

#ADULTING

Tips for Juniors to
Transition Successfully
2020



MindPeaceCincinnati.com
513.803.0844

INTRODUCTION



Junior year is the first year of high school that really focuses on preparing you for life after high school; all while you have to remember to take care of yourself! It is difficult to know where to look when it comes to receiving mental health treatment after high school is over, and what that entails. This is a guide that gives you resources for those who may have it all figured out, may not know what they want, and may lie somewhere in between during this confusing and exciting time of your life.

Because of COVID-19, the possibility of not being able to see friends, peers, teachers, and others can feel overwhelming and sad. Feelings of loss, excitement, and uncertainty are normal. However, in these unclear times, feelings can become greater, and it may be important to reach out for help. Please remember that therapists are still available.

Due to the ongoing changes about COVID-19, additional resources are available at <https://mindpeacecincinnati.com/covid-19/>.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Brain Health Tips	1-6
Self-Care.....	1-3
Tips for studying, taking test, participating in social events and sleep.....	4-6
Systems of support.....	7
What Are Your Plans After High School?	8-13
Universities.....	8
Community College.....	9
Military.....	9
Entering the Workforce	9-10
Taking Time Off.....	10-11
Where to Get Help.....	11
Housing Options.....	12
College Resources	13
Junior Year- Steps to College.....	13
What is a 504 Plan and How Can it Help?.....	15-17
College Counseling Systems.....	18-21

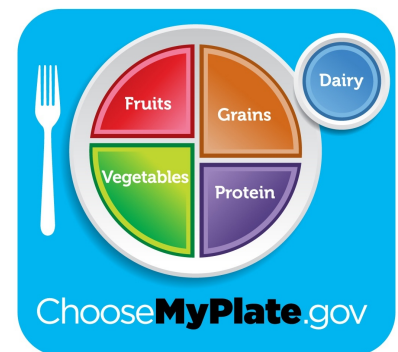
BRAIN HEALTH TIPS

SELF-CARE

Self-care refers to the activities and routines practiced to benefit your psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being. Self-care activities should be practiced on a regular basis to promote mental well-being. Self-care activities help reduce stress, increase productivity, improve health, help achieve work-life balance and prevent burnout.

PHYSICAL

- Surround yourself with nature. Research suggests that spending time in nature can lower stress and improve your mood. Spending as little as 10 minutes sitting or walking in a natural setting can lower your heart rate and blood pressure while also increasing feelings of calmness and comfort.
- Drink water! A good general rule is simply to drink water whenever you feel thirsty. By listening to your body, you can stay healthy and hydrated! Dehydration is one of the major causes of headaches.
- Exercise or dance to get out extra energy and relax. This helps to release endorphins (chemical in your brain) that makes a person feel good.
- Spend time with quality friends and family and share how your days are going. Don't be afraid to seek support from others, and to ask for help.
- Eat well-balanced meals.



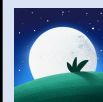
PSYCHOLOGICAL

- See a therapist or participate in support groups during times of high stress.
- Keep a journal to clarify thoughts. Evidence shows that writing about stressful events helps come to terms with them, reducing the impact they have on your life (Psych Central, 2016).
- Take a break from television, social media, and the internet to avoid exposure to negative information.
- Be an active member of the community by joining an organization or helping with community service at the local foodbanks, recreation centers, schools, etc.
- Express emotional healing practices of crying, laughing or story-telling.
- Read books or listen to podcasts.
- Participate in activities that make you happy, feel good and are empowering.
- Plan ahead, stay organized, and set time to relax.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.

CHECK OUT THESE APPS



Aloe Bud- a self-care companion



Relax Melodies- integrating mindfulness into sleep



Smiling Mind

SPIRITUAL

Practice spiritual self-care and wellness. Spiritual self-care involves caring for your soul. Practicing spiritual self-care can help you find peace between your inner feelings and emotions and the stressors of your life. Spiritual wellness involves seeking a purpose and meaning in your life.

- Try meditation or yoga.
- Pray or attend a church service.
- Express gratitude. Think of 3 different things you're grateful for every day.
- Complete a mindfulness exercise.

RESILIENCY

Resiliency is the ability to adjust to circumstances and keep going in the face of adversity, whether it's a minor hassle or a major life event. Resilience also helps you take on challenges, form stronger relationships and embrace new experiences. A lack of resilience can lead to anxiety, poor self-care, depression and risky behaviors, such as substance abuse. We can't always control events, but we can control our responses.

MANAGE STRESS

Identify your sources of stress and how they affect you. Once you understand how your behavior changes in response to stress (e.g., your health suffers, you isolate yourself from others), you can modify unhealthy or unproductive reactions and develop coping strategies for your vulnerable areas. Self-Care kits can aid in immediate relief when you're feeling overwhelmed (see examples on the next page).

