

# KNOW! HOW TO SUPPORT MENTAL WELLNESS IN THE NEW YEAR



Every January, people around the world set New Year's Resolutions, identifying how we want to grow, change, or improve in the year ahead. Often, these goals focus on physical wellness, like getting more exercise or eating healthier. **But have you considered setting a mental wellness goal?**

According to the [American Psychiatric Association](#), more than one-third of Americans make resolutions related to mental health. That's encouraging, because mental wellness plays a key role in how we think, feel, learn, and connect with others. Starting the new year with an intentional focus on mental well-being can create lasting, healthier habits for both you and your child.

Many people abandon their resolutions by February. But mental wellness goals don't have to be overwhelming or short-lived.

## FIVE TIPS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL WELLNESS ALL YEAR LONG

### Help Young People Set Realistic Goals

When it comes to mental wellness, small, realistic goals are the most effective. Vague goals like "Be happier" or "Stop worrying so much" may sound appealing but are difficult to achieve and often lead to frustration. Instead, help your child set goals that are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Start with something concrete and manageable. For example, your child might aim to practice one new coping strategy each week, read for 15 minutes before bed, or name three emotions they notice throughout each day. It's also helpful to frame goals around what you want to add to your life, rather than what you want to stop doing. These types of goals are easier to track and can build momentum over time.

#### TALKING TIP

Ask thoughtful, open-ended questions to spark reflection. Try asking, "What's one thing you could do each week to support your mental wellness? How would you make that happen?"

### Consistently Check in About Emotions

Most families regularly check in about activities. Questions like "How was school?" or "How did soccer practice go?" are common but often lead to short answers and limited conversation. Checking in about emotions can feel uncomfortable at first, but it's a great way to support mental wellness.

When you ask directly about feelings, you signal to your child that emotions matter and that it's safe to talk about them. If your child shares something difficult, focus on validating their experience rather than fixing it. Phrases like "That sounds really difficult" or "I can see why that would make you feel that way" help young people feel heard and understood. Over time, you'll build trust and encourage more open and honest conversations.

#### TALKING TIP

Try checking in routinely with open-ended questions like, "What was the best part of this week?" or "What's one thing you're struggling with right now?"

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## Model Healthy Mental Health Habits

Children learn by watching the adults in their lives. If we want young people to prioritize their mental well-being, we need to model what that looks like in everyday life.

Healthy habits can look different for everyone. You might name your emotions out loud, demonstrate coping strategies when you're stressed, or show that it's okay to take a break when you need one. You can also normalize reaching out to others for support, whether that means talking to family, friends, or a mental health professional. When adults show that taking care of their mental health matters, young people will feel more supported in their own practices.

### TALKING TIP

Explain your coping strategies in real time. For example:

"I'm feeling stressed, so I'm going to make some tea and listen to calming music. What helps you feel better when you're stressed?"

## Celebrate Strengths and Successes

Taking care of your mental well-being isn't always easy. It can be challenging to stay motivated and consistent, especially during busy or stressful times. That's why celebrating success, no matter how small, is so important.

Notice when your child tries a new coping skill, talks about their feelings, or sticks with a goal. Acknowledging these moments builds confidence, self-esteem, and motivation to keep going. It's also helpful to highlight strengths, even when your child is struggling. Recognizing qualities like persistence, kindness, or flexibility helps shift the focus from what's going wrong to what's going right.

Offer specific, genuine praise. For example: "I'm really proud of you for trying a new coping strategy this week. That took courage."

### TALKING TIP

## Incorporate Mental Wellness into Routines

Both adults and children are more likely to maintain healthy habits when they're part of a routine. Predictable schedules help young people feel safe and supported, making it easier to try new behaviors.

If possible, establish routines such as consistent bedtimes, screen-free periods before sleep, or weekly family check-ins. Then, weave mental wellness activities into those routines. A screen-free bedtime routine might include deep breathing or reading, while family meetings can incorporate emotional check-ins or connection-building activities. By linking mental wellness practices to routines that already exist, you make them more sustainable and easier to maintain throughout the year.

Invite your child into the process. Ask, "What do you like about your routine? What would you change if you could?" Then work together to make adjustments that support everyone's well-being.

## SOURCES

- [More Americans Plan Mental Health Resolutions Heading Into 2026 | American Psychiatric Association](#)
- [Mental Health New Year's Resolutions for Lasting Self-Care | Blume Behavioral Health](#)
- [5 Ways Parents Can Support Their Teen's Mental Wellness | St. Luke's Penn Foundation](#)
- [5 Simple Ways to Support Teen Mental Health in the New Year | A Brighter Day Charity](#)
- [Youth Mental Health | Mental Health Discussion Questions](#)

## RESOURCES

- [Mental Health New Year's Resolutions for Lasting Self-Care | Blume Behavioral Health](#)
- [Know! How to Build Coping Skills Together | Prevention Action Alliance](#)
- [Mental health resources for parents | Mental Health America](#)
- [SMART Goals and Kids' Mental Health | The Kids Mental Health Foundation](#)

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