



# Guidance Newsletter

Bailey Middle School

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## A Conversation about Mental Health

Across the United States school counselors are seeing an increase in early adolescent mental health concerns. From cyberbullying to self-harm to anxiety, decreased self-esteem, and depression – children and adolescents are dealing with some tough issues at increasingly younger ages. This is why it is so important for parents to keep an open dialogue with their children regarding their mental health. Here are some **TIPS** to help your child stay mentally and emotionally healthy:

### 1 Social media and cell-phones play a huge role in mental health.

Some studies have linked teen social media use with decreased self-esteem and anxiety. Set boundaries with your child for their safety including limits on social media and video game time, checking their “conversations” regularly, collecting phones at night so your child can sleep uninterrupted, etc. Even if your child doesn’t have a device, their friends do, so make sure they know they can come to you with any concerns or questions.

### 2 Recognize the warning signs of a mental health issue.

Some of these include tantrums, avoiding social activities or things they used to like, changes in eating or sleeping or dressing habits, multiple physical ailments without an obvious cause, intense concern about appearance, excessive worrying or sadness, a noticeable decline in grades at school due to difficulty focusing or remembering, and mood swings and irritability.



### 3 Help your child practice mental health habits.

Just like healthy eating habits, there are habits to increase mental health as well. Here are a couple of habits you could create as a family to promote mental health...



### 4 Educate yourself on mental health topics.

Learn what to say to your child and how to say it, the warning signs of possible self-harm and mental health conditions, when and where to get professional help, etc. Here are a couple of great websites:



### Mental Health Habits

- Take an evening walk as a family.
- After dinner, go around and have each family member say one positive thing about themselves or their day.
- Create a calming and consistent bedtime routine – could include reading together, a bath, calming music, putting away cell phones and other devices, and meditation.
- Volunteer together in the community.
- Have a family night each week where you do a fun activity together – cooking, gardening, playing games or sports, or doing a craft (but try to pick something where you talk to each other).
- Meet with your child once a week one on one – talk about them, their goals and friends, ask questions, tell them that you care and are there to listen.