



Overcoming Barriers to Asking for Help

The majority of young people do not seek or receive the help they deserve. That can be changed by learning how to overcome barriers to seeking out help.

Common Barriers:

- I feel like a burden.
- I don't want to disappoint anyone.
- I'm having a tough time recognizing if there is a problem.
- I feel ashamed and embarrassed.
- There's no hope so I might as well not get help.
- My problems are not as bad as other people's problems.
- I should be able to handle this on my own.
- I don't deserve help or support.
- People have already told me "You're fine. Just look at the positives."
- Maybe I am just being dramatic.

Research shows that trying to change our thoughts can make a positive impact on our mental health. The examples below highlight this.

Barrier	Instead of Thinking:	Try Thinking this Way:
I'm a burden.	People have more important things to deal with than me.	If someone was asking for help the same way I'm asking, I'd be willing to listen and help them.
I don't want to disappoint anyone.	I'm sorry. I know I've let you down and embarrassed you. I'll be better next time.	Thank you for your patience and for listening to me. Can we keep this open dialogue going?
My problems aren't as bad as other people's problems.	I'm not going to reach out to Leslie. She has tryouts coming up and is dealing with her parents' divorce.	My feelings are valid and I'm worth the time and space. Asking for help is ok.



Practice Overcoming Barriers to Asking for Help

Now it's your turn. For each barrier listed below, try and come up with a more positive way of thinking.

Barrier	Instead of Thinking:	Try Thinking this Way:
There's no hope so I might as well not get help.	Nothing's gonna change.	
People have told me "You're fine. Just look at the positives." when I could really use their help	Why bring anything up when my parents just say "it's not as bad as you think" or "others have it worse"?	
I should be able to handle this on my own.	No one understands what I'm going through.	
I feel ashamed and embarrassed.	I don't want my coach to find out I'm struggling in case he thinks I shouldn't be on the team	