

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

WELLBEING NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

MAY 2024

A Note from us,

We hope you are having a great start to the week! In this edition of our newsletter, we are excited to share tips to promote the wellbeing of your family.

In the tapestry of parenting, nurturing positive mental health in children is a masterpiece waiting to be crafted. As parents, you hold the brush, and your actions are the strokes that shape your child's emotional landscape. In understanding the fundamentals of mental health in childhood, recognising the challenges they face and embracing your crucial role, you pave the way for resilient, emotionally healthy children.



The Importance of Positive Mental Health in Children

Mental health is an integral part of a child's overall well-being. Just as we prioritise their physical health, it is important to recognise that emotional and psychological well-being are equally vital. Positive mental health in childhood sets the stage for a fulfilling and successful adulthood. It equips children with the tools to cope with life's challenges, build meaningful relationships and pursue their dreams.

COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY PRETEENS AND TEENS:

Children today encounter challenges that can impact their mental health:

- **Academic Pressure:** The pursuit of academic excellence can lead to stress, anxiety, and exhaustion.
- **Peer and Social Pressures:** Navigating friendship, peer pressure, and social dynamics can have an adverse effect on children.
- **Digital Overload:** The ubiquity of screens and social media exposes children to new challenges like cyberbullying and digital addiction.



NOW, LET US EXPLORE PARENTS' ESSENTIAL ROLE IN ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES AND PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH.



1. USE A BALANCED PARENTING STYLE.

Use a balanced parenting style when raising a teen because this approach to parenting leads to better mental health. This parenting style balances warmth and rules, so teens know they are cared for even when they make a mistake.

2. OPEN AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION.

Communication is the cornerstone of a healthy parent-child relationship. Be an active listener. Encourage your child to express their thoughts and feelings openly. Create a safe and non-judgmental environment where they feel comfortable sharing their concerns. You become their emotional anchor when they know they can confide in you.

Tips

- *Ask open-ended questions like, "How was your day?" to encourage conversation.*
- *Listen actively and validate their feelings, even if you do not agree with them.*
- *Avoid being judgmental or dismissive of their emotions.*

3. TEACH RESILIENCE AND COPING STRATEGIES:

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity. Parents can help children develop this essential skill by teaching them effective coping strategies. This includes problem-solving, stress management and emotional regulation techniques.

Tips

- *Encourage problem-solving by asking, "What can we do to improve this?"*
- *Teach deep breathing exercises to manage stress and anxiety.*
- *Model healthy coping mechanisms through your actions.*

4. SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS:

While wanting the best for your child is natural, setting unrealistic expectations can lead to stress and perfectionism. Instead, focus on setting achievable goals and celebrating their efforts rather than just their achievements.

Tips

- *Encourage a growth mindset where effort and persistence are valued over innate talent.*
 - *Remind them that mistakes are opportunities for learning and growth.*
 - *Emphasise the importance of doing their best rather than being the best.*
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5. PROMOTE A BALANCED LIFESTYLE:

Help your child strike a balance between academics, extracurricular activities, and downtime. Overloading their schedule can lead to burnout and negatively impact their mental health.

Tips

- *Ensure they have time for relaxation, hobbies, and unstructured play.*
- *Monitor screen time and encourage outdoor activities.*
- *Model a balanced lifestyle by prioritising your well-being.*

6. BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL:

Children often emulate their parents' behaviour and attitudes. Modelling positive mental health practices can profoundly impact your child's well-being.

Tips

- *Taking care of yourself is a strategic act of parenting because it models self-care. Taking time to enjoy hobbies and relax is vital to maintaining your health and well-being. You should encourage your teen to do the same, so they do not develop the outlook that life is all work and no play.*
- *Also, forgive yourself when you make a mistake or are not living to your own standards. Your teen is watching you! The compassion you show for yourself will reassure teens that they can come to you when they need you the most. They will learn that just as you are compassionate with yourself, you will be compassionate with them.*

7. KNOW THE SIGNS

We all experience stress in life. What matters is how we cope with that stress. When stress becomes overwhelming, it can lead to poor mental health. Teens (and adults!) need proper sleep, nutrition, and exercise to manage stress.

While it is common to see our teens dealing with stress, we may not always realize when there is more at play. Teens rely on adults to identify the signs that they may be dealing with anxiety and steer them towards help.

8. SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

Reaching out for professional help is a sign of strength. Sometimes, the problems in our lives become so overwhelming that we need help from someone with special training in counselling or therapy. They can support our ability to cope. Whether you are seeking help for yourself or for your child, professionals are eager to help you feel better.

In a world that often feels complex and uncertain, your unwavering support, open communication and commitment to your child's well-being can be the bedrock upon which they build a brighter, more resilient future.

Thank you for reading!

A stylized illustration of a family of four sitting on the floor and reading books together. From left to right: a man with short brown hair, a woman with long dark hair, a young boy with short dark hair, and a young girl with long dark hair. They are all smiling and looking at their books. The man is wearing a light blue shirt, the woman a red dress, the boy a light blue shirt, and the girl a red dress. The illustration is rendered in a soft, painterly style with a warm, muted color palette.