



Student Mental Health Toolkit for Middle School Classrooms



TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

FOR MORE RESOURCES, VISIT [CRISISTEXTLINE.ORG/CLASSROOM-EMPATHY](https://crisistextline.org/classroom-empathy)

Introduction

The 2025 Middle School toolkit is designed to help students strengthen self-care habits, build emotional resilience, and create a supportive space for open conversations about mental health. It’s an easy and impactful way for educators like you to foster student well-being.

Inside, you’ll find **ready-to-use activities** that seamlessly integrate into your lesson plans—helping students develop emotional awareness during three key moments:

- 1**
Right now
Bring mental health awareness into your classroom today.
- 2**
Mental Health Awareness Month
Engage students in activities that encourage dialogue and reflection throughout May.
- 3**
All year long
Help students build lasting self-care habits and emotional resilience they can use every day, inside and outside of the classroom.

Let’s empower students with the tools they need to understand and care for their mental health—**in the classroom and beyond.**

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How to Manage Stress and Teacher Burnout

Navigating your mental health as a teacher is crucial, given the emotional, mental, and physical demands of the profession. Here are some practical tips to help you maintain balance and well-being.

1

Set Boundaries

- Avoid taking work home every day—set a specific time to stop working.
- Learn to say no to extra responsibilities that overload your schedule.
- Protect your weekends and personal time for rest and self-care.

2

Prioritize Self-Care

- Get enough sleep, eat well, and engage in activities that recharge you.
- Exercise regularly, even if it's just a short walk between classes.
- Practice mindfulness, meditation, or deep breathing exercises to manage stress.

3

Build a Support System

- Connect with other teachers who understand the unique challenges of the job.
- Don't hesitate to seek support from a mentor, supervisor, or school counselor.
- Join online or local teacher communities for shared experiences and encouragement.

4

Manage Classroom Stress

- Establish a structured, predictable environment to reduce chaos and stress.
- Use positive reinforcement and classroom management strategies to prevent burnout.
- Take short breaks when possible, even if it's just a deep breath between lessons.

5

Celebrate Small Wins

- Acknowledge the impact you're making, even in small ways.
- Keep notes or reminders of positive student interactions to boost morale.
- Reflect on the reason you became a teacher and hold onto that passion.

6

Use Available Resources

- Take advantage of mental health days if your school offers them.
- Seek out professional development on teacher wellness and stress management.
- Consider therapy or crisis hotlines to process emotions and develop coping strategies. If you ever need support, Crisis Text Line is here for you, 24/7. Simply text **SCHOOL** to **741741**.



Imagine one of your feelings that arise. Page how you plan to achieve this goal.

...s and dreams detail below.

...S, VISIT [CRISISTEXTLINE.ORG/CLASSROOM-EMPATHY](https://www.crisistextline.org/classroom-empathy)

Classroom Activities for Mental Well-Being

These engaging worksheets are designed to create a safe and supportive classroom environment where students can better understand themselves, build emotional resilience, and develop practical strategies for navigating challenges with confidence.

How to Use:

1

Explain the purpose

Writing and visualizing can help students express their emotions and communication skills, develop and strengthen coping strategies, and participate in self-reflection.

2

Encourage students

to think about the emotions or ideas they want to convey through the exercises. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers, fostering a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere.

3

Provide inspiration

to spark creativity and imagination. E.g.: Artwork that depicts various emotions, gratitude journals, stories or a self-portrait collage that centers on navigating challenges.

4

Set up the workspace

ensuring each student has access to the materials needed and organize the classroom to allow for individual or group work.

5

Provide guidance and feedback

by offering assistance and positive reinforcement to students as they work.

6

Prompt students to discuss

their work, sharing the thoughts and feelings behind their reflections.

7

Celebrate and showcase opportunities

for your students to display their work. Welcome the diversity of creativity and encourage students to appreciate each other's work.

Write five words that inspire you and read them to yourself a few times over.

Close your eyes and imagine one of your goals. Notice the feelings that arise. Map out on this page how you plan to achieve this goal.

Think of a time when you were happy at school. Write down what was special about it.

Visualize 5 of your hopes and dreams and write them down in detail below.

