



Extend-A-Care YMCA May 2021 SEL Corner

Supporting Mental Health with SEL

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. Over the past year, we've all had struggles with the changes in our daily routines due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially kids. It's important to watch for signs of struggles, help them voice their feelings, and provide support.

WHAT? The World Health Organization (WHO), defines mental health as: "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." Raise your hand if you've struggled with any of these things over the past year. If you have, then that's ok! Many of us do.

WHY? There's many aspects to maintaining our mental health, and it's something we all should take care of, just as we do with our physical health. Kids should learn about SEL and coping strategies young to help kids learn, grow and develop and lay a healthy foundation for the future.

WATCH: Here's some video resources about mental health from [Lessons For SEL](#) and [Anna Freud NCCF](#) that you and your child can sit down to watch together and discuss:



<https://youtu.be/uPywh0OBH44>



<https://youtu.be/C4PEvF-vbo>



<https://youtu.be/DxIDKZHW3-E>

HOW?

1. Use this fun May Mental Health calendar to help your family tend to your mental health each day. ([Get it here from BetterKids.Education](https://www.betterkids.education))

Read more:

How To Support Children's Mental Health With SEL

<https://betterkids.education/blog/how-to-support-childrens-mental-health-with-sel>



2. Watch out for signs that your child is stressed or down.

- Changes in mood such as fussiness, irritability, hopelessness, and rage
- Separation anxiety
- Tantrums
- Conflict or aggression
- Bedwetting
- Loss of interest in things they used to like
- Stepping away from maintaining relationships
- Hard time keeping a consistent sleep schedule
- Changes in appetite, weight, and eating patterns
- Drop in academics
- Problems with memory and concentration
- Changes in appearance and personal hygiene

Communicate with your child about how they are feeling, and see your pediatrician for guidance with supporting your child if you have any concerns.

Read more:

Mental Health During COVID-19: Signs Your Child May Need More Support

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Signs-your-Teen-May-Need-More-Support.aspx>

3. Sit down with your child to create a list of coping skills they can do when they feel stressed. Want some ideas? Check out this list of [99 Coping Skills from Your Life Your Voice](#).

- Write (poetry, stories, journal)
- Doodle on paper or color
- Exercise
- Sing or listen to music
- Read a book
- Shoot Hoops, Kick a Ball
- Build a pillow fort
- Create something

What's on your list?