

Onward & Upward

Connecting Youth to a **Brighter** Tomorrow



Brought to you by MindPeace • 5th Edition

Your Roadmap to Navigating Overwhelm: **Start here.**

Welcome to Year 2 of Onward & Upward, **a shareable, quarterly resource** to support you and your school communities.

This newly redesigned issue tackles **anxiety** and **overwhelm** - well, because - Let's face it... You already know why!



ProTip: Read this like you would a menu, selecting the resources and strategies that work best for your community. Remember: The goal is progress, not perfection.



Building Better Systems

Finding the kids who need us most

Anxiety in kids and teens doesn't always look like worry. It often hides in stomachaches, meltdowns, or perfectionism.

Our NEW [one-page guide](#) (2-min. read) breaks down **three research-backed signs to watch for**, with specific differences by age group, so you can catch it earlier.

ProTip: Use this new resource to calibrate tiered level referral criteria or as a 5-minute staff meeting training.

Why this matters

According to PreventionFirst! [2026 Student Survey](#) of nearly 24,000 students from across Greater Cincinnati:

- 31% self-reported 'feeling nervous or anxious most or all of the time'
- Nearly 42% identified stress as a major factor affecting their mental health 'a lot or often'

The bright side: These numbers are improving and **YOU** are a large part of reason why!



Caring for the Caregivers

Because YOU matter too!

When our to-do lists pile up and everything feels urgent, it can be hard to know where to begin. In this [2-minute video](#) from *The Mel Robbins Podcast*, therapist Kier Gaines shares one simple first step for moments when stress takes over.

It's quick enough to watch between classes or meetings, and practical enough to use right away. **Share it with colleagues**, or pass it along to students and families who could use a reset.

"Sometimes overwhelm is a failure of systems that are supposed to be designed to hold you up... and you can't fix systems in a moment's notice."

- Kier Gaines

Looking for more?

This quick [Self-care Check-in Worksheet](#) helps school staff pause, reflect on their own well-being, and spot where they might need a recharge. *ProTip: Print it for the staff lounge or share it at your next team meeting.*



Parents as Partners

Equipping caregivers for success

What overwhelms parents most often this time of year?
Homework!

Share these [helpful tips](#) with your families, courtesy of our partners at *Springer School and Diagnostic Center*.

Sharing instructions:

1. Right-click the image below and choose **Save image as**.
2. Upload it to your school newsletter, family email, or website.
3. Link the image to the article: <https://www.springer-ld.org/2026/08/25/helping-homework-feel-more-manageable/> (4-min. read)
4. Add this alt text for accessibility: *Springer School family resource: Making Homework Time Less Stressful*

Abbreviated alternative (copy and paste): Make homework less stressful with these [practical homework tips for parents](#) from *Springer School & Center*.



Making Homework Time Less Stressful

Does homework at your house sometimes feel like a nightly battle? You're not alone. When energy runs low at the end of the day, even simple assignments can feel hard, especially for kids who learn differently, including those with ADHD or dyslexia.

This short, practical article from Springer School and Diagnostic Center shares easy-to-try ideas, like using the same starting routine each day, breaking big assignments into small steps, setting a timer with short breaks, and asking helpful questions instead of saying "just focus." It also offers tips on when it may be time to check in with your child's teacher.

[Read "Helping Homework Feel More Manageable" →](#)

Shared by MindPeace, connecting families and schools to mental health resources. Find more at mindpeacecincinnati.com and <https://www.springer-id.org/diagnostics/>.



Ideas to Grow On

Everyday brain health science

Why People-Heavy Days Leave You Drained

Back-to-back meetings, parent calls, and student check-ins can leave even the most dedicated school staff running on empty. In this video (10:15 min), [The Real Reason You're Exhausted After Talking to People](#), Dr. Tracey Marks explains why social interaction can be so draining and what that exhaustion is telling you. This can be a **useful watch for school teams who give their energy to others all day.**



Stories that Connect Us

It's not just you!

When "Having It All Together" Isn't the Whole Story

On paper, Caitlyn Wagonfield had it all figured out at 21.

However, behind the scenes, fear of failure was running her life. In this [personal reflection](#) (3-min read), the [1N5](#) School Program Manager explores how high

achievement can mask real struggle.

This is a must-read for anyone who supports students who always seem "fine."



Community Spotlight

Because we're stronger together

[The Anxiety Center, a MindPeace partner](#)

Located in Blue Ash and specializing in complex and severe anxiety and OCD for children, teens, and adults, The Anxiety Center offers in-person and virtual treatment options and accepts most commercial insurance plans, TRICARE, Medicaid, and Medicare.

[Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Program:](#)

For teens ages 14–18 who need more support than weekly therapy without stepping away from school. In-person, virtual, and hybrid options available.

[Children's Anxiety & OCD Intensive Outpatient Program:](#)

For kids ages 9–13 who need more than weekly therapy. In Blue Ash, three days per week from 3-6pm.

[Article: 5 Hidden Signs You're in Freeze Mode...](#)

Nathan Fite explains why a student who seems "unmotivated" may actually be stuck in a stress response called freeze mode.

MindPeace Network News

THANK YOU, MINDPEACE NETWORK

Because of your hard work...

look at what we accomplished together in 2025–2026.

76%

**of students referred for care in schools
were able to access treatment.**

MindPeace Network: 76%

Our benchmark: 80%

National average: estimated 20% according to the CDC (2023)

9,612

new student referrals identified

11,231

students served in treatment

Thank you for showing up for kids every day.

Source: MindPeace 2025–2026 Annual Report

Mark your calendars...



Wednesday, Oct. 7

Suicide Screening and
Assessment (C-SSRS & ASQ)
Tools & Safety Planning Training

8:00am - 1:00pm

(Virtual)

[Register](#)



Saturday, Jan. 30

**Anxiety and Depression Family
Education Day**

Hosted by Cincinnati Children's,
1N5 & MindPeace

9:30am - 2:30pm

Location: The Heidt Center of
Excellence

[Learn more](#)



Community Events

Be sure to check out our events
page for a rundown of both
community and professional
events.

[Events Calendar](#)

We're Here To Help

Looking for support in addressing mental health, behavior, or broader programmatic and system needs at your school?

The MindPeace School Consultation Team partners with schools to problem-solve challenges and strengthen systems of support. Connect with your school's MindPeace partnership consultant or reach out to our office directly using the button below.

Learn more about MindPeace's School Consultation Team [here](#).

Contact us

In crisis? Call or text 988. It's free and confidential, 24/7.



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