

# 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.
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- 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)