EXAMINE YOUR THOUGHTS

Negative or inaccurate thoughts about ourselves, others, or the future can produce unhelpful emotions and behaviors. Increase your awareness of how you interpret events, so you can challenge and alter counterproductive thoughts and develop a more adaptive thinking style.

BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

Positive social connections provide assistance, guidance, and comfort during difficult times. Strengthen your relationships with family, friends and trusted others to form a support network. The quality of these relationships is more important than the quantity.



SELF CARE KIT EXAMPLES:

Self-care kits should contain some of your favorite ways to de-stress. Suggested items to include could be a stress ball, journal, blanket, earbuds, essential oils, or a favorite book. See examples below.



Kit Contents: Cotton balls, nail polish remover, bottle of nail polish, tea, socks, facial wipes, a candle, and a book.



Kit Contents: Comfortable shoes, scented shower gel, sweat band, buff puff, deodorant, and a favorite snack.



Kit Contents: Journal, pens, comfortable clothing, tissues blanket, snacks, candles, books, tea, knitting supplies, and a favorite movie or show.

STUDY TIPS

- Pick a place and time
 - A place should make you happy and inspired. It should be quiet, comfortable and distraction-free. Examples: home, library, or a coffee shop
 - Find a time that's best for you. Is it in the morning or do you work better at night?
- Study every day
 - Prioritize studying so the information is always being renewed in your mind. Then you won't feel overwhelmed with last-minute cramming.
- Plan your time
 - Make a to-do list
 - Set alarms for study plans
- Discover your learning style. Are you a:
 - Visual learner: prefer learning by seeing
 - Auditory learner: prefer learning by listening
 - Tactile learner: prefer learning by doing
- Review and revise
 - Quiz yourself or ask a friend to quiz you
- Take breaks
 - Working too long on one task can lower your performance
- Ask for help
 - Reach out to teachers, family, friends or teaching assistants
- Stay motivated
 - You could decorate your study space with inspirational quotes or photos of people you admire and family members you want to make proud of you
- App it up
 - Study apps such as Quizlet can help you on the move
- Look after yourself
 - Make sure you eat well and get enough sleep and physical exercise. It's also a good idea to make sure you drink lots of water when you're studying. You'll study better if you take care of yourself.

Try Quizlet:

Quizlet helps you study on the go by providing tools and games to get you ready for your test(s).



TEST TAKING

For many students, tests are stressful. By understanding your worries and trying strategies to alleviate those will help reduce stress and increase performance!

KNOW THE TRIGGERS. ARE YOU...

- Worried when others finish first?
- Focused on whether the classroom is too quiet or noisy?
- Worried about having enough time to do your best?
- Overwhelmed with the amount of information presented?
- Having difficulty with reading directions or understanding the test's instructions?

TIPS TO OVERCOME TESTING WORRIES:

- Don't give a test the power to define you. An exam won't tell you whether you're the most brilliant (or least brilliant) student in your class. Your performance on an exam mostly depends on how effectively you studied for the test, and the test-taking strategies you use.

- Visualize completing the test successfully. Using vivid images, play the entire "tape" in your mind – from the moment you wake up on the day of the exam to the moment you finish the exam.
- High anxiety can increase the impact of caffeine, so on test days reduce your intake.
- Take deep breaths. Breathe in slowly to the count of seven and exhale to the count of seven.
- Open your eyes and give yourself a positive, very specific self-talk (i.e., "You're sure to do well. You studied hard. You're doing the best you can.") This whole procedure should take only about a minute and it is well worth the time.

PICTURE IT:

- Try this activity- Close your eyes and picture yourself doing well on the test from start to finish.
- Close your eyes and imagine your teacher passing out the test. Make sure your pencil is sharpened. Take your time and read each question. Picture yourself completing the test. Go over each item to make sure the answers are correct. Envision yourself getting the test back, and you got the best grade ever.

PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL EVENTS

Social situations can be a rough time for some people, and that's normal! For those who experience social anxieties, it's best to understand your personal triggers and learn how to cope with them. The goal is to reach a level of calmness.

KNOW THE TRIGGERS:

- Struggles with changes in routine
- Sensitive to increased noise levels
- May be nervous around unexpected happenings/activities
- Does not like the smell or taste of special treats
- Unfamiliar with parent or volunteers
- Unable to perform special activities

TIP: Practice deep breathing! Breathe in slowly to the count of seven and exhale to the count of seven.

Prior to the event, focus on your breathing to calm yourself.

