the facts:
tips for a healthy headspace

headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

leaving secondary school – navigating big changes

Leaving secondary school can feel like a big deal. Some people find it exciting and full of opportunities while others feel stressed and overwhelmed, or a combination of these things. Even changes that you're looking forward to can cause some worries. Everyone responds differently to change. Whatever your reaction is, it's OK to feel this way.





The uncertainty that big changes bring can be challenging.

What challenges and concerns might I experience?

The uncertainty that big changes bring can be challenging. Some common concerns that people experience with the change from secondary school can include:

- making friends in a new setting
- figuring out course structures or new workplace environments
- juggling commitments, such as work, family, friends and further study
- meeting different expectations and obligations (e.g., meeting deadlines)
- adapting to new living arrangements (e.g., moving out of home)
- wondering if you have made the right decisions
- managing finances and financial pressures
- experiencing new freedoms
- finding a new sense of identity and belonging
- feelings of grief or loss.

What things can help?

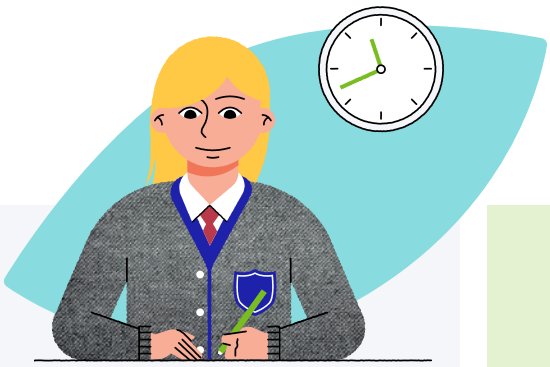
There are lots of things you can do to support yourself during these times. Learning some strategies can help you feel better prepared to cope with any worry or stress.

- Stress is our body's way of reacting to change, there are things you can do to help you cope. Learn about stress and your early warning signs.
- Make a list of things you can do to support yourself. Things that you enjoy and that help you de-stress.
- Notice any unhelpful thoughts. Try talking about them with someone you trust or writing them down. Talking things through can help you feel supported.
- Accept that some things won't go to plan, but can give us opportunities for growth.
- Be kind to yourself. Change and uncertainty can be hard work.

No matter what's going on in your life, it's a good idea to look after your headspace.

These are things like staying connected with family and friends, building your skills for tough times, staying active, getting enough sleep, eating well and cutting back on alcohol and other drugs. See our website for more tips (headspace.org.au/tips).





Practical tips

Preparing for change can help it feel more manageable. These are things like:

Problem solving

Identify what's troubling you and name it. This helps you figure out what's in your control and find a possible solution. It also helps you let go of what's out of your control.

Setting achievable goals

At times, your goals can seem big and overwhelming, breaking them down into manageable chunks can help you take those first steps.

Creating a routine

Routines bring order and predictability to our lives. Remember to include activities that you enjoy.

Getting support

Big changes can be stressful and we all need support sometimes. Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, Elder, teacher, counsellor or a health service for support.

If you're aged between 15-25, headspace Work and Study can help you navigate your way through work or study and support you to transition from school to work or further study. It's free and online via webchat, video, email or phone. **headspace.org.au/workandstudy**

If you or someone you know is going through a tough time you can get help and support from headspace, your school, TAFE or university wellbeing service or your local health provider. For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre, or for online and telephone support, visit headspace.org.au

If you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

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