

Finding Your Personal Agency

When we're overwhelmed by what's happening around us, it's easy to feel helpless. We want things to change, but where do we even start?

Personal agency is our capacity to recognize and act on the choices available to us, even when we cannot control the circumstances around us.

Sometimes that means speaking up or getting involved. Sometimes it means asking for support or recognizing that we've reached our limit.

Taking care of yourself

- Keeping some routine when things feel unpredictable.
- Making room for things you enjoy. You're allowed to enjoy your life while also caring about what's happening.
- Asking for what would actually help you: company, a listening ear, or help with a task.
- Checking in with yourself before taking on more. Do you have the capacity for this today?

Connecting with others

- Reaching out to someone you trust and being honest about how you're doing.
- Spending time with people who help you feel supported.
- Checking in on someone else. You don't have to have the perfect thing to say!
- Participating in a group or activity that gives you a sense of belonging.

Getting involved

- Choosing an issue that matters to you and learning how you can help.
- Offering your time, skills, or resources in a way that works for you.
- Voting, contacting an elected official, or participating in a community meeting.
- Helping someone with something practical. Making a difference can happen close to home.

Setting boundaries

- Deciding how much news or social media you want to take in.
- Giving yourself permission to step away from a conversation.
- Being clear about what you can offer and what you need.
- Saying "no" when you don't have the time or energy to take something on.

There will always be more we "could" do. That doesn't mean we have to do all of it. Start with something that matters to you and fits your capacity.

Putting it into practice

1. What matters to me right now? *Consider values such as connection, compassion, fairness, family, or well-being.*
2. Where do I have a choice or some influence?
3. What is one thing I can do that reflects what matters to me?
4. What support would help me follow through?
5. What might I need to accept or leave uncertain for now?

Resources

Sometimes what we're carrying feels like more than we can manage on our own. Reaching out for additional or professional support is one way to use your agency, and the resources below can help you get started.

Resource	Contact
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minnesota	**Ph: 952-546-0616**
National 988 Lifeline	**Ph: 988** **Text: 988**
Minnesota Warmline (Peer Support)	**Ph: 651-288-0400**
Hennepin County COPE Mobile Crisis Response	**Ph: 612-596-1223**
Fairview Southdale Hospital EmPATH	**Ph: 612.672.6999** Walk-in at the Emergency Department
Walk-In Counseling Center (Minneapolis)	**Ph: 612-870-0565**
Ramsey County Adult Mental Health Urgent Care	**Ph: 651-266-7900**