

NUY CLINIC NEWSLETTER

A newsletter created by Boston Medical Center's Neurodivergent Urban Youth (NUY) Clinic for neurodivergent teens and young adults.

Welcome to the NUY Clinic Newsletter!

We are excited the NUY Clinic newsletter launch is officially in the books and **the first issue is shared with you to enjoy!**

Each issue will feature helpful information, practical tips, valuable resources, and community highlights on a variety of topics! **This issue will focus on back-to-school.**

Summer is beginning to cool down into Fall, and a new academic year brings new experiences with school, social life, hobbies and more. With this in mind, this edition will dive into guidance for **kicking off September on the right foot**, whether you are starting high school, college or the workforce. That includes maintaining balance, so **look out for tips on recharging between busy schedules!**

IN THIS ISSUE:

Introduction	Pg 1
Building Independence	Pg 2
Nurturing Your Wellbeing	Pg 6
Pathways & Possibilities	Pg 8
Upcoming Events	Pg 10
Community Resources	Pg 11



BACK-TO-SCHOOL ISSUE

September is **Suicide Prevention Awareness Month**. See page 7 for mental health resources that we encourage you to read and share with loved ones!

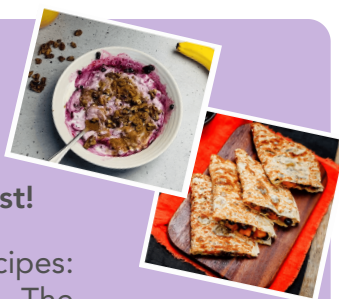


INCLUSIVE COOKING

The Inclusive Cooking program launched our first in-person class in August!

Participants cooked two delicious recipes: Veggie Quesadillas and Yogurt Sundaes. The group learned to set-up their kitchen for success, collaborated with their peers, and enjoyed gaining new cooking skills!

Virtual classes restart in October! They run the first Wednesday of each month until May 2027! The classes provide a welcoming space to learn key cooking skills and delicious recipes in a supportive community.



SIGN UP TO GET CLASS UPDATES



PAUSE TO PONDER

Take a moment to check in with yourself and reflect on the year ahead. The questions below may be a helpful guide!

- What was one major highlight of your Summer?
- Name one thing you're looking forward to this Fall.
- Finish this sentence: This year, I want to learn _____.

Building Independence

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

MOVING AWAY FROM HOME for college, a training program or your first apartment is a **big step!** It can be exciting to have more independence, but it's **completely normal to feel nervous.** Living on your own means learning new skills, creating routines that work for you, and asking for help when you need it. **Remember: no one is born knowing how to do all of these things.**

Like any new skills, they get easier with practice! Keep reading for some top tips on building independence if you move away from home. **If you are living at home, you can still use many of these tips to practice independence.** For example, you can make a meal plan (tip #1), add laundry to your routine (tip #2), communicate with the people you live with (tip #3), and make time for a hobby (tip #4).

TIP #1: MAKE A REALISTIC MEAL PLAN

When you're busy with classes, work, or making new friends, it can be easy to forget to eat and difficult to find time to make meals. **Having a meal plan that works for you can make life easier and less stressful.** It can also help you avoid relying on snacks! **To create a meal plan, start with a few meals that you like.** Foods such as sandwiches, pasta, rice and frozen vegetables, eggs, yogurt, or oatmeal can be healthy, low cost and quick



to prepare additions to your meal plan. Keeping a few easy-to-make foods on hand helps on days you're busy or low on energy.

MEAL PLANNING RESOURCES



Accessible
Chef



BMC Teaching
Kitchen



How to
Meal Prep
Budget Bytes



Neurodivergent
Lunch & Dinner
Ideas
Liv Label Free

QUICK MEAL IDEAS

- Peanut butter or turkey sandwich with fruit
- Pasta with sauce and frozen vegetables
 - Scrambled eggs and toast
 - Yogurt with granola and berries
 - Rice, beans, and shredded cheese
- Frozen vegetables with rotisserie chicken



TOP TIP: Make a grocery list before you shop so you don't have to remember everything while you're in the store. It might be helpful for you to shop on the same day around the same time each week, so it becomes a part of your routine.

Building Independence

TIP #2: KEEP UP WITH LAUNDRY

Laundry can seem overwhelming when you're doing it on your own but **breaking it into small steps** makes it more manageable.

Try picking one regular "laundry day" each week instead of waiting until you run out of clean clothes. **Setting a reminder on your phone** or adding it to your calendar can help.

If you're unsure about how to wash something, check the **instructions on the clothing tag** (this might be different for each of your clothing items; see examples below).

TOP TIP: Most everyday clothes can be washed together in cold water, which is simple and helps prevent shrinking.