TIPS TO OVERCOME SOCIAL ANXIETY:

- Challenge negative thoughts
 - Identify the automatic negative thoughts. Then analyze them and challenge them.
- Focus on others, not yourself
 - Remember that anxiety isn't as visible as you think.
- Learn to control your breathing
 - Follow a YouTube breathing exercise video.
- Face your fears
 - Be patient and don't try to face your biggest fear right away.
- Make an effort to be more social
 - Volunteer, take a social skills class.
- Adopt an anti-anxiety lifestyle
 - Avoid caffeine. Get quality sleep. Eat a balanced diet.

SLEEP

Staying up late has adverse effects on a person’s cognitive thinking and processing skills. The hippocampus controls the brain’s memory, and when you experience sleep deprivation your memory also suffers. All the information you think you’ve retained—vanished. The most important thing you can do if you want to do well is get good sleep. Teenagers need 8+ hours of sleep every night.

TIPS FOR GETTING GOOD SLEEP

A lack of sleep can have physical consequences. Not enough sleep can make you sick, leading to more colds, flu, coughs, and sniffles, and can be associated with weight gain.

- Avoid caffeine at night, and limit it during the day.
- Create a sleep schedule, and stick to it.
- Don't sleep in on weekends or days when you have time off.
Wake up close to the same time every day.
- Put books and technology away at least 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime.
- Don't use your computer or phone in bed.
- Exercise earlier in the day, never just before bed.
- Sleep with earplugs and use an eye pillow to drown out any bright lights and loud noise.
- Turn out the lights when it's time to go to bed; a bright room will keep you awake. If you fall asleep to a TV, make sure you put it on a sleep timer!

FACT:

Light from televisions, cell phones and other electronics negatively impacts your sleep. This type of light is often called “blue light” and can impact your circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm helps our body and mind know what time a day you’re supposed to be awake or sleeping.

Establishing healthy sleep habits will do wonders for your long-term health.

RESOURCES:

Everyday Health. (2010, March 17). 10 Tips for Better Sleep at College. Retrieved from <https://www.everydayhealth.com/college-health/10-tips-for-better-sleep-at-college.aspx>

Harvard Health Publishing. (2019, September 24). *Blue light has a dark side*. Harvard Health. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/blue-light-has-a-dark-side>

Kahn, J. (2019, February 17). *Picture Perfect Nutrition in 5 Minutes: Food Plates to Use*. Medium. <https://medium.com/@Kahn642/picture-perfect-nutrition-in-5-minutes-food-plates-to-use-48efaddc9669>

National Sleep Foundation. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

Resilience 101. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.scoreforcollege.org/resilience101>

**TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF, AND WORK**

SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT



The Struggle is Real!

If you're overwhelmed or having difficulty coping, who will you seek out for support? Consider establishing a support team, in addition to professional assistance you may already have. Depending on the severity of your symptoms, you may need periodic or ongoing help.

MILD SYMPTOMS

- Talk with a trusted friend or advisor
- Review your self-help or coping strategies
- Reach out to your support team
- Consider speaking with a school-based therapist

MODERATE SYMPTOMS

- Assess severity and contact the community crisis line, mobile crisis unit, or call 911 if needed
- Consult with your care team (medical/primary care and psychiatric)
- Schedule an appointment to be seen for therapy. Speak with your school counselor, school-based therapist or visit www.MindPeaceCincinnati.com
- Contact your family or a trusted friend for support

SEVERE SYMPTOMS

- Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department
- Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255 or text "home" to 741-741
- Contact your local mobile crisis unit:
Butler County (844) 427-4747, Clermont County (513) 528-7283, Hamilton County (513) 584-5098

If you have a friend who is dealing with one or more of the signs below, support and listen to them. Express your concern for their wellbeing and ask how you can support them at this time. Also, tell a trusted adult or ask if you can help them find mental health services and support (MentalHealth.gov, 2017).

SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:

- Withdrawing from social activities or appearing down for more than 2 weeks
- Self-harming actions
- Suicidal Ideation
- Risk-taking behaviors
- Severe mood swings
- Change in eating habits
- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- Drastic changes in behavior, personality, or sleeping habits

MindPeaceCincinnati.com
513.803.0844

References:

MentalHealth.gov. (2017, September 26). *Talk About Mental Health: For Friends and Family Members*. Retrieved from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/friends-family-members>

National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d). *How to Help a Friend*. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-Young-Adults/How-to-Help-a-Friend>

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?



By now you may have decided which colleges to apply to, whether or not to go into the military, or whether to start working. While this is an exciting time in your life, this may also be quite stressful. Try to identify your feelings and fears, and talk about what you're going through.

UNIVERSITIES

Most schools offer a range of admissions options. Investigate which of your favorite schools offer:

- **Regular admissions** means that schools mail their decisions in April.
- **Rolling admissions** means that a school processes applications as they come in; you can apply at any time, but it's best to be early because spots fill up.
- The **early-decision** option is for students who are really sure about the school they want to attend, and who want to know earlier than April if they have been admitted. There's a drawback to applying under an early-decision option, though: You are promising that school that you'll attend if you're admitted.
- Most schools offer an **early-action** option, which means that students can be admitted early, but don't have to commit to a decision until spring, typically.

