

# BRAIN HEALTH TIPS



## SELF-CARE

Self-care means activities and routines done to benefit your mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Self-care activities should be practiced on a regular basis to help mental well-being. Self-care activities help lower stress, increase productivity, improve health, and help achieve a balance of school and social time to prevent burnout.

## PHYSICAL

- Go out in nature.
- Drink water! 8-10 glasses of water (2 liters) are recommended for students ages 13 and older (Healthy Kids, n.d.).
- Exercise or dance to get out extra energy and relax. This helps to release endorphins (chemical in your brain) that makes a person feel good.
- Spend quality time with friends and family and share how your days are going. Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Eat well-balanced meals containing protein, fruits and vegetables.

## MENTAL

- See (in-person or virtually) a therapist or go to support groups during times of high stress.
- Keep a journal to write down your thoughts. Research shows that writing about stressful events helps come to terms with them, reducing the impact they have on your life (Psych Central, 2016).
- Take a break from television, social media, and the internet to limit negative information.
- Be an active member of the community by joining an organization at school or helping with community service.
- Express emotional healing practices of crying, laughing or story-telling.
- Read books or listen to music or a podcast. Check out the *Eternal Sunshine* app for ideas.
- Participate in activities that make you happy, feel good and are empowering.
- Plan ahead, stay organized, and set time to relax. Set goals for yourself.

### Check Out These Apps!



***Smiling Mind***



***Eternal Sunshine***



***Better Sleep***

## **SPIRITUAL**

Spiritual self-care means caring for your soul. Spiritual wellness is about seeking a purpose and meaning in our life. Practicing spiritual self-care can help you find peace between your inner feelings and emotions and the stressors of your life.

- Practice meditation or yoga.
- Pray or attend a church service.
- Express gratitude. Think of 3 different things you're grateful for every day.
- Complete a mindfulness exercise.
- Journal or talk about what makes you happy.

## **RESILIENCY**

Resiliency is the ability to adjust to situations and keep going even in tough times. Resilience also helps you take on challenges, form stronger relationships and take on new experiences. A lack of resilience can lead to anxiety, poor self-care, sadness and risky behaviors. We can't always control events, but we can control how we react.

## **MANAGE STRESS**

Identify your sources of stress and how they affect you. Once you understand how your behavior changes in response to stress (e.g., your health suffers, you separate yourself from others), you can modify unhealthy or unproductive reactions and develop coping strategies. Self-Care kits can aid in immediate relief when you're feeling overwhelmed (see examples on the next page).

## **EXAMINE YOUR THOUGHTS**

Negative or inaccurate thoughts about ourselves, others, or the future can create unhelpful emotions and behaviors. Increase your awareness of how you interpret events, so you can challenge and change unproductive thoughts and develop a more adaptive thinking style.

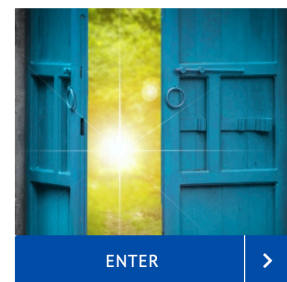
## **BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK**

Positive social connections provide assistance, guidance, and comfort during difficult times. Strengthen your relationships with family, friends and other people you trust to create a support network. The quality of these relationships is more important than the quantity.

### **Open the Virtual Door to Self-Care!**

For calming, refocusing, exercise, self-awareness and mindfulness tools to help in in your self-care process visit our Virtual MindPeace Room™.

<https://mindpeacecincinnati.com/virtual-mindpeace-rooms/>



Jr. High and High School  
(7-12th grade)

## SELF CARE KIT EXAMPLES

Self-care kits should contain some of your favorite ways to de-stress. Suggested items to include could be a stress ball, journal, blanket, earbuds, essential oils, or a favorite book. See examples below.



Kit Contents: Cotton balls, nail polish remover, bottle of nail polish, tea, socks, facial wipes, a candle, and a book.

Put together a self-care kit with items in your home. Think about these questions and fill an empty shopping bag or a basket with your favorite items.

- What do you do to distract yourself? Is there a craft you do, show you watch, or activity you enjoy?
- What makes you relax? Do you have a favorite pair of sweatpants or a cozy t-shirt?
- Think about your five senses (taste, smell, touch, sight and sound). What can you do to appeal to all these senses?
- What's a way you can express yourself? Art, journaling, poetry, singing or something else?

## SLEEP

**Teens need 8-10 hours of sleep each night** (National Sleep Foundation, n.d.). Lack of sleep has negative effects on a person's thinking and processing skills. When you don't get enough sleep your memory also suffers. All the information you think you've retained—GONE. The most important thing you can do is get good sleep.

### TIPS FOR GETTING GOOD SLEEP

A lack of sleep can have consequences. Not enough sleep can make you sick, leading to more colds, coughs, and sniffles, and can be associated with weight gain.

- Avoid caffeine at night, and limit it during the day.
- Create a sleep schedule, and stick to it.
- Don't sleep in on weekends or days when you have time off. Wake up close to the same time every day.
- Put technology away at least 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime.
- Don't work on your computer in bed.
- Don't exercise before bed.
- Sleep with earplugs and use an eye pillow to drown out any bright lights and loud noise.
- Turn out the lights when it's time to go to bed; a bright room will keep you awake.

Establishing healthy sleep habits will do wonders for your long-term health.

### Go Outside and Get Some Sun!

Exposure to bright light during the day helps synchronize your internal clock and makes it easier to fall asleep at night. So, make sure you get plenty of sunshine.

## SCREENS

Did you know that youth ages 8-18 spend an average of 7.5 hours a day in front of a screen? Whether it's scrolling through your phone, iPad, or sitting in front of the TV, too much screen time has been linked to sleep problems, poor grades, and a greater risk of obesity. Being in front of screens for long amounts of time can also lead to mood problems, a lack of physical activity, and poor self-image (aacap.org, 2020).

### Tips

- Turn off notifications
- Set a timer to turn off your technology
- Try something new; read a book, workout, hang out with friends!
- Turn your phone on do not disturb
- Set screen time limits under your phone setting

### TIP:

Try blue light glasses! Blue light has a high energy frequency that can delay the body's release of melatonin, which can result in having a hard time falling asleep. Wearing these glasses can reduce the impact of blue light which can result in improved sleeping patterns. (Barnes, 2020).

#### Resources :

Christopher M. Barnes. (14 Oct. 2020). "Will Blue Light Glasses Improve your Sleep?" *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/10/will-blue-light-glasses-improve-your-sleep>.

*Everyday Health*. (2010, March 17). *10 Tips for Better Sleep at College*. Retrieved from <https://www.everydayhealth.com/college-health/10-tips-for-better-sleep-at-college.aspx>

Healthy Kids. (n.d.). Choose Water as a Drink. Retrieved from <https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/kids-teens/choose-water-as-a-drink-kids>

National Sleep Foundation. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

Resilience 101. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.scoreforcollege.org/resilience101>