

# CONNECTIONS

Wellbeing Newsletter for Parents

a note from us

Parenthood can be rewarding, but it is ever busy, too! For many parents, finding time for yourself can be a challenge as you juggle family and relationships with your home and work life. With the practicalities of day-to-day life, it can be easy to forget to look after your own wellbeing needs, as well as those of your children, which can lead to feelings of stress or being overwhelmed. Self-care is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

Taking care of yourself allows you to be the best parent you can be. Factoring in regular time or activities for yourself will hopefully allow you to enjoy the good moments in life more and to find strength during tough times.

Here are a few ways to promote Self-Care in your life:

## Prioritize Sleep

- Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night.
- Establish a bedtime routine to promote better sleep.
- Nap, when possible, especially if your nights are interrupted.



## Healthy Eating

- Consume a balanced diet with a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day.
- Plan and prepare meals ahead to save time and make healthier choices.



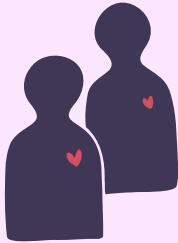
## Exercise Regularly

- Incorporate physical activity into your routine, even if it is just a short walk.
- Find activities you enjoy, making exercise a source of joy rather than a chore.
- Exercise helps reduce stress and boosts mood.



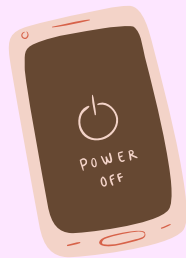
## Set Boundaries

- Learn to say no when necessary to avoid overcommitting.
- Establish clear boundaries between work, parenting, and personal time.
- Communicate your needs and limits to others.



## Create Me-Time

- Schedule regular breaks to engage in activities you love.
- Take short breaks throughout the day to recharge.
- Engage in hobbies that bring you joy and relaxation.



## Connect Socially

- Nurture relationships with friends and family.
- Schedule regular outings or activities with loved ones.
- Join parent support groups to share experiences and advice.

## Learn to Delegate

- Delegate tasks at home and at work when possible.
- Share parenting responsibilities with your partner or other family members.
- Recognize that it is okay to ask for and accept help.

## Continuous Learning

- Stay curious and engage in activities that stimulate your mind.
- Attend workshops or read books on parenting and self-improvement.

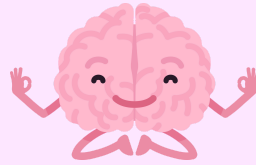


## Practice Mindfulness

- Incorporate mindfulness or meditation into your daily routine.
- Take moments to breathe deeply and stay present.
- Mindfulness can reduce stress and increase overall well-being

## Ask For Help

- Reach out to friends, family, or professionals when needed. Do not hesitate to seek professional help if you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Share responsibilities with your partner.



## Embrace Personal Growth and Development

- Remember, self-care is not selfish. It is an investment in your well-being, and by taking care of yourself, you are better equipped to care for your children. Find a balance that works for you, and do not hesitate to adapt your self-care routine as your needs evolve.



# Self Care for Primary Students

It is important for families to carve out space for quiet time. A few minutes of singing to your child, reading a book together, or listening to a kid-friendly YouTube meditation can strengthen your connection. Particularly for younger children, consider incorporating a “slow down” time in your family’s routine; this will also help train their brain to make mindful choices.



