

FAMILY TIMES

Teen Edition

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Moore Public Schools
Mental Health Team



Self Care for Caregivers

by Deanna Wasson, LMSW U/S

Self care is often talked about as a luxury to relieve stress. In reality, it is important to make it a priority so that we can cope with life's daily tasks and challenges. Take a moment to reflect, assess, and develop a plan to care for yourself.

Let's get physical

Adequate sleep and nutrition: Sleeping 7-9 hours per night, along with a balanced diet, provides your body with increased energy and ability to focus throughout the day.

Movement: Exercise promotes positive moods through hormone responses, as well as over physical health.

I second that emotion

Support system: Do you have a safe person and space to process your thoughts and feelings?

Name your emotions: Control your feelings by acknowledging them, rather than pushing them away or letting them overwhelm you.

Always on my mind

Learn something new: Take time for an interesting hobby or challenge for yourself.

Healthy thinking: Practice acceptance and compassion for yourself and others to increase positive perspectives and inner dialogue.

Self Care Quiz:

1. **What do you need?**
2. **Are there areas of your life that you aren't giving enough attention?**
3. **What is causing you stress, and how are you coping?**
4. **How can you care for yourself in these areas?**

Make a plan. Remember, little steps can take you a long way. Practice and adjust as you want or need changes.

Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/self-care-strategies-overall-stress-reduction-3144729>

In this Issue:

- Helping your student with stress and how to determine if further help is needed
- Upcoming Event
Parent and Teen Night with the Mental Health Team

We can't
lecture teens
into change,
we have to
model it.

- Kirsten
Cobabe

Stress Management

by Courtney Folsom, MSHR, LPC, CRC

Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the demands of life. There are times we may feel pushed beyond our ability to cope with daily challenges or prolonged exposure to stressful events. Stress management can help your mind and body adapt. Without it, chronic stress can lead to serious health problems over time.



The Mayo Clinic defines stress management as the tools, strategies, or techniques that reduce stress and reduce the negative impacts stress has on your mental or physical well-being.

To best combat the negative effects of stress, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris recommends focusing on these specific areas in your life:

- **Sleep**
- **Nutrition**
- **Mental Health**
- **Mindfulness**
- **Healthy Relationships**

Take a second and reflect on these areas of your life. Is there one step you could take today to improve one of these areas? Small steps can make a big difference over time. Don't wait until stress damages your health, relationships, or quality of life. Start practicing stress management techniques today.

Sources: The Deepest Well, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris
Mayo Clinic: Stress Symptoms: Effects on Your Body and Behavior

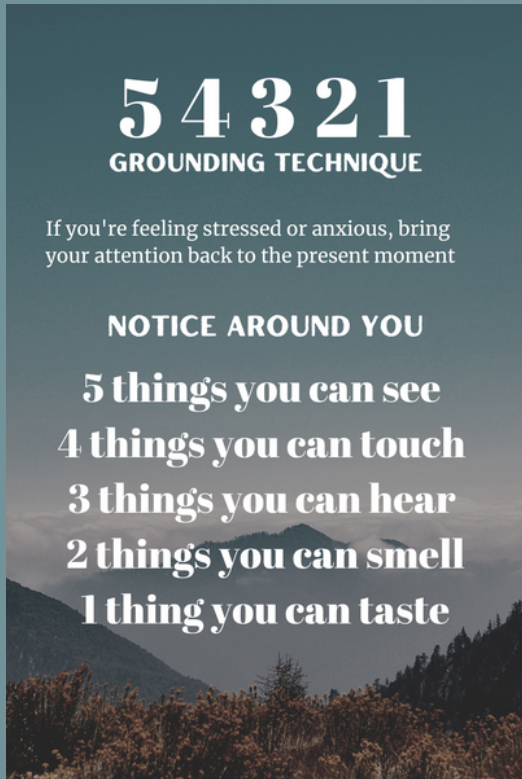
Regulation Skill

5 4 3 2 1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

If you're feeling stressed or anxious, bring your attention back to the present moment

NOTICE AROUND YOU

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste



Try this grounding technique with your student today to practice calming.

COPING CORNER

Mindfulness in Nature by Lori Stuart-Worth, LCSW

Have you ever noticed how tough it is to be present? We spend so much time worrying about the future or thinking about the past. These constant thoughts can get in the way of enjoying parts of our life and may amplify feelings of stress. One strategy to boost your mood, and help you and your teen cope, is to spend a mindful moment in nature. Mindfulness is the act of paying attention to what is happening in the present moment without judgment.

Why nature? Psychological research reveals that environments can increase or reduce our stress, and being in nature is linked to reducing stress, anger, and fear while increasing pleasant feelings. There is even research that shows spending time in nature can improve cognition, concentration, and health outcomes.

To practice mindfulness in nature, step outside and go to a green space. You can be in your yard, in a park, or on a walk down the street. Find a spot to rest and take a deep breath. Now observe what is around you; notice what you see: note the clouds, trees, flowers, and animals, bugs, and birds around you. What can you hear and smell? Try and touch something like the bark of a tree or grass and notice its texture.

Now take a moment to check in on yourself. Recognize what you are feeling and just allow it to be—there is no need to label your feelings as good or bad. Take all the time you need to notice what is around you and within you. As you finish this moment of mindfulness offer gratitude for the natural world around you.

