

LEARN TO LIVE BULLETIN

Your guide in wellness and mental health

Helping your Family Flourish Through the Changing of Seasons

Sarah watched her daughter's shoulders slump at the mere mention of having to go shopping for school supplies the following week. "Is summer really almost over already?" her 10-year-old whispered, the anxiety making her voice tremble. Like so many families, Sarah's household was feeling the emotional weight of a life transition - that time when carefree summer days shift into structured school routines.



Transitions - whether expected, like back-to-school season, or unexpected, like a family move - can create heightened stress for both parents and children. The good news? Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques offer practical, evidence-based tools to help your family navigate these changes together. At its core, CBT teaches us that our thoughts directly influence our feelings and behaviors. When families face transitions, uncomfortable thought patterns often surface. These thoughts might sound like "This change will be terrible," "My child will never adjust," or "I just can't handle this stress."

If our exaggerated thought patterns go unrecognized and unchallenged, they can lead to distressing emotions and unhelpful behaviors like avoidance or "acting out." If we learn to notice and reframe the thoughts instead, we can help our families transform their concerns into opportunities for growth. For example, our reframed perspective might sound like, "Working through the difficulty of this change will make us stronger and happier." Consider some other quick, yet practical CBT strategies you could practice with your family:

- **Thought Inspection:** Have family members write down their worries about the upcoming change, then challenge these thoughts with evidence. For example, if your child is worried about making friends, they might be able to recall previous years when they successfully connected with new classmates.
- **Active Problem-Solving:** Guide your children to approach their concerns about the changes step-by-step. Help them to identify the specific concern, brainstorm solutions, weigh options for solutions, choose one to try, and reassess as needed.
- **Gratitude:** Try creating a family ritual of gratitude around your transition. Have each person share one memory they'll cherish from the previous season of life and one thing they're looking forward to in the new season.

As a parent, you also have the important responsibility of serving as a role model to your family. Children watch how adults handle change. If you can practice self-compassion and use some of these tools during stressful transitions, you can demonstrate to your children how they might be able to successfully navigate tough transitions and life changes.

Get Started Today

As summer fades into fall, Learn to Live can help you make the back-to-school transition into an opportunity for growth and flourishing. If you'd like to learn more about the tools introduced here or your overall mental health and wellbeing needs, consider taking our quick assessment for insights and recommendations. Do this by scanning or visiting learntolive.com/partners and enter access code **MMHG**. Learn to Live is available to you and your family members, ages 13 and older at no cost.