# Self Care for Middle and High Schoolers



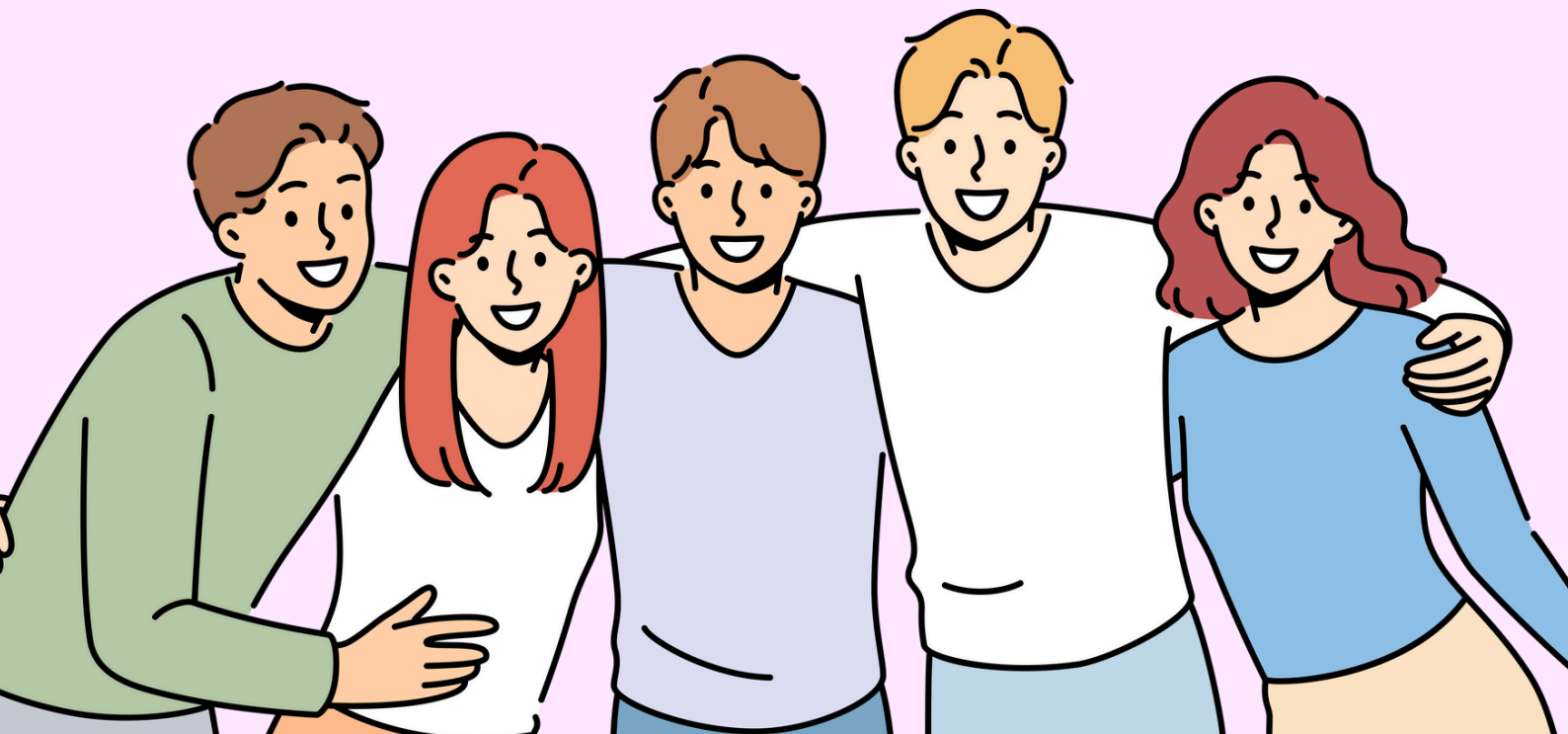
## ‘Leave it at the door’ exercise

Every time you enter a doorway in your home, take the opportunity to have a positive mental shift. **Remind yourself to leave the past behind and stay focused on the present.** This may make your teenager roll their eyes at first but if you begin by practicing this together, they may make a habit of it on their own.



## 3-step self-compassion break

During or after a stressful event, **practice a three-step, self-compassion break with your adolescent or model it for them to practice on their own.** The first step is to acknowledge this is a difficult moment (i.e. “This is stressful”). The second step is to acknowledge that stress and suffering are parts of life (i.e. “Other people feel this way; I’m not alone”). The last step is to ask yourself, what can I do to be kind to myself? It might help to think about what a loved one might tell you (i.e. “May I accept myself as I am; may I be strong”).





