permission to say "no"
- communicating clearly
- maintaining a positive, healthy relationship

# Tolerating Stress and Pain

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**Pain is a part of life.** Learning techniques to tolerate distressing situations can prevent you from feeling overwhelmed by your physical or emotional pain.

**Temporary distractions** can provide *short-term relief* and *reduce the risk of making the situation worse* by responding impulsively.

**Combine these techniques with problem-solving strategies** so you can begin to change your situation, rather than avoid it.



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## Take an activity break

Do an activity that requires you to think or concentrate like a hobby, a school project, reading a book, or writing poetry. You can also try creating art or music.

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## Lend a hand

Shift your attention to helping someone else like visiting an elder or helping a sibling with their homework.

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## Paced breathing

Intentionally slow your breathing so that you inhale for 4 seconds, feeling your lungs and tummy expand. Gently exhale for six seconds. This type of breathing can calm the part of your nervous system that responds to stress.

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## Encouragement/ Reality checking

Remind yourself that everything is temporary, including this feeling.  
Comfort yourself the way you would comfort a friend in a similar situation.

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# UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

Our minds are constantly making sense of the events happening around us. Sometimes the interpretations are accurate—but often our minds take ‘shortcuts’ that aren’t accurate. These biases distort how we feel about ourselves and how we view our lives. Recognizing these thinking styles can help us see things more accurately and feel better.

## AWFULIZING

I was late to class. Now I’ll fail the test and this class. I’ll never graduate.



## SHOULD

I should be further along by now.

I should be able to just stop smoking.

I should just give up so I don’t embarrass myself.



## ALL OR NOTHING THINKING

I already failed one drug test, why bother caring about my probation now?

If I don’t make the team, I’m worthless.



## PERSONALIZATION

I’m the reason my parents split up.

They didn’t respond to my post. They must be sick of me.



## JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Everyone is staring at me. They’re all making fun of me.

My partner didn’t answer my text, so they must be cheating on me.



## PREDICTIVE THINKING

No one will ever hire me. Why should I even apply?

My parents are never going to trust me again.



## FEELINGS AS FACTS

I feel ugly, so it must be true.

This feels hopeless, so there must be no way to solve it.



## OVERGENERALIZATION

I always mess things up.

You never take my side.

They broke up with me. I’ll always be alone.



## LABELING

I made a mistake. I am such an idiot.

I got fired. I’m a failure.



## DISCOUNTING THE POSITIVES

They only invited me because they feel sorry for me.

It’s a fluke that I got into college.

My teacher said I’m smart, but she’s nice to everyone.



## IN CLOSING

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It may feel overwhelming to think about  
the different paths you can choose or  
the opportunities for change that lie ahead.

*Remember:*

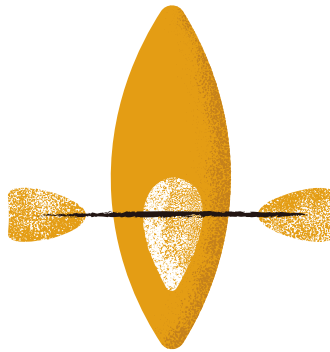
All journeys are made one step at a time.  
Wise travelers ask for help when they are lost or find trouble.  
Everyone needs rest along the way.

You are strong.

You are courageous.

You deserve good things.





## **REACH OUT FOR QUESTIONS**

951-708-4019

Hemet, California

<https://www.ihs.gov/california/index.cfm/yrhc-project/>