Confidence-Boost Bingo

This is a fun way to encourage your students to recognize and celebrate small wins that build confidence and self-esteem.

How to Use:

1

Distribute the bingo cards

to each student in your classroom. Each card is filled with confidence-boosting activities. You can also let students create their own by choosing from a list of different prompts you may prefer.

2

Set the time frame

and decide if the game will be played during one class period, throughout the day, or as a week-long challenge. Up to you!

3

Play it!

Read the prompts provided and ask your students to mark off the corresponding squares in the bingo cards if they have done the actions mentioned. They can reflect on their experiences along the way.

4

Get a Bingo!

Students aim to complete a row, column, or diagonal. For an extra challenge, they can try to fill the entire card.

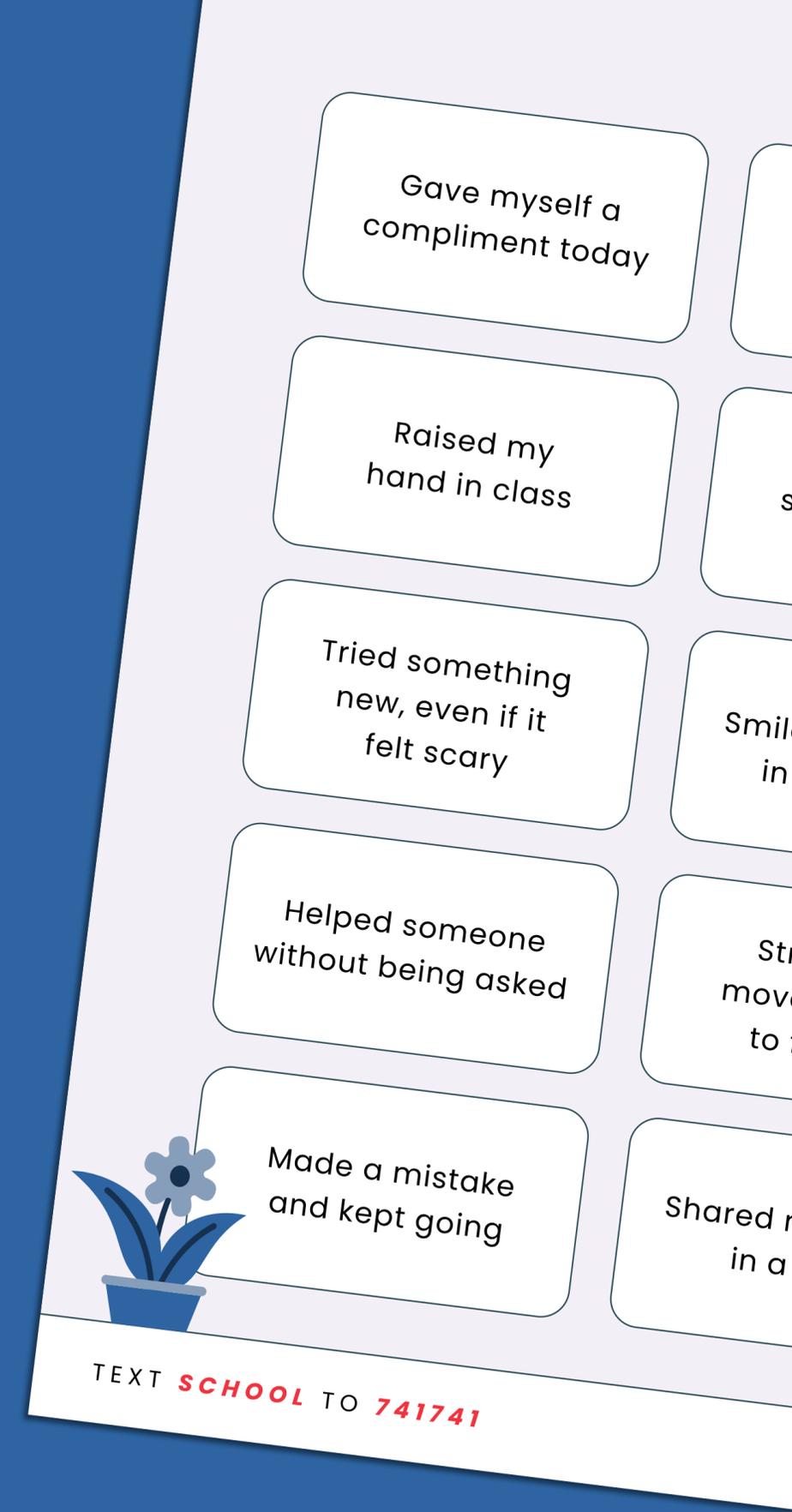
5

Celebrate

by recognizing your students' achievements and discussing their favorite moments, sharing wins, or rewarding participation with a fun class activity.

