

Dare to Care: Enhancing Emotional & Physical Well-Being

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month

Every April the [National Council for Alcoholism and Drug Dependence \(NCADD\)](#) sponsors Alcohol Awareness Month to increase awareness and understanding of the causes and treatment of the nation's #1 public health problem: alcoholism. The theme this year is **"Changing Attitudes: It's not a 'rite of passage.'"** The target audience: youth and their parents.



#ALCOHOLAWARENESSMONTH

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

Alcohol is the most used substance by youth and adults in the United States. According to the National Institute of Health's 2020 Monitoring the Future Survey, 55.3% of high school seniors used alcohol in the past year. It is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. About 95,000 Americans die from alcohol-related causes each year.

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they hear you®

Substance Use
Prevention

**POWER of
PARENTS**



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The Importance of Exercise for Youth

According to research from the [Keck School of Medicine of USC](https://www.keck.usc.edu/), the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted physical activity for youth, and in particular, the tween age group. This decline in activity can exacerbate concerns about mental health, poor sleep, and attention span, not to mention the physical implications.

These alarming findings, albeit not surprising, reinforce the need to find ways to get kids moving despite the challenges presented by pandemic. Now that spring weather is upon us, it is the perfect time to jump into action and find creative ways to incorporate more outdoor activity.

Please see the box below for some guidelines to use when planning physical activities for children:



Key Guidelines for School-Aged Children and Adolescents

It is important to provide young people opportunities and encouragement to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable, and that offer variety.

Children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily:

1. **Aerobic:** Most of the 60 minutes or more per day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least 3 days a week.
2. **Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days a week.
3. **Bone-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days a week.

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The Importance of Exercise for Youth (cont'd)

Benefits of School-Based Physical Activity

Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence is important for promoting lifelong health and well-being and preventing a variety of health conditions. Schools are in a unique position, regardless of learning mode, to help students attain the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily.

A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) can increase physical activity opportunities before, during, and after school.



Increasing youth physical activity:

Before and After School

- Walking or biking to and from school
- Intramural sports and clubs
- Extended day programs

In Physical Education

- Standards-based curricula
- Motor skills development
- Physical fitness

During School

- Classroom physical activity breaks
- Active lessons
- Daily recess

Through Staff Involvement

- Role models for wellness
- Classroom participation
- Professional development programs

With Community Engagement

- Shared use of recreational facilities
- Opportunities for physical activity when school is out of session
- Environments for safe travel to and from school



Benefits everyone:

The Students

- Improved attention*
- Better mood and memory*
- Improved bone health
- Healthier weight
- Better heart health
- Lower risk of depression
- Better grades

The Teachers

- More students on task*
- Improved classroom behaviors*
- Students getting better grades
- Fewer absences

The Community

- Lower health care costs
- Expanded school partnerships
- More access to activity-friendly spaces

**Immediate benefit from a single physical activity session*

To learn more, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity>



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Calm Classroom Blog: Practicing Mindfulness in the Classroom

What exactly is “mindfulness” and why are so many teachers using it in their classrooms? According to [Mindful](#), “Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us. Mindfulness is a quality that every human being already possesses, it’s not something you have to conjure up, you just have to learn how to access it.”

Whether we are experiencing stress and anxiety or looking for ways to cultivate a greater sense of well-being, practicing mindfulness is one way we can learn how to work with our emotions and access a state of inner-calm at any moment. Mindfulness is a skill that takes practice to cultivate, yet many adults, let alone young people, haven’t been exposed to such techniques. Without an understanding of our thoughts and feelings, it may be difficult to access the mindful presence that is inherent within all of us.



What is mindfulness in the classroom?

While mindfulness sounds like a “nice to have” in any classroom, and may conjure up thoughts of relaxed yoga and meditation sessions replacing rigorous classroom content, the truth is that mindful practices improve learning as students gain more self-awareness, mental focus, and emotional well-being. In addition, mindfulness helps students learn to self-regulate their emotions so that they can be more present for learning throughout the school day.