LAUNDRY CHECKLIST

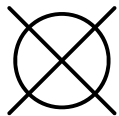
1. Gather clothes and empty pockets
2. Separate lights and darks (if washing them separately)
3. Add laundry to the washing machine
4. Add detergent (and fabric softener if preferred)
5. Select the appropriate wash cycle and turn on the machine
6. When the wash is finished, move clothes to the dryer promptly or hang them to air-dry
7. When the clothes are dry, fold them or hang them in your closet

Remember, it doesn't have to be perfect. Clean clothes are the goal!

COMMON LAUNDRY TAG EXAMPLES



Dry on
Low Heat



Do Not
Dry Clean



Check out this
page from Tide
for more labels
and their
meanings!



Do Not Iron



Building Independence

TIP #3: COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR ROOMMATE AND RESPECT SHARED SPACES

Sharing a room or apartment means balancing your needs with someone else's needs. Every roommate has different habits, schedules, and preferences.

It can be helpful to talk about expectations early. You can discuss quiet hours, guests, cleaning responsibilities, and how to share common spaces. Having these conversations early can help prevent misunderstandings later. If something is bothering you, try bringing it up calmly and respectfully to your roommate, or ask a trusted adult for advice. Your roommate may not realize there's a problem. At the same time, be open to listening if they have concerns too.

RESOURCES: Communicating with College Roommates

This blog post, written by an autistic adult, discusses what to consider before moving away from home and how to make the transition go smoothly

This article is written by an individual with autism who shares their tips and takeaways of living on a college campus

This article includes 10 tips for college-aged neurodivergent individuals to consider when living with a roommate for the first time

This post discusses setting boundaries - an important skill when living with a roommate

The resource includes scripts to help guide conversations with roommates



Building Independence

TIP #4: MAKE TIME FOR A HOBBY

Setting aside time each week for something you enjoy can help you to relax, meet people, and build a routine that fits you.

Try a hobby that matches your interests and schedule. You could read, draw, cook, play a sport, go to the gym, listen to or make music, garden, or learn a new skill. If you want to meet people, look for clubs, student organizations, recreation programs, classes, or events through your school or college. You can also **check out your local library or community center for free or low-cost activities.**



If you would like to do any activity alone in your free time, examples could include journaling, baking, puzzles, crafts, or walking. See the upcoming events section in the newsletter for more ideas!



Remember: You don't need to be good at a hobby for it to be meaningful. The goal is to find something you enjoy and make a little time for yourself.

TIP #5: TAKE TIME TO ADJUST

Living away from home is a big change, and it may take weeks or even months to feel settled. Some days you'll feel confident and independent, while other days you might miss home or feel overwhelmed. Both experiences are completely normal.

Try to build routines that help you feel grounded. Eating regular meals, getting enough sleep, and checking in with family or friends can make a big difference.

Remember: Increasing independence doesn't mean doing everything by yourself. It includes getting support from your family and friends and asking for help if you need it. Each new skill you practice is one more step toward feeling comfortable and confident in your new home, and building greater independence.



GENERAL RESOURCES FOR INDEPENDENCE AT HOME



How to Live Independently with Autism: A Practical Guide

By New Directions for Young Adults



Building Independence: Life Skills & Independent Learning for Neurodivergent Young Adults

By College Internship Program

Nurturing Your Wellbeing

BACK-TO-SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH TIPS

IT'S THAT SEASON AGAIN when many of you are getting ready to go back to school, starting at a new school, or even starting college! Although these changes can be exciting, they can also bring up anxiety and plenty of new stressors and challenges. Here are some tips to help you protect your mental health during the transition.

TIP #1: YOU'VE DONE THIS BEFORE

As stressful as a new academic year can be, this is not your first rodeo! You've been through this routine in the past: new classrooms, new teachers, new friends to meet, and exciting new classes to keep you busy. **Try to remember what has worked for you in the past to help manage during stressful times.**

TOP TIP: *If you feel stuck, try asking family members, friends, or your doctor what they've seen help you in the past. Coming back to your tried-and-true strategies can help you anchor as you take on new activities.*

TIP #2: MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

When school gets demanding, it can be easy to forget to care for ourselves. Where you can, **try to take a few minutes every day** to do something that's good for your wellbeing—whatever that might be for you. **We've provided a few ideas, but feel free to add your own!**

TIP #3: REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

Your teachers, school counselors, and student services or special education office are there **to help you talk through difficult situations and brainstorm strategies** to keep you feeling your best. You can also talk to your therapist or psychiatrist, or reach out to your Primary Care clinician about getting connected to one.

PsychologyToday is a great resource for finding mental health clinicians. You can filter for several preferences on the search engine.