Optional:

Encourage students to share one action they completed and how it made them feel to reinforce positive self-reflection.



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Confidence-Boost Bingo



Gave myself a compliment today	Wrote down 3 things I'm good at	Finished a task I'd been putting off	Took a break when I felt overwhelmed	Wrote down one goal I want to achieve
Raised my hand in class	Told a friend something I like about them	Practiced deep breathing for 1 minute	Asked someone how their day was	Cheered on a friend or classmate
Tried something new, even if it felt scary	Smiled at someone in the hallway	★	Listened to music that made me feel confident	Drew or doodled something that makes me happy
Helped someone without being asked	Stretched or moved my body to feel good	Said "thank you" to myself for working hard	Tried a positive "I am..." statement (like "I am brave")	Took 3 big belly breaths before starting something
Made a mistake and kept going	Shared my opinion in a group	Sat with someone new at lunch or in class	Laughed at something silly	Made someone else laugh



Digital Reset Challenge

Screen time can shape our mood, focus, and overall well-being. This challenge is all about creating healthier digital habits and promoting positivity online—whether that means unfollowing negative accounts, setting screen time limits, or taking a break from social media. Small changes can make a big impact on your students’ mental health. Ready to reset and recharge? Let’s go!

How to Use:

1

Hold a week-long challenge

where students track their screen time, unfollow accounts that negatively affect them, and share positive, uplifting content.

2

Introduce the 5-Day Digital Reset Challenge

to your students. You can lead this challenge as a class, assign it individually, or use it as a journaling activity. Your classroom, your choice.

3

Read the daily activity

to your students and highlight its main focus. You may decide to complete the reflection part of the exercise after each day or complete all reflections together at the end of the challenge.