Source: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>

Tech Takeover

by Jeanette Henson, M.Ed., LPC

Technology has become essential to our current way of life. According to Best Writing (2022), the average amount of screen time for Americans is seven hours. We depend on it for everything from connection with others, recipes, researching, news, shopping, navigation, and entertainment. As adults, you can remember the simple life without technology. However, the eye-opening reality is that this current generation doesn't know life without technology. Think about how much technology affects our daily living? It is difficult to go through an entire day and not encounter some kind of technology.

Monitoring screen time is important, but instead of focusing on the amount of time teens are spending on technology we should be focusing on the quality of their time. Are they using it for good or are they using it to avoid and procrastinate? We all know there are scary things within technology that can have negative effects. Being engaged with your teen's online interests can help build that positive aspect of what technology provides. Working out how to behave online is now a new social skill that we have the responsibility to teach our teens. Here are some tips to assist teens in experiencing quality time online:

1. **Engage in conversations regarding advantages and disadvantages of technology and your expectations for its use in your household**
2. **Don't look at technology as a "right" held by your teen. Instead, consider implementing restrictions that will benefit their needs at the time**
3. **Set limits, get all passwords, and track digital actions**
4. **Limit seclusion from adults during usage and take the time to know what teens are doing**

As a parent, the number one issue surrounding all this is trying to understand the impact of technology on physical and mental health. The more engaged you are with your teen's actions online, the better equipped you will be to work through any negative affects your teen may encounter.

Sources: <https://www.fusionacademy.com/resources/technology-and-our-teens/>
<https://bestwriting.com/blog/screen-time-statistics>

Teen Connection

By Candace Ladd, MHR, LPC

Teens still need physical connection. Although we know that it is common for our teens to withdraw and prioritize their friendships over connecting with us, they still very much need our attention and affection. They may not ask for it and they may even act annoyed by it, but connection brings a sense of belonging and makes us feel loved.

As our children get older, we tend to pull back on our physical affection many times in order to give them their space, autonomy, and independence. What we may forget is that we too need physical touch and affection and that if we need it so do they.

Hugging is a great way to bring physical connection and it has many valuable rewards. Hugs release a hormone called oxytocin in the brain. This is known as 'the bonding molecule' as it increases feelings of intimacy, helps bonding and reduces feelings of loneliness and isolation. Hugs also release dopamine – the pleasure hormone – which creates feelings of happiness or euphoria. Hugs also lower blood pressure, reduce the amount of the stress hormone cortisol in our bodies, release tension and send calming messages to our brain. When we are stressed or anxious, we need other people and connection more than ever.

Upcoming Family Event

Are you interested in learning additional strategies to connect and support your teen?

You and your student are welcome to join our Parent and Teen Night.

Scan this QR code to find more information and to register online.



Registration Not Required



Parent and Teen Night

SUPPORTING TEEN MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

CONNECTING AND TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN

Presented by the MPS Mental Health Team

November 3rd
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Moore High School

Family therapist Virginia Satir once said, "We need four hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth." The moral of the story is go home and hug your teens, you may realize that you needed a hug just as much as they do. **Connection matters.**



Teens and Depression

by Tammy Mayer, M.Ed., LPC



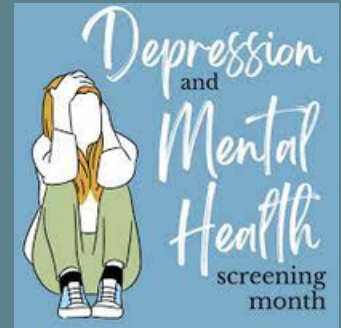
Being a teenager can be tough, but it shouldn't feel hopeless. If your teenager has been feeling sad a lot of the time for a few weeks or longer, are not able to concentrate, or do the things they used to enjoy, talk to your teen about what you are noticing.

- **Do they report feeling sad, anxious, worthless, or even empty?**
- **Have they lost interest in activities they used to enjoy?**
- **Do they get easily frustrated, irritable, or angry?**
- **Is your teen withdrawing from friends and family?**
- **Are their grades dropping?**
- **Has your teen's eating or sleeping habits changed?**
- **Has your teen experienced any fatigue or memory loss?**
- **Has your teen expressed thoughts about suicide or harming themselves?**

Depression looks different for everyone. They might have many of the symptoms listed above or just a few.

You and your teenager are not alone, and help is available. They can feel better. Explore these options.

- Encourage your teen to talk to a trusted adult about how they have been feeling. The school counselor is a great first step.
- Ask your teen's doctor about options for professional help. Depression can be treated with talk therapy, medication, or a combination of medication and therapy.
- Try to spend time with your teen and encourage them to spend time with friends even if your teen doesn't want to.
- Encourage your teen to stay active and exercise even if it's just going for a walk. Physical activity releases chemicals, such as endorphins, in their brain that can help them feel better.
- Help your teen try to keep a regular sleep schedule.
- Offer regular meals and express the importance of eating healthy foods.



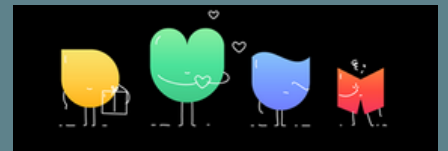
October was Depression and Mental Health Screening month. Online screening is a fast, easy way to determine if you are experiencing mental health conditions. Use the QR code below to take a mental health test at MH America.



MHA Screening

Free App for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Apps are a great resource for you and your child to support your overall mental health. They can serve as reminder to check in with yourself and give you new tools and tips.



How We Feel

The How We Feel App allows you to check in and track your emotions. It creates a journal to spot patterns and give you ideas to help yourself in the moment.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@MPS_MentalHealth



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

Mental Health Resources
for more information

<https://www.mooreschools.com/Page/52192>