GUIDED MEDITATION SESSIONS

1. Take a walk outside
2. Listen to music
3. Meditate → 
4. Call a loved one
5. _____
6. _____

Insight Timer



Medito App



Nurturing Your Wellbeing



If you're ever in a situation where you feel overwhelmed, unable to care for yourself, or worried about hurting yourself or other people, **ask for help right away**. There are trained staff at multiple organizations available 24/7 by phone call or text to help you in a crisis. **See below for some options:**

1. **988** – 24/7 national hotline for support in a mental health crisis. You can call or text them at 988 or chat online at <https://988lifeline.org/>.
2. **Crisis Text Line** – mental health support line staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who you can contact without having to talk on the phone. Contact them by texting HOME to 741741 or at <https://www.crisistextline.org/>.
3. **The Trevor Project** – 24/7 crisis support hotline especially for LGBTQ+ youth. You can reach them by texting START to 678678, calling 1-866-488-7386, or chatting on their website at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/>
4. **BlackLine** – mental health support line serving BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ individuals. You can call them at 1-800-604-5841 or read more about them at <https://www.callblackline.com/>



Below are some **teen-friendly resource lines**, which can be helpful for mental health support but do not run 24/7:

NOTE: If you are worried about your safety, contact one of the crisis lines, call 911 or go to the ER



1. **National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) Teen and Young Adult HelpLine** – offers education about mental health conditions and resources to get support. You can reach them Monday-Friday, 10am-10pm EST by calling 1-800-950-6264 or texting FRIEND to 62640.
2. **Hey Sam** – a free, confidential textline staffed by young adults serving youth up to age 24. Text 439-726 to be connected with a peer who will listen to whatever you feel comfortable sharing.



Pathways & Possibilities

HIGH SCHOOL: IEPS AND 504 PLANS

DO YOU HAVE AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) OR 504 PLAN in high school? If yes, it's a good idea to review the plan at the start of the new school year. You may have made progress on skills over the summer or have additional support needs that were not met in school last year. If that is the case, your plan may need updating. As you review your plan, the following questions may be a helpful guide:



Do my supports, accommodations and IEP goals *(if applicable)* meet my needs?



Does my schedule work well with my strengths and challenges?



Would it be helpful to request a team meeting to discuss needed changes to my IEP or 504 Plan?

If you don't have an IEP or 504 Plan, but think you could benefit from receiving accommodations or supports in high school **your parent/caregiver can request a special education evaluation.** Learn how to request an evaluation here:

Special Education Timeline
By Federation for Children with Special Needs



What is the difference between an IEP and 504 Plan?



Understood®

HIGH SCHOOL



IEP Teams
Mass Legal Help



List of Accommodations for IEPs and 504s
Undivided



Families & Guardians Hub
MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

COLLEGE



Navigating Disability Accommodations in Higher Education
The National Law Review



Legal Rights for Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities
US Department of Education



Association on Higher Education and Disability



Pathways & Possibilities

COLLEGE ACCOMMODATIONS

DID YOU HAVE AN IEP OR 504 PLAN in high school? Do you think having accommodations or supports in college would be helpful? If yes, this section has tips to make the process of requesting college accommodations as smooth as possible!

It's a good idea to **gather all the paperwork you'll need before requesting college accommodations.** Most colleges require a clinician's letter that includes proof of disability and support needs. If you've applied for supports or accommodations before, the good news is that you probably already have this! If not, **reach out to your primary care doctor to request a letter.** Many colleges have a standard form for your doctor to fill out! Here is a list of helpful paperwork to have when requesting college accommodations:

PAPERWORK

1. Documentation of your disability and support needs from a clinician (ideally from past 6 months)
2. Documentation of past accommodations
3. Previous IEP or 504 Plan (NOTE: Accommodations from these documents do not automatically transfer to college)

WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Modifications or adjustments made to remove barriers to allow individuals with disabilities to access education, work, or other environments.



Understood®

ACCOMMODATION EXAMPLES

- Extra time on exams and assignments
- Exam room settings
- Flexible attendance
- Communication assistance devices
- Course substitution
- Textbook/handout/syllabus alternate formats e.g., large font, electronic, braille, audio
- Permission to record classes

COLLEGE DISABILITY SERVICES

Many colleges have disability services that are there to help you navigate the process of requesting accommodations! Most offer appointments and/or office hours to access support. If you can't find your college's disability services, ask your advisor, a professor, or the student affairs office. **TOP TIP:** If the semester has already started you can still request accommodations!

EXAMPLE

ROSS Center at UMass Boston



Upcoming Events



Take a look at the snapshots of upcoming **social and recreational community events!** Are there any you would like to join?

ADAPTIVE SAILING

Community Boating's Universal Access Program (UAP) allows individuals to experience the freedom sailing offers in an accessible environment. Check out the Fall sailing class before the season ends!