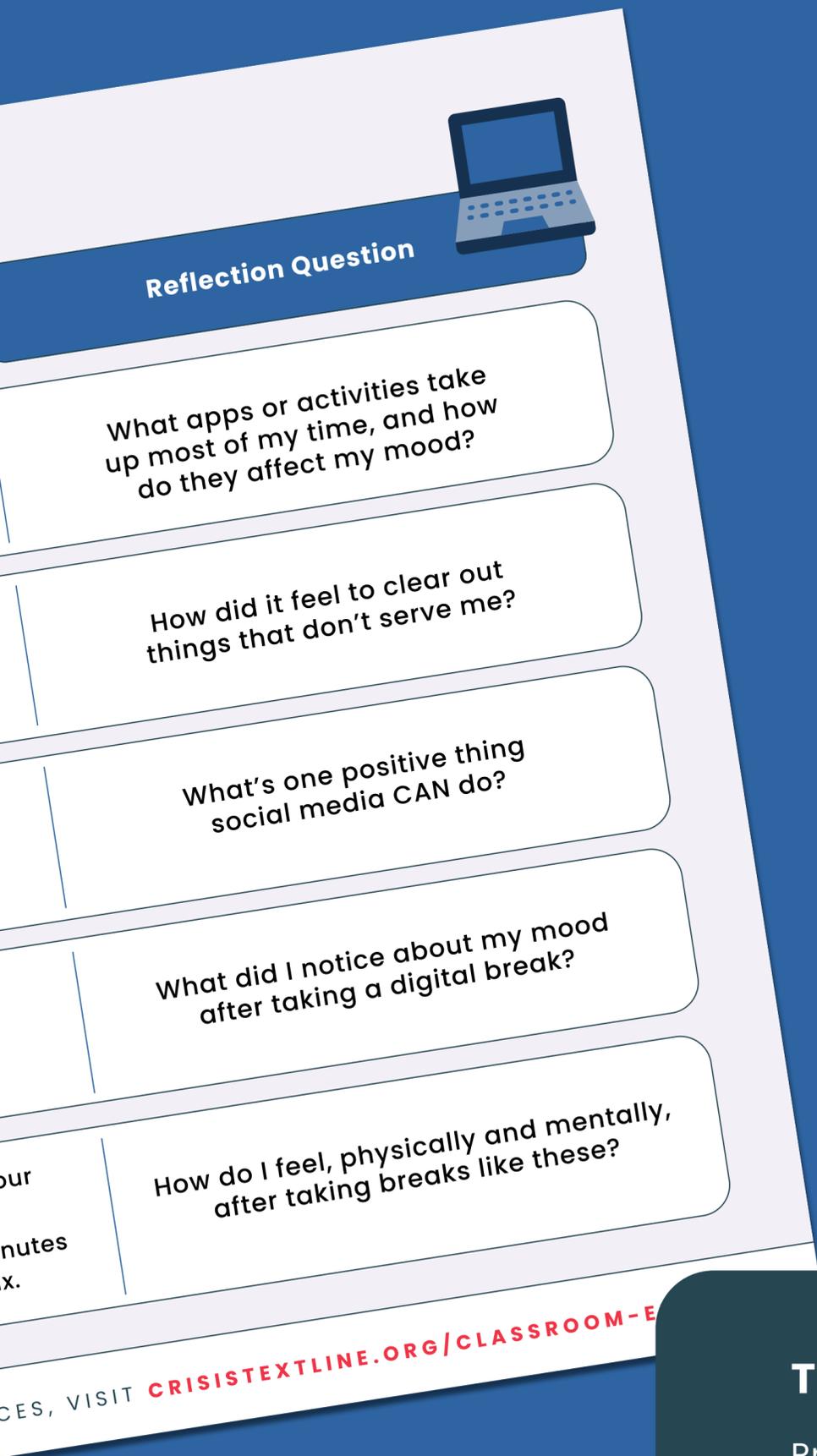
4

Host a classroom discussion

after the challenge has ended or ask your students to write a short reflection on how it felt to reset.

Tip:

Print and display the Digital Reset Challenge page on the board or use it as individual hand-outs.



Digital Reset Challenge



Day	Focus	Activity	Reflection Question
Day 1	Awareness	Track your total screen time today.	What apps or activities take up most of my time, and how do they affect my mood?
Day 2	Feed Reset	Unfollow or mute accounts that make you feel stressed, sad, or less than.	How did it feel to clear out things that don't serve me?
Day 3	Spread Positivity	Share something uplifting or kind online (like a compliment or good news).	What's one positive thing social media CAN do?
Day 4	Offline Joy	Take a 1-hour screen break and reset by doing something fun without a screen.	What did I notice about my mood after taking a digital break?
Day 5	Move or Pause	Move: Get up, stretch and move your body for 5 minutes. Pause: Put your head down for 5 minutes on your desk, breathe and relax.	How do I feel, physically and mentally, after taking breaks like these?



Check-in With Someone You Trust

This activity empowers students to break the stigma about mental health by having open and meaningful conversations about mental well-being and interviewing someone they trust—a parent, teacher, coach, counselor, or friend. Through this, students will gain insights into different perspectives on mental well-being, varied types of self-care, and learn about support systems.

How to Use:

1

Encourage students to choose a trusted person

or think of someone they feel comfortable talking to about mental health. This could be a family member, mentor, teacher, school counselor, or friend.

2

Instruct students to set up a time to talk

by asking their chosen person if they're willing to have a short conversation with them about mental health and well-being. They can do this in person, over the phone, or through a video chat.

3

Ask students to pick 5 questions

from the page below for their interviews.

4

Remind your students to take notes and reflect

after their interviews. They can write down key takeaways, surprising insights, or advice that stood out to them.

Optional:

You can encourage students to have a class discussion and share general thoughts (without sharing personal details) about what they've learned from their interviews.

Ideas for Reflection

Questions for Students

- What was the most interesting thing you learned from your interview?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How did it feel to talk about mental health with someone you trust?
- What is one thing you want to apply to your own mental health journey?