FACT: School counselors say that 75% of students change their majors after they enter college.

Application costs may vary and sometimes application costs can be waived if you qualify financially.

Don't cross a school off your list just because the tuition is steep. Ask your school counselor about possible community scholarships. Also, ask the university's financial-aid office about scholarships, grants, work-study programs, and loans. See if your family's employers offer scholarships. Check out organizations within your community. An amazing number of college funding sources are out there for students with specific career goals in mind.

To apply for federal aid in the United States, you must fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, although some schools use their own forms. Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information.

TIP: Ask the university's financial-aid office about scholarships, grants, work-study programs, and loans.

URBAN VS. RURAL SCHOOL- WHICH IS BEST?

Urban schools are located in big cities with easy access to entertainment and transportation. They provide increased access to internships, networking opportunities, and careers. Urban schools also have a variety of activities and cultural events, and typically a more diverse student body. Going to an urban school can provide you with the adventure of life in the big city however, may lack the close-knit campus culture of other universities. While activities on non-urban campuses are often the center of the school's social scene, in a big city, off-campus events can take the center stage. Big city living can also distract you from your school work due to the independence and varied entertainment options available.

Rural Schools are located in the countryside. They are typically far away from major cities, meaning most students live on campus and most activities occur on campus. Rural schools usually have access to nature, outdoor recreational activities, on-campus entertainment, and fewer distractions or temptation to spend money. However, some students may find this environment unstimulating or restricting. There also may be less access to transportation, internships or networking opportunities.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Benefits of attending a community college:

- Tuition is offered at a lower cost.
- You are able to complete core courses and then transfer your credits to a university.
- Classes are smaller which allows for more one-on-one interactions.
- Flexible scheduling and night courses are readily available.
- Some community colleges offer on-campus living.
- STEM programs are also available.

Disadvantages of attending a community college:

- Most only offer an Associate's Degree, which is a 2-year program.
- Less of a campus lifestyle is provided.
- Limited degrees may be offered.

TIP: Try to visit a campus when school is in session so you can get a good idea of what life is really like on campus.

Community College Myths:

There are myths associated with community college. These include: low quality professors, students had low high school GPA's, and students will not get a good job in the workforce. This is not the case. Some people who've attended community college include:

- *Walt Disney: Founder of Disney World and Disneyland*
- *Fred Haise: Apollo 13 Astronaut*
- *Calvin Klein: Fashion Designer*
- *Clint Eastwood: Actor and Oscar-winning director*

MILITARY

Entering the military can be an excellent choice for students. Discipline, earning money, saving for college, learning a trade — all of this is possible in the armed forces. Veterans are also entitled to many benefits both while in the service and after.

You should carefully explore all of the pros and cons of a military career. After all, if you don't like the service or if the thought of going to war seems too scary, you can't easily drop out. If you want specific training through the military, make sure the contract you sign includes that training. Explore your options at <http://todaysmilitary.com>.

ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

Getting a job immediately after high school remains a good choice. Students who go this route benefit from training on how to search for employment, write a resume, and develop interviewing skills. Many companies reimburse employees for continuing education in areas related to their employment. You should ask about this benefit through the human resources departments of potential employers.

Another option is an internship. Over the course of a year, you could potentially participate in two or three internships to explore career choices. Most internships are unpaid, so planning ahead is crucial if you need to save money for living expenses. Internships provide participants with the opportunity to learn about many areas of a particular career. They're also a great way to make contacts and develop mentoring relationships.



Don't overlook trade opportunities. Careers involving a trade or technical skill allow you to specialize in a particular occupation which typically involves working with your hands. Jobs may include carpentry, masonry, electrical work, mechanics and more. Apprenticeships provide an affordable way to enter these in-demand careers. They provide a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction under supervision. Over 90% of apprentices turn in to employment after the program completion. To understand what opportunities are available visit www.Apprenticeship.gov.

Still unsure about how to enter the workforce? Here are three local organizations that help youth with the transition.

- Easter Seals- a program for youth at risk of dropping out of school, economically disadvantaged or facing similar problems.
 - Call (513) 386-6852
- Ikron- provides curriculum designed to assist youth in planning a career, completing trial work experience, and obtaining and maintaining employment.
 - Call (513) 621-1117 or go to <https://cincinnati.ikron.org> for more information
- Project Search- provides skill training and workplace internships for individuals with disabilities.
 - Call (513) 636-2516 or email projectsearch@cchmc.org

TAKING TIME OFF

For some students, taking a year off between high school and the "real world" can be beneficial. This can be a good time to travel, do community service, or even live in a foreign country before the responsibilities of life make it harder to do so.