📍 BOSTON 📅 SPRING - FALL



COMMUNITY ACCESS DAY

An interactive experience for wheelchair users of all abilities. Join for a fun day of adaptive sports and activities, learn about resources and meet others!



📍 BOSTON 📅 SEP 19



VERONICA ROBLES MARIACHI BAND

A bilingual, inclusive program featuring traditional Latin American music and exploration of creative and performing arts.



📍 BOSTON 📅 SEP 12



CALMER CON

A sensory-friendly comic and pop culture convention! Join for a day of gaming, building, drawing and more.



📍 WESTON 📅 SEP 12



SPECIAL ARTISTS

The Special Needs Arts Program (SNAP) offers Saturday art classes virtually and in-person for ages 13+ year round! Check out the Fall class schedule and information about registration on the website.



📍 LEXINGTON 📅 ALL YEAR



TRAIN 4 LIFE PROGRAM

A health and wellness program for individuals ages 18+, offered by Special Olympics, MA. Participants take part in weekly workouts, mental wellness and learn nutrition knowledge. Check out Special Olympics for other sports programming throughout the year for all ages.



📍 ACROSS MA 📅 AUG - NOV



FIND MORE
EVENTS AT
SPEDCHILDMASS



Community Resources



The new academic year is just getting started! Take a look at some community resources to **help access supplies and supports** for the academic year.

HOMEWORK SUPPORT

Boston Teachers Union (BTU) program offers free tutoring across Boston Public Library branches after school, every week during the school year. No registration is required and support is **FREE!**



BTU Program

You can ask for disability accommodations and language support.

TUTORING

Are you looking for a tutor outside of school? There are multiple organizations that offer **FREE** tutoring in Boston, including **Boston Scholars Tutoring** and **UPchieve**.



Boston Scholars Tutoring



UPchieve

You can search for other tutors in Massachusetts on the following search engines, including Special Education tutors. Costs vary and some offer financial assistance.



Varsity Tutors



Wyzant



Care.com

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATES

If you are facing barriers in high school to getting educational supports that you are legally entitled to, an educational advocate may be able to help.



Mass Advocates for Children (MAC)



Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLIES



Do you need supplies for the school year? **Cradles to Crayons** works with many organizations to provide families with school supplies and other resources. You could also ask your local **Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF)** about accessing school supplies!



Cradles to Crayons



BCYF



BTU Back to School Fair

*Check out the upcoming Boston Teachers Union (BTU) back-to-school event on **September 20**, for **FREE** books, snacks, music and more!*

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

A lot of high school education, college, and job applications take place online. If you are looking for low-cost laptops and internet access for educational or employment purposes, check out the following resources!



Computers 4 People



Everyone On

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS (BPS)

Check out the **BPS webpage** for important updates about the new school year, including information about school meals, transportation, back-to-school events and more!



ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER



The NUY Clinic newsletter is intended for neurodivergent adolescents ages 14-24 and their family members. The newsletter will feature helpful information, practical tips, valuable resources, and community highlights to help

neurodivergent teens and young adults in building skills, confidence and meaningful connections. Topics include independent living, education and employment support, mental health, social activities, and more!

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Katie Campbell: Newsletter Manager
Kailani Ye: Designer
Clare Westerman: Content Writer

David Yang: Content Writer
Natasha Soesanto: Content Writer
Sarah Hancock: Content Writer

Vaish Vemuri: Content Writer
Catherine Hsu: Content Writer
Crisilia Morel: Resource Support

If you have an idea for a future newsletter, email us at NUYinfo@bmc.org! We would love to hear from you!

ABOUT THE NUY CLINIC

At BMC's unique Neurodivergent Urban Youth (NUY) Clinic, we recognize, value, and celebrate neurodiversity. Our clinic brings together experts from Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Neurology, and Psychiatry within an interdisciplinary, comprehensive care model to support people ages 14 to 24 with neurodevelopmental conditions.

Our team embraces a patient-centered and holistic approach, working closely with patients and their families to ensure they receive care and services tailored to their individual needs and goals. In doing so, we equip patients and their families with the tools, guidance, and resources to navigate the transition to adulthood with greater confidence and clarity.

NUY CLINIC TEAM

Katie Campbell, MA: Senior Community Wellness Advocate
Alexandrine Dumont-Byron, BS: Case Management & Outreach Coordinator

Paul Hammerness, MD: Psychiatrist
Marilyn Augustyn, MD: Developmental Pediatrician
Joshua August, MD: Pediatric Neurologist

NUY
CLINIC
WEBSITE



If you have questions about the NUY Clinic, you can reach us at:

 NUYinfo@bmc.org

 617-414-0321