Check-in With Someone You Trust

What does mental health mean to you?

How do you take care of your mental health?

Have you always had good mental health practices?

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone who is struggling with their emotions?

Check-in With Someone You Trust

Was there a time when you faced a tough situation? How did you handle it?

What are some signs that someone might need extra support with their mental health?

How do you think social media affects mental health, especially for young people?

What is one thing you wish more people knew about mental health?

Check-in With Someone You Trust

Who do you turn to when you need support?

What are some ways to support a friend who might be struggling?

Mental Health Plan

There may be a time when you or your students will need support in managing tough emotions. Having the right tools and a plan in place ahead of time can make all the difference in navigating those moments with confidence.



How to Use:

1

Explain the purpose

and importance of having a mental health plan as a tool for helping themselves stay safe and seek appropriate support during times of distress.

2

Encourage your students

to take a picture of their plan so they can revisit it when needed and keep a physical copy of it in their backpack, lockers, or at home.

Pro tip:

Play our [Peaceful Pause Playlist](#) in the background while the students work on some of the activities. Remind them that it's okay to seek help and that learning about how to develop a Mental Health Plan is an important part of growing up.

Make a Mental Health Plan



Your mental health is important. At one point or another, you and your friends may need some tools to cope with difficult emotions. The best way to prepare yourself is to have a plan before you need it.

When I feel stressed, here are three things I can do to feel more calm:

Three people I can reach out to if I'm struggling:

Three things I do for self care that often make me feel better:

Resources I can turn to if I need support:

Coping Techniques Breakdown

These straightforward and practical strategies equip you with the tools to help your students build resilience, manage their emotions, and navigate life's challenges. With these tips, you can foster a supportive and positive classroom environment where every student feels understood, empowered, and ready to succeed.

How to Use:

1

Explain the purpose

of this resource, emphasizing the importance of understanding and developing coping skills for dealing with emotions and challenges.

2

Provide relatable examples

on when and how to use these techniques, such as "ways to help us feel better when we're upset or facing something difficult."

3

Start a brief discussion

about different emotions and situations that may require the students to use coping techniques.

4

Highlight

that there are no right or wrong answers, and that the goal is to explore and discover what works best for each individual.

Address support and resources

by reassuring the students that they can talk to a teacher or a trusted adult if they have any concerns or need additional support. They can also reach out to Crisis Text Line by texting **SCHOOL** to **741741** for free, 24/7, and confidential emotional support or through our [webchat service](#).

Coping Techniques Breakdown

Take time to rest

Allowing yourself to rest physically and mentally will help you reset and clear your mind.



Seek mental health support

Need additional support? Consider reaching out to Crisis Text Line by texting **SCHOOL** to **741741** or contacting mental health professionals in your area.

Tune into TV, video or podcasts

Your favorite show can be a healthy temporary coping skill to lower anxiety. Some shows offer new perspectives and learning opportunities.

Let's get physical

Choose an activity that best suits you. Exercise can help boost your mood, decrease anxiety and improve sleep quality.



Coping Techniques Breakdown



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Create art



Practice a hobby or try something new. These activities can help with feelings of stress and burnout and allow you to be present in the moment.

Listen to music

Pick an upbeat tune to feel energized or go for that slower beat for a soothing and relaxing effect on your mind and body.

Connect with loved ones

Quality time with your core circle is key. Find a moment to meet with them, talk, text or joke together. Having a support system is a game changer!

Tune into TV, video or podcasts

Your favorite show can be a healthy temporary coping skill to lower anxiety. Some shows offer new perspectives and learning opportunities.

Let's get physical

Choose an activity that best suits you. Exercise can help boost your mood, decrease anxiety and depression and improve sleep quality.



Play with pets

It helps diminish feelings of loneliness and depression. If you don't have pets, visit a nearby shelter and show those little critters some love!

Take it slow with meditation

Doing this can provide a sense of calm, balance and relaxation. Find a quiet place to connect with yourself and your senses.



Get lost in a good book

It'll help relax and distract your mind, and can significantly help decrease your stress.