Mindfulness programs include many different facets, but the goal is aimed at giving students the opportunity to tune into their thoughts, feelings and physical bodies with an open, curious attitude. When chaos rules a classroom, students will not feel safe or reach their individual potential and in fact, chaos leads to student conflict, stress, or disengagement. Practicing mindfulness in the classroom can offer solutions to these issues.

Adding this practice to your classroom can be as simple as pausing for a 3-minute breathing exercise or as dynamic as giving students time and space to talk about their emotions. Regardless, it is meant to be a supportive compliment to your curriculum and content as a way to enhance student engagement.

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Calm Classroom Blog: Practicing Mindfulness in the Classroom (cont'd)

How do you practice mindfulness in the classroom?

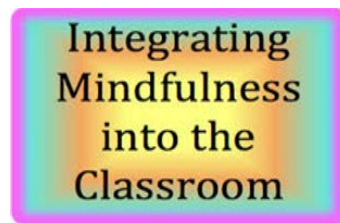
Incorporating a daily or weekly classroom mindfulness practice doesn't have to be time consuming or complicated. The point is not to add more stress to your plate but learn how to manage stress when it arises. Here are a few quick and easy exercises you can add into your classroom today:

- Breathing exercises - Before having students start a test or quiz, set a timer for one minute and practice mindful breathing. Along with the students, inhale to the count of two and exhale to the count of two.
- Discuss emotions - Take a minute at the beginning of each class to ask students to do an emotion check-in. This can be a quiet minute for students to think or journal to themselves. Or, it can be an opportunity for students to voice their feelings aloud.
- Have a space for a stressed student - Clear a part of your classroom to be a safe space for a student to have a minute to themselves. If you see a student visibly becoming irritated or overwhelmed, offer them time in the space. For young children, this could even be a play tent or other semi-private area.
- Gratitude journal - Set aside a 5 minute window once a week for students to journal about things they are grateful for.
- Introduce mindfulness - Take breathing exercises to the next level by guiding students through a short mindfulness practice.
- Talk about the benefits of mindfulness - Discussing the benefits of mindfulness and even sharing experiences from your own life will help students adopt a practice of their own.

Consistency is key, so make mindfulness a part of your daily classroom routine!

Mindfulness is a quality we all possess and can improve through practice. As educators, it is important to give students the tools to balance their stress levels and learn the value of caring for their mental and emotional health on a daily basis.

Click [HERE](#) for full article!



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How to Support Kids as They Return to School:

Experts offer guidance for easing anxiety and nurturing hope



*By Lindsay Kalter
News Service of Blue Cross
Blue Shield of MA*

Children across the country are heading back to school this spring after a year of hybrid or virtual learning – and parents can help support their mental health during a particularly vulnerable time, experts say.

“For many kids and families, we’re hearing that there understandably is anxiety going back,” says Dr. Tracy Mullare, a child and adult psychiatrist and a member of the physician/psychologist review unit at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. “Even going back during a normal year can cause some anxiety. Going back these days, there are so many unknowns.”

“Safe in-person instruction gives our kids access to critical social and mental health services that prepare them for the future, in addition to the education they need to succeed,” Centers for Disease Control Director Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky said recently.

But returning to school may initially come with its own mental health challenges for some, Mullare says, including social anxiety, fear of contracting COVID-19, and difficulty adjusting to new protocol and class layout.

There are ways caregivers can help minimize these issues, Mullare says.

- **Keep an open dialogue**
- **Go back-to-school shopping**
- **Have a sit-down with educators**
- **Make mental health appointments**
- **Address your own stress**



Click [HERE](#) for the full article!

Minding Your Mind: Educational Opportunities

Rehoboth PTSA

presents



Resilience Required: Tween Mental Health During COVID-19.

A webinar for parents and caregivers. This year couldn't be more different. Grief, loss, the rise in anxiety and depression, and ongoing uncertainty about the future are impacting our tweens. Join Counselor Jon Mattleman and Young Adult Speaker Jordan for a dynamic virtual program with live Q&A.