Community service organizations offer a wide variety of choices where students can match with their skills and interests. Americorps (www.nationalservice.gov), for example, offers hundreds of programs across the United States with a small stipend, plus a chance to obtain money for college or vocational training. Many religious organizations provide community service programs as well.

You should keep in mind that a brochure may look different from reality, such as some work and service camps in developing countries. You should expect difficulties, but know that the rewards of community

service often outweigh the hardships — and can actually change the direction of a person's life. Speaking with previous participants should give a more realistic view than promotional material.

Remember: taking time off doesn't necessarily put you at a disadvantage for college admission. For many young adults — especially those who choose an internship or international service — it can actually be an advantage.

While researching colleges, find out if they have delayed admissions programs. If not, ask the colleges what their position is on students who take time off, and how that might impact your chances of getting in if you reapply.

Whatever you choose to do now does not have to be what you do forever. You can always go back to school or change a career path — lots of people do this every day and with great success!

WHERE TO GET HELP

Your school counselors are a good starting point for helping you research information on your interests. You may have access to Naviance (www.naviance.com) or other online services that can also help steer you in the right direction.

There are many associations, both local and national, for thousands of occupations. Find out where they're located and get information on how to pursue particular career paths. Consider taking a career aptitude test. Below are two recommended tests.

- Meyers-Briggs- a personality test which measures psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions. (www.16personalities.com)
- MAPP Career Assessment Test-measures your temperament, aptitude, how you get along with people, and the top careers that match your needs. (www.assessment.com/TakeMAPP)

You may also be able to attend meetings or arrange for an informational interview where you can meet one-on-one with people at their workplaces to find out more about what they do. Ask friends, relatives, or others you know in different industries to assist you in your search. After all, there's often nothing more flattering than having someone ask about what you do.

REFERENCES:

CareerOneStop. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.careeronestop.org/FindTraining/Types/apprenticeships.aspx?frd=true>

Chen, G. (2008, February 08). The Top 7 Community College Myths. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <https://www.communitycollegereview.com/blog/the-top-7-community-college-myths>

Galbicsek, C. (2019, July 24). *College Alcoholism*. Alcohol Rehab Guide. <https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/resources/college-alcohol-abuse/>

Hannon, Kerry. "Personality Tests, Myers-Briggs Test, DISC, MAPP." *AARP*, www.aarp.org/work/job-hunting/info-2015/take-these-tests-to-find-your-new-job.html.

Kids Health from Nemours. (n.d.). KidsHealth. Retrieved from <http://www.kidshealth.org>

Patel, J. (2018, December 20). *What to Expect at an Urban/Suburban/Rural Campus*. Niche. <https://www.niche.com/blog/urban-suburban-rural-campus/>

Title IX. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.knowyourix.org/college-resources/title-ix/>

HOUSING OPTIONS



Living on Campus, If Going to College

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freedom- if you have strict parents or don't like limitations, then living in a dorm or school housing will give you freedom to discover yourself outside your family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expenses- Living on campus, with an addition of a meal plan, is an additional cost that should be considered. On average, it costs \$9,000 a year to live on a college campus not counting meal plans and other amenities. (Robert, 2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proximity- Your dorm is within walking distance of class, the library, your best friend's dorm room, and food in the cafeteria; which means no worries of getting up extra early in the morning and driving to class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of privacy- living on campus in most cases means you'll be sharing a room with a roommate. If this poses an issue for you, you may want to explore other options.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meeting new people- living on campus is a great opportunity to meet new people in your dorm outside of just your classes for friendships that last a lifetime. 	<p><i>"All our dreams come true if we have the courage to pursue them"</i></p> <p>-Walt Disney</p>

Living at Home

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost- Living at home allows you to cut down on costs of meals and other amenities like water and electricity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited freedom- Living at home, you may not enjoy the freedom your peers have living in a house/apartment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family support- Living at home will give you the opportunity to rely on your family for emotional and financial support while transitioning to adult life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commuting- Because of travel time, you may have to get up extra early in order to make it to class or work on time.

Independent Housing

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life skills- helps you gain real life experience, such as understanding rental contracts, budgeting bills, cleaning, and grocery shopping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Less involvement- You may not be as likely to hear about events or be as involved as your peers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freedom- Gives you more choice to make your space your own, i.e. using your own furniture, not having to follow other's rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expenses- In addition to rent, gas/ electric, cable, and internet are things to consider when thinking about living independently.

REFERENCE:

Living, Off-Campus. "The Pros and Cons of Living Off Campus"-*Off Campus Living*, 22 October 2013, Accessed 19 Feb. 2020. wp.stolaf.edu/offcampusliving/basic/proscons/

JUNIOR YEAR – STEPS TO COLLEGE



Investigate college choices with your guidance counselor

Register and take ACT and SAT

See guidance counselor to confirm graduation requirements

Complete college essay for applications before senior year starts

Get excited for senior year of high school!

