6 Ways to Encourage Good Mental Health Habits

Developing healthy coping strategies is not an innate ability and as children continue to grow, there are some ways parents and caregivers can assist in helping them obtain good mental health habits.

1. Talk openly about mental health.

There is still a stigma surrounding mental health disorders which discourages people from talking about any mental health challenges they may be facing. When we talk openly about mental health, we are promoting a safe environment that will encourage youth to seek support and help when it is needed.

2. Model your own healthy habits.

Children learn by observing. When adults use positive coping strategies to manage life's stressors, youth are more inclined to develop and use their own strategies.

3. Spend time together as a family.

Children need love, time and attention. Setting time aside to be with your child produces a stronger bond, making them feel valued and loved. Invite them to join you in an activity you enjoy to reduce stress. Incorporate these activities into your family's weekly routine and acknowledge their mental health benefits.

4. Participate in community or volunteer activities.

Children will meet and connect with new people. They will experience a sense of belonging and purpose, and will learn how to relate to others.

5. Encourage regular exercise.

Children and adolescents need at least 1 hour of daily physical exercise to promote healthy development, and exercise is one of the most effective strategies for maintaining a healthy mind. Exercising stimulates chemicals that improve our moods and allow us to channel negative energy positively.

6. Praise your child's efforts and behavior.

When we are praised on something we did, we feel good about ourselves, and our confidence and self-esteem increases. Praise also helps to motivate kids and encourage them to continue to try new things.

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A project of the Mental Health Association in NYS, Inc.

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