

Supporting Your Child's Mental Health at Any Age

10 Tips to Use in Everyday Life

1. **EXERCISE.** Encourage play and exercise as they are healthy outlets that work both the brain and body.
2. **REST.** Help your child manage stress by building in rest and relaxation time each day.
3. **NOURISH.** A healthy well-being starts with daily positive habits. Try cooking as a family, making healthy food choices, eating on a regular schedule, and getting exercise.
4. **LISTEN.** Actively listen to your kids before speaking or offering advice. Allow them to express their feelings and help them feel heard and understood.
5. **TALK.** Use open-ended questions to learn more about their day and how they are feeling. Engage them in conversation as much as you can to build interpersonal skills and create a trusting environment.
6. **ENCOURAGE.** Regularly support, encourage, and praise your child. Acknowledge positive decisions and choices. Praise your child's effort and not just their achievements.
7. **BE PATIENT.** Children experience different challenges at every age. It may take time for your child to open up to you or get into a new routine. Practice patience with them, respond calmly when their emotions are elevated, and guide them in exercising their problem-solving skills.
8. **BE PRESENT.** Schedule time for your family to be together without the distractions of electronic devices. This can be as simple as eating dinner together, going for a walk, or using a car ride as time to talk.
9. **BE A MODEL.** By taking care of yourself through healthy habits and daily routines, you are showing your child how well-being works. Practice self-care, positive self-talk, setting boundaries, and kindness to others as you work to strengthen the mental health of yourself and your family.
10. **SEEK HELP.** Don't be afraid to seek help from professionals or other adults if you think your child is struggling. Being proactive is never a bad idea – establishing supportive relationships is an important part of your child's well-being.

RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Provides 24/7, free, confidential support for people in distress, and prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.

Call: 1-800-273-8255

Chat: [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline

Free service providing information, referrals, and support to people living with a mental health condition, family members and caregivers.

Call: 800-950-6264

Text: "NAMI" to 741741

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Learn some common warning signs that your child or family member may be struggling with their mental health. It's not always easy to determine which behaviors are normal and which may be indicating something more is happening under the surface.

Symptoms may vary by individual or illness, but may include:

- Excessive worry or fear
- Consistent feelings of sadness or "down in the dumps"
- Frequent disobedience or aggressive behaviors
- Frequent temper tantrums or extreme mood swings
- Problems concentrating/changes in school performance
- Frequent nightmares or trouble sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Complaining of consistent physical pain such as headaches, stomach aches, body aches
- Thinking or talking about suicide