Use resources such as Naviance (www.naviance.com) to decide on what careers and colleges best suit you

Create a list of colleges that meets your needs / criteria

Go on college visits including meeting with the disability or counseling offices

Finish and refine resume

Retake ACT/SAT

MindPeaceCincinnati.com
513.803.0844

SENIOR YEAR- STEPS TO COLLEGE

- Complete final edits for college essay
- Decide on colleges to apply for
- Ask teachers/ guidance counselors for two letters of recommendation

- Work on and submit FASFA form: October 1
- Work on college applications
- Watch for early decision submissions

- Take SAT/ACT if needed for the last time
- Work on completing financial aid and scholarships
- Finish your resume



- Watch for Student Financial Aid Report
- Watch for acceptance letters

- Make final decision on a college
- Notify all other colleges of final decision

- Take AP Exams
- Send final transcripts to colleges
- Send 'thank you' letters to teachers and counselors

AUG & SEPT

- Understand and review your 504 Plan with high school, if needed
- Confirm transitional plan on your IEP with mental health provider and school, if needed
- Go on college visits including meeting with the disability or counseling office

OCTOBER



IEP– Individualized Education Program

NOVEMBER

- Apply for benefits if needed (i.e. SSI or Medicaid) SSI go to ssa.gov or call 1-800-772-1213. Medicaid contact HCJFS at 946-1000 or www.hcjfs.hamilton-co.org

FASFA– Free Application for Federal Student Aid

DEC & JAN

- Submit college applications for regular decision
- Watch for early acceptance letters

FEB & MAR



HCJFS– Hamilton Country Job and Family Services

APRIL

- Meet with your mental health team to go over fears and coping strategies

MAY

- Pay college admission deposit



WHAT IS A 504 PLAN AND HOW CAN IT HELP?



You may have heard the term 504 Plan or Section 504 before, but not really understood what it means and how it can help. Section 504 is a civil rights federal law that public school districts are required to follow.¹ In this tip sheet, we offer some information on 504 plans.

A 504 PLAN IS...

- Based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This federal act prohibits the discrimination of students with disabilities in public school systems and ensures these students receive the educational supports they need to succeed in school.
- An **education plan** which:
 1. Identifies the modifications and/or accommodations needed to remove learning barriers for a student within mainstream education.
 2. Outlines the responsibilities of all stakeholders (e.g. parents, student and school) in removing these learning barriers.
- Not just for academic purposes and can be used for extracurricular activities and athletics.

TO QUALIFY FOR A 504 PLAN, A STUDENT MUST...

- Generally, be between the ages of 3 and 22 (which can vary by program and state/federal laws).
- Have an enduring, documented health-related, learning or behavioral disability which has been evaluated as substantially limiting one or more major life activities (e.g. reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, etc.).²

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A 504 PLAN?

- Legally requires public schools to provide accommodations and modifications to qualified students with disabilities (including mental health conditions or learning disabilities).
 - Examples: Counseling, preferential seating, adjusted class schedules, assistive technology like “smart pens”, voice recorders or computers for taking notes, extended time for assignments, quiet space for test taking, etc.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A 504 PLAN AND AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?	
504 PLAN	IEP
Students who do not qualify for special education services under IDEA, but who have an ongoing, documented disability that have been evaluated as requiring accommodations to succeed in school, as provided by the Rehab. Act of 1973. ³	Students with one or more disabilities outlined within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) who have been evaluated as needing special education services. ⁴
A 504 plan does not have to be a written document and is less comprehensive than an IEP. No due process is outlined in Section 504 legislation – school districts are left to define this for themselves. ⁵	An IEP must be a formal, written document. It must meet many due process requirements by law (i.e. detailed plans and timelines for the evaluation, specialized instruction, and educational services of a student, etc.). An IEP has many procedural safeguards and rights.
Students with 504 plans receive accommodations and/or modifications to curricula in a mainstream classroom. ⁶	Students with IEPs may receive specialized instruction and other educational services in a mainstream classroom or special education classroom depending on their needs. ⁶

- Can be helpful throughout a student’s lifetime as evidence of having a disability in order to qualify for some disability services (e.g. housing, transportation, vocational rehabilitation, Social Security determination).

SHOULD A STUDENT EVER GET A 504 PLAN INSTEAD OF AN IEP PLAN, OR GET BOTH?

- If a student’s disability does not impair them enough to need specialized education services, then a 504 may be obtained (if the student is qualified) instead of an IEP.
- In most cases it is not necessary to have both an IEP and a 504 plan while in school. Get a 504 plan if a student doesn’t qualify for, or doesn’t want, special education services.
- Because some students may perceive special education services as stigmatizing, getting a 504 plan is an alternate way to acquire necessary accommodations.

