

Healthy Minds Overview

Life is full of ups and downs. It is normal for our emotional state to change on a day-to-day basis and in periods throughout our lives. Many difficult situations, like the death of a loved one or the COVID-19 pandemic, are unavoidable. When our minds are healthy and strong, we are more resilient to life's challenges, able to use healthy coping methods, have better relationships, maintain our overall health and well-being, and prevent chronic illnesses. That's why it is important to be proactive about our mental health!

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and feel able to contribute to their community.

What is Mental Illness?

Mental illness is defined as having a mental, behavioral or emotional disorder. In the U.S., more than [20% of adults](#) and have a mental health disorder and one in six children ([17.4%](#)) between the ages of two and eight in the United States have been diagnosed with one. Mental illness is treatable. The severity and impact of mental illness on day-to-day function vary from person to person.

The Mind/Body Connection

There is a strong link between our physical and our mental well-being, often referred to as the mind/body connection. When we take good care of our bodies, we can avoid chronic disease, increase energy, sleep better, produce "feel good" chemicals and give our mind the nutrients it needs to stay healthy. When we take good care of our mental health, we can reduce aches, pains and digestive issues, which helps us feel better physically.



The Whole Child Approach

Whole Child development includes all areas of children's development and learning—from social, emotional and cognitive skills to literacy, math and science. Supporting the whole child is a shared responsibility of families, schools and the community. Together, we can ensure that every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged.

A key piece of considering all aspects of your child's well-being is helping them build social and emotional skills. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people (and adults!) gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. While SEL can be implemented in schools, it can also be taught in your home.

The Importance of Family Engagement

Relationships strongly impact our physical and mental health, starting at an early age. When a child is provided with strong social, emotional and physical support through family engagement in their daily life, they are more likely to reach their full potential academically and socially, and experience better overall health outcomes in adulthood.

Learn More

Check out this infographic by NAMI: [You Are Not Alone](#). And access National PTA's Healthy Minds resources at [PTA.org/HealthyMinds](https://www.pta.org/HealthyMinds).