

HOW CAN I NURTURE MY CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH?

By: Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee

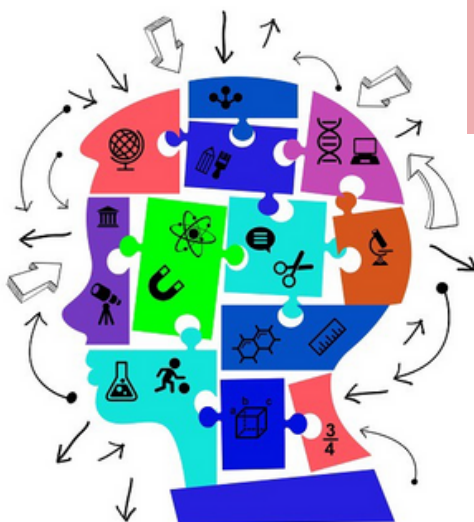


HELP CHILDREN BUILD STRONG, CARING RELATIONSHIPS:

- *It's important for children and youth to have strong relationships with family and friends. Spend some time together each night around the dinner table.*
- *A significant person who is consistently present in a child's life plays a crucial role in helping them develop resilience. This person—often a parent or other family member—is someone your child spends a lot of time with and knows they can turn to when they need help.*
- *Show your children how to solve problems.*

HELP CHILDREN AND YOUTH DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM, SO THAT THEY FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- *Show lots of love and acceptance.*
- *Praise them when they do well.*
- *Recognize their efforts as well as what they achieve.*
- *Ask questions about their activities and interests. Help them set realistic goals.*



LISTEN, AND RESPECT THEIR FEELINGS:

- *It's OK for children and youth to feel sad or angry. Encourage them to talk about how they feel.*
- *Keep communication and conversation flowing by asking questions and listening to your child. Mealtime can be a good time for talking.*
- *Help your child find someone to talk to if they don't feel comfortable talking to you.*

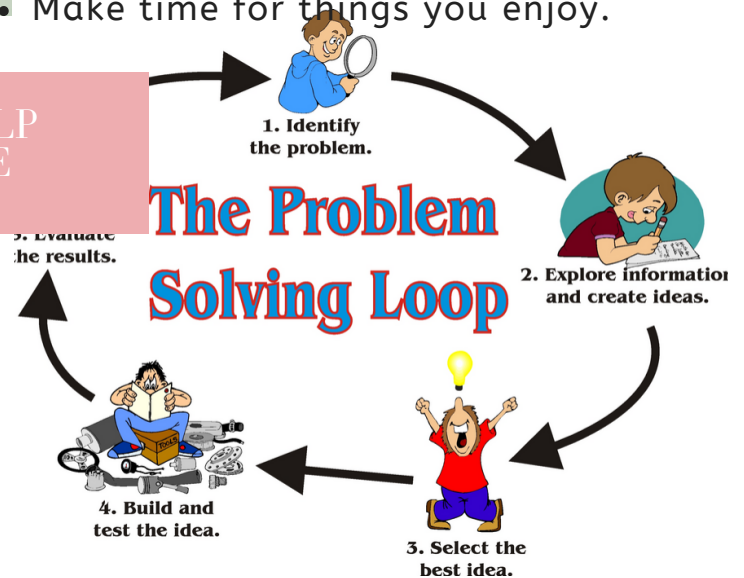


CREATE A SAFE, POSITIVE HOME ENVIRONMENT:

- Be aware of your child's media use, both the content and the amount of time spent on screens. This includes TV, movies, Internet, and gaming devices.
- Be aware of who they might be interacting with on social media and online games.
- Provide time for physical activity, play, and family activities.
- Be a role model by taking care of your own mental health: Talk about your feelings.
- Make time for things you enjoy.

IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, HELP CHILDREN AND YOUTH SOLVE PROBLEMS:

- Teach your child how to relax when they feel upset. This could be deep breathing, doing something calming (such as a quiet activity they enjoy), taking some time alone, or going for a walk.
- Talk about possible solutions or ideas to improve a situation and how to make it happen. Try not to take over.



HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD OR YOUTH HAS A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM?

All children and youth are different. If you're concerned your child may have a problem, look at whether there are changes in the way they think, feel or act. Mental health problems can also lead to physical changes. Ask yourself how your child is doing at home, at school and with friends.