

Self-Care:

Practical Tips for Everyday Wellness



Enjoyable Activities

Engaging in activities we enjoy can bring relief and focus during times of overwhelm, stress or fatigue. This could be painting, music, reading, gardening and many other options.

Physical Movement

Daily exercise can help you both physically and mentally, boosting your mood and minimizing stress and anxiety. No need to do what everyone else is doing. Pick an exercise and routine that best fits your interest and ability.



Adequate Sleep/Hydration/Nutrition

Mood can be affected by how we care for our physical body. Check in on your habits and routines. Are there areas that can be improved to better assist your wellness? Getting back to the basics is sometimes the best thing we can do for ourselves.

Take Breaks

Allowing the opportunity for brief breaks in your tasks has been known to refresh the mind, see situations in new ways and minimize fatigue. Even if all you have is a few minutes, it can still have a positive impact on your wellness.



Social Connection

Social connection with others has been shown to positively impact mood, quality of life and provide a sense fulfillment. Consider seeking quality over quantity and finding ways to connect in daily life.

Rest and Relax

The constant business of life can feel hard to escape. While action and productivity are helpful and necessary so is finding time to rest. Consider adding an activity that recharges your wellness battery.



Understanding STRESS

Stress is a physical, mental and emotional reaction that people experience when they encounter challenges in life. These are often referred to as “stressors”.

A little bit of stress can be a good thing by helping us build resiliency to life challenges. However, too much stress over long periods of time can negatively impact physical and mental well-being. It is important to recognize when “healthy” stress turns “unhealthy”.

Common Stress Signs/Symptoms:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Agitation
- Fatigue
- Tense muscles
- Sleep disturbances
- Appetite changes
- Headaches/body pain
- High blood pressure
- Mood changes
- Increased worry

5 Tips for Anxiety Management

1

Recognize anxiety in the body - Calm the nervous system with paced breathing and muscle relaxation.

2

Practice acceptance - Worry can build as we push it away. While anxiety can be scary, it is not dangerous.

3

Ground to the present moment - Notice 5 senses (vision, smell, hearing, touch, taste).

4

Reframe - Anxiety increases with negativity. Challenge thoughts to gain more positive outlook.

5

Talk to someone - Expressing thoughts and emotions can help us see problems in a new light.

Understanding ANXIETY

Everybody feels anxious sometimes. While this can be a normal experience, it is important to recognize what anxiety is and when it might be negatively affecting our daily life.

Think of anxiety as a “protector” from what **could** happen versus what **is** happening. We tend to overestimate the potential threat and underestimate our ability to cope. Caution can be helpful, but let us consider where it is holding us back from the life we desire.

Common Anxiety Signs/Symptoms:

- Fatigue or weakness
- Impending doom
- Difficulty breathing
- Heart palpitations
- Headaches
- Dizzy/lightheaded
- Chest tightness
- Shaky
- Sleep disturbance
- Stomach issues
- Avoidance

5 Tips for Stress Management

1

Recognize the source - Identifying stressors can be a great first step in realizing the areas causing difficulty.

2

Notice what you can control - Focusing on areas out of our control can zap us of energy and time. Try noticing areas you do have control over.

3

Prioritize tasks - Not all tasks are equal. Create a list and begin with the easiest or even most important tasks first.

4

Break it down - Avoid overwhelm by taking small, achievable actions toward your goal.

5

Time Management - Maximize productivity with planning and organization that helps make time for what and who is important.



When to Refer a Child to Play Therapy: A Guide for Teachers

Introduction: Play therapy is a therapeutic approach that uses play to help children express their feelings, resolve conflicts, and develop problem-solving skills. As teachers, you are often the first to notice when a child is struggling. This guide will help you identify signs that a child may benefit from play therapy.

Signs a Child May Need Play Therapy:

1. Emotional Indicators:

- Persistent sadness or depression
- Excessive fears or anxieties
- Sudden mood swings or emotional outbursts
- Difficulty managing anger or frustration

2. Behavioral Changes:

- Aggressive or disruptive behavior
- Withdrawal from social interactions
- Regressive behaviors (e.g., bedwetting, thumb-sucking)
- Hyperactivity or inattentiveness

3. Academic Concerns:

- Decline in academic performance
- Difficulty concentrating or staying on task
- Frequent absences or tardiness
- Lack of interest in school activities

4. Social Issues:

- Difficulty making or keeping friends
- Bullying or being bullied
- Social isolation or exclusion
- Poor communication skills

5. Family and Environmental Factors:

- Recent changes in family dynamics (e.g., divorce, new sibling)
- Exposure to trauma or violence
- Chronic illness or death of a loved one
- Economic hardship or instability



Steps to Take Before Referring:

1. Observe and Document:

- Keep detailed notes on the child's behavior, emotions, and interactions.
- Note any patterns or triggers that may be contributing to the issues.

2. Communicate with Parents/ Guardians:

- Share your observations and concerns with the child's parents or guardians.
- Discuss any changes at home that might be affecting the child.

3. Collaborate with School Counselors:

- Consult with the school counselor or psychologist for additional insights and support.
- They can provide initial assessments and recommend appropriate interventions.

Making the Referral:

1. Choose a Qualified Play Therapist:

- Ensure the therapist is licensed and has specialized training in play therapy.
- Seek recommendations from school counselors or trusted professionals.

2. Provide Comprehensive Information:

- Share your observations and any relevant documentation with the therapist.
- Include information on the child's strengths, interests, and any previous interventions.

3. Follow Up:

- Maintain open communication with the therapist, parents, and school staff.
- Monitor the child's progress and adjust support strategies as needed.

Conclusion: Early intervention through play therapy can make a significant difference in a child's emotional and behavioral development. By recognizing the signs and taking appropriate steps, you can help ensure that children receive the support they need to thrive.

Resources:

- Alexis Combest, LPC-S, RPT-S, NCC, ASDSC
- Association for Play Therapy
- Texas Association for Play Therapy