Attendees will be provided a framework to understand and navigate your tween's mental health from two perspectives: a counselor and a young person with lived experience. Jordan will share his story with students the following day.

**MON, APRIL 12
7:00-8:00PM**



TO REGISTER

<https://event.webinarjam.com/register/273/q7m5rsv3>

Provided with support from



Questions? Contact:
Christie Daniels
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**MINDING
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We Are Hiring!

YOUNG ADULT SPEAKERS

Are you a young adult who is interested in meaningful mental health advocacy?

Position Description:

Share the experience of your mental health journey with middle and high school students throughout New England. Through a comprehensive and supportive training process, speakers develop a personal and educational presentation to share with students and parents with the goal of ending stigma around mental health and encouraging help-seeking behaviors. Presentations are delivered to students during the day and parents/caregivers/community groups in the evening and on weekends.

Requirements:

Must be in a productive recovery process with toolbox of skills. Willing to share your story publicly. Have a flexible schedule to meet the needs of schools and community groups. Able to travel to presentation locations. Speakers are required to arrange for their own transportation. Live in/around New England. Location flexible as you will be traveling throughout your area (not going to an office regularly).

Generous Compensation per presentation.



Contact: Michelle Drolsbaugh, New England Director
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Kind Minds

An in-school program for K-4 students.

Creating awareness about mental wellness begins in elementary school. This clinician-led interactive presentation teaches children how to identify their emotions, engage in kind acts, and build empathy, increasing their understanding of how their emotions impact their thoughts and behaviors. Using discussions, role plays, and interactive activities students will learn to recognize, identify, and express emotions in age-appropriate ways.

This is a classroom-based program, taking place during the school day and delivered virtually during COVID-19. Presentations geared towards grades K-2 and 3-4.

Program Fee: \$250/presentation.
Financial support available.

For more information:

Michelle Drolsbaugh, New England Director
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www.mindingyourmind.org
f t i in

Kind Minds is inspired by the mission of the Be Kind. Always. Foundation. Founded by siblings Timothy and Jessica Griffin to honor their younger brother, Stephen, who lost his life to depression, the Be Kind. Always Foundation promotes mental health awareness and suicide prevention by spreading Stephen's message of kindness and humility.



**THE REAL
LIVES OF
MINORITY
STUDENTS**
UNDERSTANDING AND
SUPPORTING THE MENTAL
HEALTH OF ALL LEARNERS.

Presented by



Professional Development for
School Personnel.

For more information, email:
Michelle@mindingyourmind.org

South Shore Health: Giving Back Together

Host a fundraiser to benefit South Shore Health! Whether you have a personal connection or you're looking for a fun way to support your community, any fundraising event, big or small, drives our mission of **Your Health. Our Passion. One Community.**



From requesting donations in place of gifts for your birthday, to a virtual trivia game or fitness class, choose an idea that will be easy for you to organize and inspire your network to get involved. As we continue to adapt to the changes brought about by COVID-19, we strongly encourage you to stay safe and follow local health guidelines when planning your fundraiser. YOU can also designate which service line at South Shore Health you want to support, such as Youth Health Connection, pediatrics, or another program that is close to your heart.

We're here to help you get started!

Visit SouthShoreHealth.org/Fundraising or contact Kaitlynn O'Leary, Events Specialist, at KOLeary@southshorehealth.org or 781-624-8783.

**I Live Here
I Give Here®**

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Youth Health Connection is a community benefits program of South Shore Health dedicated to the positive mental health and physical well-being of youth. Our programs collaborate with schools, families and community providers to help young people deal with the various challenges they face and the decisions they must make as they grow and mature. By combining efforts, we can ensure that local youth have access to the health-related knowledge, skills and resources they need to make healthy decisions throughout their lifetime.

Youth Health Connection:

Builds and sustains community connections through healthy dialogue and sharing knowledge to keep our youth safe today and moving forward.

To subscribe, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/2CJppKj>

Connect with us:

