

Mental Health and Wellness Tips for Students

Use healthy coping skills to help overcome challenges

- Utilize breathing exercises, visualization, and other [mindfulness activities](#).
- Explore creative outlets, such as music, drawing, or writing
- Engage in movement, including yoga and dance.
- Seek outdoor activities in nature.
- Reach out to trusted friends and mentors.
- Set a more structured schedule.

Mind-body wellness; physical well-being

- Get enough rest and sleep (8-10 hours daily).
- Have a “technology curfew”; limit [screen time](#).
- Exercise and eat a [balanced diet](#).

Open and positive communication; social well-being

- Talk about what is troubling you with a trusted adult.
- Know how to seek assistance when struggling or confused and unsure.

Identify and understand your feelings; psychological well-being

- When feeling angry, worried or troubled, discuss your feelings with a parent, another trusted adult, or a trusted friend.
- Teachers, counselors and coaches are examples of adults who can help.

Set goals for physical, social, and psychological well-being

- Develop [SMART goals](#) for the future to help you stay focused on things that really matter. This can help you put day-to-day problems into perspective.

Abstain from substance abuse

- [Avoid using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs](#); these don't help with problems and often make things worse. Instead, think about positive ways to handle problems and the feelings that go along with them.

Get involved in your school and community, social well-being

- Inquire about a club, group or sports team that your school sponsors that you could join and be a part of.
- Find out how you can volunteer in your community

Make positive and healthy decisions

- Be able to problem solve using the healthy decision making model and resolve any conflicts.
- Understand consequences of actions and be able to reflect on decisions made.

Know where and who you can go to for support

- Be familiar with support staff at your school, and know how to access information about available resources in your community.
- Identify trusted adults at home and at school that you can seek guidance and support from.

Be Kind

- Promote positive behaviors such as respect, responsibility, and kindness around you in common areas, such as hallways, cafeterias, locker rooms, and playgrounds.
- Prevent negative behaviors such as bullying and harassment.
- Work together with peers to stand up to a bully, encourage them to reach out to lonely or excluded peers, promote acts of kindness, and seek the availability of adult support.

Express love and gratitude to others

- Praise should always occur more frequently than criticism.
- Positive emotions help to buffer students from mental illnesses like depression and anxiety.
- Telling a friend that you care and one positive thing about them can make someone's day!

Get to know your school counselor <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/careers-roles>

- Do you know who your school counselor is? Find time to say hello and get to know who he/she is.

- Do you like helping people? Maybe school counseling could be a career for you! Get to know what school counselors do.

Learn how to do something well

- Becoming good at a task can help build positive self-esteem.
- Anyone can become good with at least one activity. It could be learning an instrument, doing well in school, playing a sport, and/or helping others.
- Each of us has hidden talents. Find out what you can excel in!

Get to know your building pupil personnel worker (PPW) and what he/she does in your building

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/SSSP/PPW/index.aspx>

- Do you know who your PPW is? Find time to say hello and get to know who he/she is.
- Do you like helping people? Maybe being an advocate for students could be a career for you! Get to know what PPWs do.

Get Connected!

- Build positive relationships with those around you.
- Avoid people who bring you down.
- Seek support and guidance from those you trust and feel valued by.

Be Optimistic in the face of difficulty!

- Seek help if you need it.
- Work together to solve problems
- Avoid the blame-game; it interferes with problem-solving.
- Work with people's strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses

Get fit!

- Good physical health prepares the body and mind to be more resilient.
- Healthy eating habits, regular exercise and adequate sleep protect kids against the stress of tough situations.
- Regular exercise also decreases negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression.

Think positive!

- Modeling positive attitudes and positive emotions is very important.
-
- Using a "can do" problem-solving approach to problems can empower you

and give you a sense of promise.

Encourage helping others.

- Know that you can make a difference. Pro-social behaviors build self-esteem, foster connectedness, reinforce personal responsibility, and present opportunities for positive recognition.
- Helping others and getting involved reinforces being part of the community.

Get to know your building school psychologist and what he/she does in your building <https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/who-are-school-psychologists>

- Do you know who your school psychologist is? Find time to say hello and get to know who he/she is.
- Do you like helping people? Maybe school psychology could be a career for you! Get to know what school psychologists do.

Express gratitude to others

- Emotions are contagious. Express gratitude to your parents, siblings, families, friends, neighbors, and strangers.
- Say thank you when someone helps or does something nice for you.
- Share with others something for which you are grateful.

Express gratitude to yourself

- Keep a “Good Stuff” journal - write down positive things that happen and share
 - Why this good thing happened;
 - What this good thing means to you;
 - What you can do tomorrow to enable more of this good thing;
 - What you learned from taking the time to name this good thing; and
 - What ways you or others contribute to this good thing.

Unlock Potential. Find Your Password!

- Set goals.
- Identify action steps.
- Communicate need.
- Engage in discussions to help create the connections.

References:

“Resiliency: Strategies for Parents and Educators,” Virginia Smith Harvey, *Helping Children at Home and School II: Handouts for Families and Educators*, NASP, 2004

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/mental-health/prevention-and-wellness-promotion/building-resiliency-helping-children-learn-to-weather-tough-times>

National Association of School Psychologists. (2017). *Supporting children’s mental health: Tips for parents and educators* [Handout]. Bethesda, MD: Author.

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/mental-health/prevention-and-wellness-promotion/supporting-childrens-mental-health-tips-for-parents-and-educators-x38466>

[http://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy-tools-and-resources/school-psychology-awareness-week-\(spaw\)/gratitude-works-program](http://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy-tools-and-resources/school-psychology-awareness-week-(spaw)/gratitude-works-program)