HOW CAN A STUDENT GET A 504 PLAN IN HIGH SCHOOL (OR EARLIER)?

- A 504 plan evaluation process may be started by a parent/guardian or the school. If you believe you qualify, you should ask the school to provide a 504 plan.
- To get a 504 plan, the student must be evaluated to see if he or she is deemed to have a qualified disability.⁷ This evaluation process includes:
 - Documentation of the disability (such as a doctor’s diagnosis),
 - Evaluation results (if the student was recently evaluated for an IEP),
 - Observations by the student’s parents and teachers,
 - Academic record, and
 - Any independent evaluations (if available).⁷
- If a student has a qualified disability, a 504 plan can be created and implemented by a 504 committee. This committee may include the student, their parents, teachers, and school administrators.
- Parents and students should check in with the school about the 504 plan as updates are not required by law.

CAN A STUDENT USE THEIR 504 PLAN IN COLLEGE?

- Neither a 504 plan nor a high school IEP apply directly to college; but either can be helpful.
- To get accommodations in college, students must apply to student disability services. The accommodations described in a high school 504 plan can help a student advocate for their needs with student disability services in college.
- It is important to note that colleges are not required to provide accommodations just because a student had a high school 504 plan or an IEP.
- A student can still apply for and receive accommodations in college even if they didn’t have an IEP or 504 Plan in high school. Colleges are required to provide accommodations to students with a disability who qualify for them under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

REFERENCES:

1. Durheim, M. (2015, October 30). A Parent's Guide to Section 504 in Public Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/section-504-2/>
2. Izzi, M. (2014, August 24). Definition of Disability under the Rehabilitation Act. Retrieved from <http://www.legalmatch.com/library/article/definition-of-disability-under-the-rehabilitation-act.html>
3. Stanberry, K. (n.d.). Understanding 504 Plans. Retrieved August 16, 2016, <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/understanding-504-plans>
4. Fenell, Z., Gilchrist, J., Katz, B., Kirkpatrick, S., & Makofsky, S. (n.d.). "About SpecialEducationGuide.com." Special Education Guide. Degree Prospects, LLC. Retrieved August 16, 2016, <http://www.specialeducationguide.com/disability-profiles/>
5. Disability Rights Center – NH. (2016, March 15). Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans: What's the Difference? Retrieved August 31, 2016, <http://www.drcnh.org/IDEA504.pdf>
6. KidsHealth. (n.d.). 504 Education Plans. Retrieved August 31, 2016, <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/504-plans.html>
7. U.S. Department of Education. (2015, October 16). Protecting Students with Disabilities: Frequently Asked Questions about Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>



Suggested Citation: Bryer, M., Golden, L. & Logan, D. (2016). What is a 504 plan and how can it help my student? Tip Sheet 10. Worcester, MA: University of Massachusetts Medical School, Department of Psychiatry, Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center (SPARC), Transitions Research and Training Center. The contents of this tip sheet were developed under a grant with funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, and from the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (ACL Grant# 90RT5031, The Learning and Working Transitions RRTC). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this tip sheet do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, or SAMHSA and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



This publication can be made available in alternative formats upon request



The Transitions RTC is part of the Systems & Psychosocial Advances Research Center (SPARC), A Massachusetts Department of Mental Health Research Center of Excellence



COLLEGE COUNSELING SYSTEMS



CONTACT INFORMATION

Community providers are also available in Greater Cincinnati.
Search the database at: www.MindPeaceCincinnati.com/search

An important consideration when choosing a college is how their mental health system works. Each school has a slightly different system, processes and specifications for care. Be sure to contact the mental health or counseling services at your school of choice during the summer, before heading to campus. Understand if all your psychiatric needs can be met at that school. Here are some questions to consider asking: Can the school counseling office offer ongoing therapy? If not, do you have transportation to get to appointments? How will you obtain your medication? Is there an on-site psychiatrist available to help with medication management?



It is ideal to meet face-to-face with the counseling services employees to begin establishing a relationship before classes begin. Developing a relationship, taking care of paperwork (such as filling out disability forms), and understanding their school system of support are all things that should be accomplished before classes begin. By doing so, you will alleviate stress and establish a safety net of support if a crisis should arise.

