

Healing Hearts



"The group made me feel that school was a safe place for me, because now I know I'm not alone."
-Middle School Student

Coping Skills for Students During School Exams

Testing periods can be stressful for students of all ages. Pressure to do well, thoughts of self-doubt, anxious feelings, and difficulty concentrating can all contribute to academic performance. For students who are grieving a death or experiencing other challenging life events, testing times often add additional layers of mental, emotional, and physical exertion. Teaching practical coping skills for students to use before, during, and after exams helps support students' overall well-being as they tend to their academic endeavors.

Positive self-talk helps boost confidence and fosters healthy inner dialogue. While getting ready for school in the morning, students can set the tone for their day with positive affirmations. During a test, positive self-talk can provide reassurance to students when they feel uncertain or overwhelmed. Positive reminders go a long way, even after taking a test. Celebrating effort rather than just outcomes helps build resilience.

- *I will try my best today. I am smart and ready. I believe in myself.*
- *I will take this one question at a time. I am prepared for this. I can handle this.*
- *I am more than a score on a test. I worked through a challenge today. I am proud of my hard work.*

Deep breathing exercises help calm the nervous system and decrease stress levels. Before an exam, encouraging students to take 3-5 long, deep breaths can reduce anxiety and help direct focus. Students can practice breathing exercises throughout exam periods, as many can be done quietly without disturbing others. After completing an exam and exiting the testing area, students deserve a deep sigh of relief.

- **Smell the Flowers/Blow out the Candle:** Slowly breathe in through the nose as if smelling a sweet bouquet of flowers. Exhale through the mouth as if blowing out a candle.
- **Box Breathing:** Visualize a box or square with 4 equal sides and imagine tracing each side. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.

Coping with Emotions: Taking Care of Your Mind and Body

<p style="text-align: center;">Progressive Muscle Relaxation</p> <p>Sit up tall with both feet on the floor. Squeeze and tense up the muscles in your feet. Hold, then release. Squeeze the muscles in your legs. Hold, then release. Repeat for: back and shoulders, arms and hands, head and neck, whole body.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Deep Breathing</p> <p>Take a few deep breaths. When you breathe in you want your belly to fill with air and get bigger like a balloon. Inhale for five seconds, hold, exhale for five, hold. Repeat a few times.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Engage the 5 Senses</p> <p>Close your eyes or look down for about 30 seconds and focus only on what you hear. Switch senses to focus on smell, taste, touch, and sight.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Exercise</p> <p>Get moving! Go for a walk or run, stretch, play a sport or active game, dance, etc.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Draw or Write it Out</p> <p>Release your thoughts and feelings on to paper.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Positive Affirmations</p> <p>Give yourself uplifting reminders. Name something you like about yourself. Tell yourself something positive.</p>

- Dragon Breath: Inhale through the nose, then exhale powerfully through the mouth like a dragon breathing out fire.

Movement helps release tension and built-up energy. Stretching in the morning on testing days helps wake up the brain and body. During long periods of sitting, adjusting posture and allowing for subtle movements, even in a chair, can help relax muscles. After completing exams, students can use movement to celebrate their hard work.

- Reach for the Stars: Stand tall with feet shoulder-wide apart. Slowly reach both arms up high towards the sky. Lift the heels off the ground to reach even higher.
- Shoulder Rolls: Slowly roll shoulders backwards 3 times then forwards 3 times.
- Victory Dance: End the day with a celebratory dance!

Click [HERE](#) to print the "Coping with Emotions: Taking Care of your Mind and Body" handout, available in English and Spanish.

Upcoming Events

Friday, May 1, 2026

Good Grief for Helping Professionals

[Learn More](#)

Saturday, May 2, 2026

Hats, Hearts & Horseshoes: A Kentucky Derby Affair

[Learn More](#)

Monday, May 11

Bo's Place KATY Open House

[Learn More](#)

Wednesday, May 20

Bo's Place Open House (Main Campus)

[Learn More](#)

Volunteer Spotlight: Hope Conroy

Hope Conroy is from Jamaica and has been married for 40 years. She has three sons and two grandchildren. She loves to travel and watch Korean dramas. Her love of travel was inspired by her travels to the USA for the first time as a young woman and managing a travel agency for a few decades.