## **Engage the senses without a screen.**

**Encourage your teen to put their phone, tablet, gaming system, or computer away.** Try taking a few deep breaths and lighting a candle, listening to music, playing with sand/play dough, baking something, meditating, going for a walk/run, stretching or yoga, playing a sport, eating something healthy, creating art just for YOU, etc.



## **Do something for others.**

**Sometimes doing something for another person and taking the focus of us can clear our heads.** First, think about someone (a friend, teacher, coach, or family member), and ponder what they appreciate. Then, make or do something nice for that person like drawing a picture, doing the dishes, etc.



## **Open a family conversation about stress & health!**

Teens care about privacy and independence, so there may be times they try to hide any signs that they are experiencing stress. Many teens feel intense pressure to do well in school, sports, and extracurricular activities, to fit in with others or look a certain way.

The first step in helping your teen cope and **build resilience is to make mental health an open topic in your family.** If kids know it is OK to say they are not OK, they will feel safe sharing what is happening in their lives.

**Parents who listen without judgment, ask open-ended questions and express empathy and support can build the trust and understanding teens need to reveal their concerns and ask for help.**





# Make Self-Care a Family Affair

In a stressful world, building resilience is a family health issue. You can support your child by agreeing on healthy routines that all of you will follow. Here are some tips that center on practices that help all humans feel their best.

1

**Healthy rest.** Work with your child to create bedtime routines that enhance relaxation and calm, leading to at least 8 hours of restful sleep.

2

**Tasty, nutritious meals you enjoy together.** The random chatter that happens while you are cooking, setting the table, and eating together can foster connection (and help you pick up signals that your child needs extra support). Mealtime also gives you the chance to talk about the stress-busting superpower of healthy foods that deliver essential nutrients.

3

**Physical activity.** Regular exercise is a proven way to release tension, elevate mood and improve sleep. Parents who enjoy a sport or activity can invite kids to join in, keeping the competition friendly and the focus on fun. Families that swim, run, play, ski, skate or walk together will benefit from an active lifestyle.

4

**Healthy media use.** Tech is here to stay, but there's growing evidence that we need to use it thoughtfully. Help your children set media priorities that reflect your intentions around digital devices and content, emphasizing issues such as safety, privacy, kindness, compassion, and other shared goals.

Self-care can be anything that calms and relaxes us. Support your child's independence by encouraging them to seek out ways of unwinding that work well for them. These can be solo pursuits or something your child enjoys with others.

# ***Reinforce healthy views that support teen and family well-being***

Stress often comes from sources outside us, but our own beliefs and attitudes can feed our anxieties too. You can help your teen by offering healthy, empowering perspectives like these:

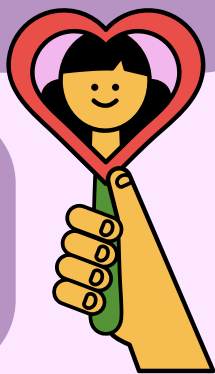


**There is no perfect.** Comparing our lives (or bodies, careers, or relationships) to others can fuel depression, anxiety, and poor self-esteem. Helping your teen build a healthy context for the glossy images and videos they see on social media (and in fact, about everywhere) will support their health.

**Grind culture is not healthy or realistic.** The popular narrative tells us we need to be "on" 24/7 to succeed, but our brains and bodies need rest to perform well. Let your teen know that long-term success comes from healthy practices like the ones they are developing now.



**Feeling prepared helps melt stress.** Building healthy communication skills that help us advocate for ourselves without anxiety or guilt is another way of feeling ready for life's challenges.



**We can talk back to negative self-talk.** When an inner voice says, "My life is the worst," it can help to imagine things going a very different way with some hard work and a little help. This simple habit can make a real difference in turning around negative thoughts that can erode our well-being.



**We are in this together.** The world's longest-running study of happiness shows that close relationships are the secret to a happy, healthy life. Encourage your teen to seek out friends and mentors who will expand the circle of strength that surrounds them. Let them know that asking for help when they are down another essential way, they can care for themselves and their long-term health.