



HEALTHY MINDS HABITS MESSAGING

This messaging complements the graphics on [PTA.org/HealthyMinds](https://www.pta.org/HealthyMinds). You can post it on social media or include it in your newsletters. More suggestions for how to promote Healthy Minds via your PTA's channels can be found [here](#).

CATEGORY 1: KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Use these messages to share information with families they might not be aware of!

- Did you know school counselors are available for your family to talk to, even if you are just a little bit concerned?
- Did you know all discussions with your school's counselor or nurse are confidential and free?
- Did you know that sleep is closely linked to mental health? Aim for at least nine hours of sleep for 6-to-12-year-olds, at least eight hours for teenagers and at least seven hours for adults.

CATEGORY 2: HELPING KIDS COPE

These reminders and tips give families ideas for how you can help build coping skills.

- You are your kid's biggest role model. Talk to them about your own stressors or fears and how you deal with them.
- The hardest time for people with anxiety is right before the event or task they are worried about. Keep this time period as short as possible for your child. Less time = less time to worry.
- Is your family looking for a calming activity to do together? Deep breathing is free, easy and can be done anywhere.
- Getting outdoors and exploring nature can be a great boost to mental health and overall energy. Try to do a family activity outside this week!
- Encourage your students to use art to convey how they feel. Explore new art forms together to develop new coping strategies for your whole family to use.
- Through creating, people develop personal processes and skills that help them convey the meaning of their artwork. Create something with your children and explore their process to help them better understand how they can develop their own coping mechanisms.

CATEGORY 3: TALK ABOUT IT!

These suggested questions and tips can get families talking to each other about their mental health.

- Pro tip: Car rides to/from after-school events are a great time to check in with your kid! This gives children time to wind down after leaving school before being asked a bunch of questions.



- Conversation starter: Instead of asking your child how their day was, ask them what the most surprising thing that happened during the day was and why.
- It can be hard for some people to find the bright spots in a day, especially when life is feeling particularly tough or when facing anxiety, depression or other challenges. For others, it can be difficult to admit something didn't go well or that they're just not feeling particularly positive. Create space for all feelings by encouraging your children to share one good thing and one challenging thing about each day.
- Art is a great way to help your child share emotions they may not know how to verbalize. Create something with your children and ask them to describe what emotions they were feeling while they made it.

CATEGORY 4: CREATE CONNECTION!

One great way to boost mental health is to help people feel connected, whether that's to their family or friends, to their larger community or to their heritage!

- Reach out to one friend and see how they're doing today. Sometimes receiving a friendly message can be just what someone needs—and can help improve your mood too!
- Try a new activity you haven't done before and bring a friend or family member along! Pushing ourselves beyond our comfort zones can be a great way to build connection. No need to go crazy—this might be cooking a new meal, learning to knit or trying out yoga.
- Talk as a family and choose one activity to do together in the next week that is a bit different. Maybe it's finding a new park and going for a walk, playing a new board game or taste testing a type of food you don't normally buy from the grocery store.
- Explore events or other fun activities happening in your community, like community service projects, live entertainment or festivals. It can be a boost to your and children's mental health to feel connected to your community!
- Create your family story! Check out the Family Story activity at [PTA.org/HealthyMinds](https://www.pta.org/HealthyMinds) to bring your family's history to life. It can help your children to feel grounded and connected to a larger purpose and lasting story. If going backwards is difficult or too traumatic for any reason, build out how you'd like to see your family story unfold over the next decade!
- Art helps create mutual respect and understanding for different cultural and social experiences. Exploring artwork from a different part of the country or world help children learn to empathize and understand experiences that differ from their own.