Hope first heard of Bo's Place after her son Matthew died. Once she retired, she decided to volunteer at Bo's Place, to honor Matthew. In 2019, she began volunteering as a Support Group Facilitator and still facilitates regularly to this day.

When sharing about the importance of a support group, Hope stated "Never underestimate the importance of a support group. Often individuals are unable to find a safe space to share their pain and heartache. Bo's Place provides that space where they also find strength and support in interaction with each other. Additionally, Bo's Place offers a unique reach that far exceeds the support of the individuals involved. The ripple effect it causes benefits others in ways we will never know."

As Hope reflected on the impact of her volunteer experiences, she shared, "This volunteer experience feeds my soul. I look forward to working with a new group of participants every 9 weeks. It is so gratifying to be a part of the participants' journey and be able to hold that space. I appreciate everything about it and take pride in my association with this organization."

Lastly, we asked Hope if she could share a time that she felt the "Bo's Place Magic." She said it happens so often she can't recall one specific event, but that it never ceases to amaze her when it happens and reminds her of the impact support groups can make.

Thank you, Hope, for being a part of the Bo's Place Magic!



Volunteer Appreciation Month: Honoring the Heartbeat of Bo's Place

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month and we have so much gratitude to share about our incredible volunteers. Please read to learn more about their significant impact on our programs.

[Read More](#)

Support Group Activity Spotlight: Memory Quilts

Learn about our special tradition of family support groups making Memory Quilts to honor their loved ones who died.

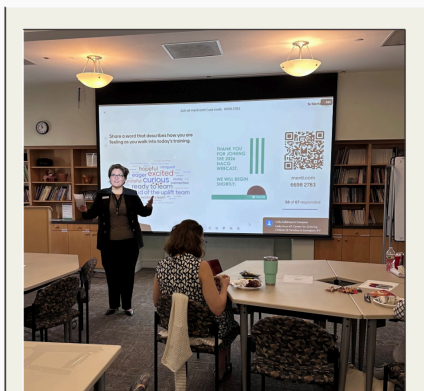
[Read More](#)

Derby Day is Coming - Get Your Tickets Now!

The best Derby party in town is right around the corner! Don your fascinators and seersucker and join us for the 10th anniversary of this beloved tradition!

[Read More](#)

Recent Happenings



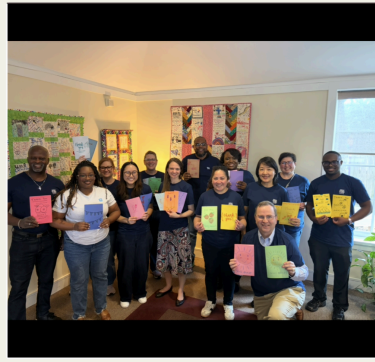
*National Alliance for
Children's Grief Webcast
3.3.26*



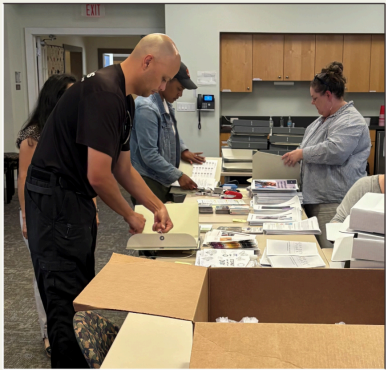
*Bo's Place Open House
3.18.26*



Matthew's Garden Club
3.21.26



New York Life Volunteers
3.26.26



Houston Area Suicide
Prevention Coalition
3.21.26



National Charity League-
Memorial
3.28.26

About Bo's Place

At Bo's Place, we believe that grieving families heal when they share their experiences with each other. We offer free Grief Support Groups in English and Spanish to families and individuals.

If you or someone you know would like information about Bo's Place Grief Support Groups for children, families, and adults, click [here](#) or call 713.942.8339.

Our Website

Our Mission

Volunteer

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Amazon Wishlist



Bo's Place exists to enhance the lives of those who have experienced the death of a loved one.



Bo's Place | 10050 Buffalo Speedway | Houston, TX 77054 US

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