



TEN TIPS FOR TEEN WELLNESS

1

Connect With Your Teen Through Conversation

Why? Having a trusted adult is one of the most important factors to increase resiliency and mental health wellness in teens.

How? Schedule a time to converse with your child. Show interest in what they talk about. Be an active listener: no cell phone, pay attention, don't judge, repeat and summarize what your teen shares with you.

2

Limit Social Media

Why? Over 3 hours of social media per day increases teens' risk of mental health problems. Kids need to escape the constant peer pressure, negative comments, and bullying that can happen on social media. Their brains need a break!

How? Set time limits. Take electronics at night consistently. . Have a conversation (see #1) about social media and develop expectations together.

3

Teach Basic Coping Skills

Why? Teens are in the process of developing lifelong habits. Coping skills increases resiliency in youth, and teaches them healthy ways to manage challenges.

How? Experiment with what works for you and your teen! Ideas include: deep breathing, taking a break from the situation, walking or other physical activities, journaling, coloring and listening to music.

4

Diet

Why? Diet is directly linked to mood and brain development and function. (As kids get older, they eat out of the house more often- do the best you can!)

How? Ask your teen what their favorite foods are. Pick some ideas that are healthy and have those on hand as much as possible. Schools have free breakfast and lunch this year, so encourage your child to eat meals throughout the day. Limit sugary drinks as much as possible and encourage water. Talk with your teen about their diet and make little changes to get started.



5

Exercise

Why? Exercise reduces stress! Exercise causes a release of endorphins in the brain-these are the happy chemicals! These happy chemicals reduce anxiety and depression in our teens! Exercise also boosts self-esteem and promotes a more positive self image.

How? The Centers for Disease Control recommends at least 60 minutes of activity on most days for teens. Find something your teen likes to do and encourage that! Bonus: Exercise together! Go outside!

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6 Extracurricular Activities

Why? Extracurricular activities are associated with improved academic engagement and performance. They build strong connections with peers, strong time management skills and increase social skills in teens. Activities like art and music increase neural connections on both sides of the brain. These connections are beneficial in all aspects of a teen's brain.

How? Encourage your teen to try something new! Explore around your community and see what is out there! Check out the Glenwood Rec Center and after school programs at your child's school. If you need some ideas, call the school... there are often flyers in the main office and ideas posted on the school's social media pages.

7 Support Community Connection

Why? Connecting with the community ensures your teen is able to develop relationships with peers and trusted adults outside of the home. Also, helping others helps your teen feel better!

How? Look for service project, volunteering opportunities, yard clean up for elderly neighbors, working with a younger student, tutoring... or have your teen come up with some ideas!



8 Discipline with Dignity

Why? Discipline comes from the Latin word, "to teach." Discipline should teach teens responsible behavior and self-control.

How? *Regulate, Connect, Redirect*

Regulate: When our brains are clam, our brains can produce rational thoughts. Take some time to calm down before addressing anything. Make sure you and your teen are calm. Be patient! This can take some time!

Connect: Build on your relationship and trust. Listen to your teen, share perspectives, and don't judge.

Redirect: Work with your teen to teach them about owning their behavior and how to change the outcome of their actions next time. Have your teen brainstorm how to repair any harm that was caused.

9 Model Self Care

Why? You can not pour from an empty cup. If you aren't well-rested, eating healthy and prioritizing your physical and mental health, you can't be at your best! This is a huge aspiration for most parents- do the best you can!

How? Set some priorities and small, attainable goals for yourself. You could even do this with your teen! As parents of teens, we often think that they want to do the exact opposite of what we do... this is not true! They are always watching... Model self care for your teen.

10 Nobody Succeeds Alone

Why? This is hard!!!!

How? Lean on others for support. Raising a teen is not easy for anyone, no matter what they say. Reach out to health care providers, mental health clinicians, teachers, coaches, school counselors, and friends. Find support groups you can attend (RFSchools has one). There is power in sharing stories. Give yourself some grace. Everyone makes mistakes. Everyday is a learning opportunity, and we are all doing our best.



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