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	OFFICE OF COUNSELING SERVICES	WEBSITE
Bowling Green State University	(419) 372-2081	https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html
Cincinnati State	(513) 569-5779 (Clifton)	www.cincinnati-state.edu/real-world-academics/student-services/counseling-center
College of Mount St. Joseph	(513) 244-4949	www.ms-j.edu/student-life/wellness-health-services
Indiana University	(812) 941-2244	https://www.iu.edu/personal-counseling/index.php
Miami University	(513) 529-4634	http://miamioh.edu/student-life/student-counseling-service
Northern Kentucky University	(859) 572-5650	https://hcs.wv.nku.edu/counseling/counseling-services-available
Ohio State University	(614) 292-5766	https://ccs.osu.edu/
Ohio University	(740) 593-1616	https://www.ohio.edu/student-affairs/counseling
University of Cincinnati – Blue Ash	(513) 745-5670	www.ucblueash.edu/students/services/counseling-services
University of Cincinnati – Main Campus	(513) 556-0648	www.uc.edu/counseling
University of Dayton	(937) 229-3141	https://udayton.edu/studev/health_wellness/counselingcenter/index.php
University of Kentucky	(859) 257-8701	https://www.uky.edu/counselingcenter/
University of Louisville	(502) 852-6585	http://louisville.edu/counseling
Wright State University	(937) 775-3407	www.wright.edu/counseling
Xavier University	(513) 745-3022	www.xavier.edu/health-wellness/counseling

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE	INITIAL VISIT FEE	ONGOING SESSION CHARGE	SHORT TERM SERVICES AVAILABLE*	MEDICATION MANAGEMENT*	WALK IN HOURS	SUPPORT NETWORK	CAMPUS CRISIS SUPPORT*
Bowling Green State University	No Charge (through walk-in)	No Charge	Yes (limit determined by counselor)	Yes, through Falcon Health Center	Mon.-Fri. 1:30-4	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(419) 502-4673 Wood County Crisis Line
Cincinnati State – Clifton Campus Only	No Charge	No Charge	Yes (no session limit)	Refer out	Mon.-Fri. 8-4	None	None
College of Mount St. Joseph	No Charge	No Charge	Yes (by appt.)	Refer out	None	None	(513) 807-2516 Counselor On-Call
Indiana University	No Charge	No Charge	Yes (no session limit)	Refer out	None	None	(800) 221-0446 Regional Crisis Line
Miami University	No Charge	First 3 sessions free, \$25/therapist or psychiatrist	Yes (no session limit; free sessions reset after a semester)	Yes, through the student health center	Emergency only	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(855) 249-5649 On-Call Counselor
Northern Kentucky University	No Charge (for initial screening)	\$15/therapist	Yes – 15 sessions/academic year	Nurse can prescribe some medications	Mon.-Fri. 8:30-4:30	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(859) 572-7777 Campus Police, ask for On-Call Counselor
Ohio State University	No Charge	No Charge	Yes – about 6 sessions	Yes	None	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(614) 292-5766 After Hours
Ohio University	No Charge	No Charge	Yes (no session limit)	Yes	Mon.-Fri. 9:45-3:15	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(740) 593-1616 24/7 University Crisis Line
University of Cincinnati – Blue Ash	No Charge	No Charge	Yes (no session limit)	Refer out	None	None	(513) 556-0648 Crisis Counseling 24/7

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE	INITIAL VISIT FEE	ONGOING SESSION CHARGE	SHORT TERM SERVICES AVAILABLE*	MEDICATION MANAGEMENT*	WALK IN HOURS	SUPPORT NETWORK	CAMPUS CRISIS SUPPORT*
University of Cincinnati – Main Campus	No Charge	3 free sessions, \$35/therapist	Yes	Refer out	Call ahead	BSN www.ucincybsn.org	(513) 556-0648 Crisis Counseling 24/7
University of Dayton	No Charge	No Charge	Yes (no session limit)	Yes (must in counseling first)	Mon., Wed., Fri. 1-3 Tues. & Thurs. 2-4	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(937) 229-2121 Public Safety 24/7
University of Kentucky	No Charge	No Charge	Yes (session limit is based on needs assessment)	No	Mon.-Fri. 9-3	Yes	(859) 257-8701 24/7 University Crisis Line
University of Louisville	No Charge	No Charge (Cost for assessments)	Yes (no session limit)	Refer out	Mon.-Fri. 8:30-4	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(502) 852-5787 24/7 Student Care Team
Wright State University	No Charge	No charge for students who pay \$20 semester fee \$20 /appt for students who waive fee	Yes (no session limit)	No	Mon. 10-3 Tues.-Thurs. 11-3 Fri. 10-2	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(833) 848-1765 Raider Cares Line
Xavier University	No Charge	No Charge	Yes – about 6-8 sessions	Yes	Mon. 9-11 Wed. & Fri. 2-4	Yes (through counselors on campus)	(513) 745-3022 Therapist On-Call (513) 745-1000 Campus Police

*Short-term: counseling is limited to a few visits or until an ongoing therapist can be established

*Medication Management: school can provide on-site medication services with a psychiatrist

*Campus Crisis Support: therapist on-call or a 24/7 hotline to call in case of a crisis