

UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Adult Support: Parent to Secondary Child Social Emotional Health and Wellness Guide

Becoming aware of our child's mental health

- Approximately one out of every five children in America have a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- Mental health problems in young people are associated with outcomes such as suicide, substance use, an inability to live independently, justice involvement, school dropout, economic hardship and physical health problems.
- Untreated mental health concerns among children and youth affect not only the young person and their family, but also schools, communities, workplaces and the nation.
- The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health.
- Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

Indicators that your child may be struggling with a mental health issue

- Feels very sad, hopeless or irritable
- Feels overly anxious or worried
- Is scared and fearful; has frequent nightmares
- Is excessively angry
- Uses alcohol or drugs
- Avoids people; wants to be alone all the time
- Hears voices or sees things that aren't there
- Can't concentrate, sit still, or focus attention
- Needs to wash, clean things, or perform certain rituals many times a day
- Talks about suicide or death
- Hurts other people or animals, or damages property
- Has major changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Loses interest in friends or things usually enjoyed
- Falls behind in school or earns lower grades

Care Tips

ROUTINE

- Give kids some predictable anchors in their day. Those could include basic chores with creative activities that interest your child.

DISCIPLINE

- Remember that discipline is teaching. Make all consequences logical and predictable. Write them down if necessary! Be consistent and fair. Make sure you acknowledge both positive and negative behaviors.

SOCIAL TIME

- Making and building positive interactions is so important. These could include texting or video calling family and friends, playing board or card games, watching movies, playing video games together, making and sharing meals and exercising or doing a sport together.

DIET, EXERCISE AND SLEEP

- Healthy eating and exercise decrease risk and alleviate symptoms of depression. Regulating sleep is important to help depressive symptoms as well. Turn off electronic devices at least one hour before bed and charge them somewhere other than the bedroom.

GRATITUDE

- Research shows that a grateful heart is a happier heart. Help your child show gratitude to those around them. By focusing on what we are thankful for rather than what we've lost, our brain chemistry actually changes for the better..

ROLE MODEL

- Talk about your own feelings, apologize, use active problem-solving skills. It lets your children know that emotions are a normal part of life and encourage them to talk about their concerns and express their emotions.

FROM THE KIDS

- Encourage seeing a therapist; give them space but also listen when needed; ask them if they're all right and tell them they're loved; prioritize learning over grades; make them feel safe, help them with their work, listen to their stresses over online work; take them out of the house when possible.

MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

- Care for your children's mental health just as you do for their physical health. Pay attention to warning signs and seek professional help.

UCS Resources

- Teachers, Principals, School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists and District Nurses. All of these individuals are accessible through your home school.
- UCS Wellness Page which is located on UCS main webpage, or at www.uticak12.org/UCS_Wellness has an abundance of resources.

Community Resources

- Macomb County Community Mental Health (Mental Health Services & Resources)
<https://www.mccmh.net/> 1-855-996-2264
- Macomb County Crisis Line 24/7 (Crisis Counseling & Resources)
586-307-9100 or 1-800-442-HOPE (1-800-442-4673)
- Macomb County Health Department (Health Services and Resources)
<https://health.macombgov.org/> (586) 469-5235



UCS WELLNESS
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