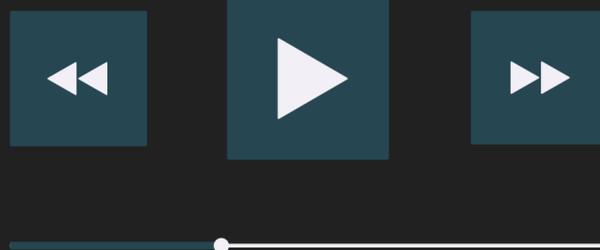
CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Peaceful



Pause

Peaceful Pause Playlist



[CRISISTEXTLINE.ORG/PEACEFULPAUSE](https://crisistextline.org/peacefulpause)

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Peaceful Pause Playlist

Our [Peaceful Pause Playlist](#) is curated to create a sense of calm, ease stress, and restore balance. Music has a powerful impact on mental well-being, influencing emotions, thoughts, and even physical responses. For many of our texters, pressing play on the right song is one of the most effective ways to shift from a stressful moment to a state of relaxation.

Play it in the classroom:

Using music in the classroom can enhance the learning environment and engage students in a variety of ways:

- Play the songs softly in the background during independent work time or group activities.
- Use the playlist as a prompt for interactive listening activities, such as identifying musical elements like tempo, rhythm, melody, and dynamics. Students can also analyze the song lyrics to see what resonates with them.

Pro tip:

When using music in the classroom, it's important to consider students' preferences, cultural backgrounds, and sensitivities. Be mindful of volume levels and ensure that music enhances the learning experience without becoming a distraction.

How to Talk to Parents and Caregivers About Mental Health

Talking about mental health with parents or caregivers can be tough for students. Many fear being misunderstood, judged, or adding to their parents' stress. Some struggle to find the right words, while others worry about not being taken seriously. By understanding these challenges, you can help create a supportive space where students feel more confident discussing their well-being—both at home and in school.

How to Use:

1 Introduce the “How to Talk to Parents or Caregivers About Mental Health”

worksheet. Explain its purpose as a tip sheet to help students feel more comfortable sharing their feelings about mental health with the trusted adults in their lives.

2 Encourage self-reflection

by prompting students to review this worksheet coping privately, encouraging them to reflect on which strategies resonate with them personally.

3 Normalize emotions

and reassure your students that it's perfectly fine for them to feel their feelings and that it's also okay to be open and talk about them with their parents or other adults they trust.

4 Offer follow-up support

by letting your students know that you're there for them and be prepared to offer guidance to those students who may require additional assistance on how to start a conversation about mental health with their parents or caregivers.

How to Talk to Parents About Mental Health

Talking to your parents or caregivers about you is important to remember you deserve to be heard. Here are some tips on how to describe what you're feeling, so here are some tips to use to start the conversation.

Tips for talking to your parents or caregivers about mental health

Prepare and practice

Try practicing with a friend or someone you trust. Have the conversation with your trust to spend some time writing out and discussing your feelings.

Identify what you want

Define what you want out of the conversation. Do you want to try therapy/counseling, vent, or talk to someone at home or school?

Pick a time

Try to choose a time/place that works for you when you're feeling well instead of during a crisis.

TEXT SCHOOL TO 741741

How to Talk to Parents and Caregivers

About Mental Health



Talking to your parents or caregivers about your mental health can be tough, but it's important to remember you deserve to be heard. You might not know where to start or how to describe what you're feeling, so here are our best tips and some phrases you can use to start the conversation.

Tips for talking to your parents or caregivers about mental health

Prepare and practice

Try practicing with a friend or someone you trust before you have the conversation with your trusted adult. It may also help to spend some time writing out and organizing your thoughts.

Identify what you want

Define what you want out of the conversation. Do you want to try therapy/counseling, vent, or ask for specific support at home or school?

Pick a time

Try to choose a time/place that works for a conversation when you're feeling well instead of waiting until you're in a crisis.

Phrases to use when talking to your parents or caregivers about mental health

Hey, _____ I'd really like to talk to you about some things I'm going through right now, and I'd appreciate your support. Can we set some time to talk? I've been feeling (*stressed, sad, anxious*) about (*situation*) and want to share because I need support with _____ .

Remember, you don't have to struggle alone, and you can always reach out for support by texting *SCHOOL* to 741741. We're here for everyone, so make sure your parents have this number, too!