

# Teen Mental Health Tip Sheet



## RELATIONSHIPS

Nurturing healthy relationships has a huge impact on life satisfaction. Here are things you can do:

- Choose face-to-face connections over online ones.
- Surround yourself with those with whom you trust.
- Promote positivity in others.
- Avoid those who make you feel bad about yourself.
- Avoid those who pressure you to be someone you are not.
- Do not try to change others.
- Set clear boundaries for yourself.
- Be willing to forgive.



## SLEEP

Three out of four teens say they do not get enough sleep. This can negatively impact mood and anxiety symptoms. Here are simple strategies to improve sleep:

- Prioritize sleep.
- Have a consistent sleep schedule.
- Make the area you sleep in quiet, comfortable and free of distractions.
- Follow a relaxing pre-bed routine.
- Limit naps during the day.
- Limit caffeine drinks in the afternoon.
- Limit bright lights and electronic screens to help your body's natural melatonin production.
- Unplug from electronics well before bedtime if possible.



## TECHNOLOGY USE

Technology is a part of every aspect of our lives. But some types of screen use can have a negative impact the mental health of many teenagers. Follow these tips to help control your technology instead of letting it control you.

- Take purposeful breaks from technology.
- Review privacy settings.
- Limit notifications.
- Lock or unfollow toxic accounts and pages.
- Limit screen time (especially at bedtime).
- Foster positivity in online spaces by being a good online citizen.



## SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

Our brains continue to develop at rapid rates well into our 20s. Substance abuse can negatively impact the development of the brain and may have long-lasting effects. These impacts may contribute to:

- Depression
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Poor focus
- Sleep disruption
- And many other negative impacts.

Substance use may include alcohol, tobacco or vaping products, marijuana, synthetic drugs and inappropriate use of prescription pills.

Substance use may occur due to:

- Peer pressure.
- Self-medicating to relieve stress or pain.
- An unhealthy coping strategy.
- Experimenting.

It is often unsafe, illegal and can make depression or anxiety symptoms in the long-term.



## DIET

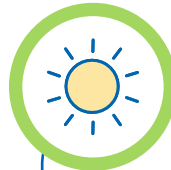
Eat a well-balanced diet to improve both physical and mental health. It is important to eat regular meals to avoid drops in blood sugar levels. This also maintains energy needed for body and brain functions. Gut health is closely tied to brain function and mental health. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and beans for gut health, brain function and mental health. Probiotics may provide support also. Sharing meals with others can improve mood and fosters connection with others.

# Teen Mental Health Tip Sheet (continued)



## EXERCISE

Exercise can improve self-esteem, body image and sleep. Regular aerobic exercise such as jogging, swimming, cycling, walking or sports can release chemicals in the body which help improve mood, decreased stress and improved energy. Strength training can benefit both mental and physical health.



## SUNLIGHT

Exposure to sunlight, especially in the morning, has been shown to improve mood, anxiety, alertness and general health. Always remember to protect yourself from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation with sunscreen. Never look directly at the sun as it may cause damage to your eyes.



## HYDRATION

Drinking water throughout the day improves physical and mental health by reducing fatigue, improving alertness and helping with depression and anxiety. Carrying a water bottle around with you through the day can serve as a reminder to stay hydrated when you are busy or not thinking about it. Watch for signs of dehydration:

- Thirst
- Dry mouth
- Dark urine
- Rapid heart rate
- Constipation
- Sleepiness
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Nausea



## SELF-CARE

Develop regular and sustainable self-care practices, which address five basic pillars:

- **Physical:** diet, exercise, sleep.
- **Social:** family, friends, colleagues and those you interact with on a regular basis.
- **Emotional:** regularly checking in on your emotions so that you may feel, process and release emotions in a safe and non-judgmental manner.
- **Intellectual:** reading, learning, self-development and personal growth.
- **Spiritual:** yoga, meditation, religious worship.



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