

Mindful Minute

A Mental Health Resource for Parents

A Healthier, Happier Summer Starts at Home

As the school year winds down and summer begins, many families look forward to a slower, more flexible schedule. While this break can be refreshing, the loss of daily structure can also affect the mental and emotional well-being of both children and parents. Changes in routines, increased screen time, shifting responsibilities, and less predictable schedules can lead to stress, fatigue, or disconnection if not managed intentionally.



Mental health maintenance during the summer is a family effort. For kids, consistent sleep, balanced meals, regular physical activity, and some light structure help support mood and behavior. For parents, this season can bring its own pressures such as juggling childcare, work, and expectations to “make summer special.” Prioritizing your own well-being is just as important. Small habits like setting realistic expectations, taking short breaks, and maintaining your own routines can help reduce burnout.

Summer is also an opportunity to strengthen family connection. Simple check-ins during meals, walks, or downtime can create space for everyone to share how they’re feeling. These moments don’t need to be formal; what matters is consistency and openness.

It’s important for both parents and children to recognize when extra support may be needed. Ongoing irritability, withdrawal, trouble sleeping, or feeling overwhelmed are signs worth paying attention to at any age. Reaching out to trusted supports such as friends, family members, counselors, or healthcare providers can make a meaningful difference.

By approaching summer with intention and flexibility, families can support each other’s well-being, build stronger connections, and create a healthier, more balanced season for everyone.





Family Bonding Activity

Summer is the perfect time to recharge both physically and emotionally. Staying active as a family not only strengthens attachment but also supports mental health.

- **Outdoor activities** like going for walks, swimming, or bike riding have been shown to boost mood and lower stress.
- **Healthy eating** can be simple, too! Fill your plates with seasonal fruits, grilled lean proteins, and plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- **Consistent sleep routines**, even during vacation, help regulate mood and energy for both kids and adults.
- **Regular family check-ins.** Ask how everyone's feeling and create one on one times and activities for the children in the family. Even small, consistent activities such as story time before bed or walks to the mailbox can turn into bonding relational moments that create safety and connection in a family.
- **Celebrate small wins**, and notice signs of burnout or emotional distress like difficulties sleeping, changes in appetite or weight loss or gain.

It's okay to reach out for help and encourage each other to talk with a healthcare provider or counselor. Make emotional and physical wellness a family habit. Move together, eat mindfully, rest intentionally, and support each other along the way.



Communication Strategies

For those of us that struggle with our mental health, I find one of the very best things we can do is look for the good in our everyday lives. If you ask your child "How was your day?", most likely you will get a one-word answer. If you ask specific questions about good things from their day, you will engage your child in meaningful conversation while simultaneously guiding their brains to see the good.

Example conversation starters include

- *What are three good things from your day...*
- *Something good that I saw someone do...*
- *Today I had fun when...*
- *Something I accomplished today...*
- *Something funny that happened today...*
- *Someone I was thankful for today...*
- *Something I was thankful for today...*
- *Today I smiled when...*
- *Something about today I'll always want to remember...*
- *Today was special because...*
- *Today I was proud of myself because...*
- *Something interesting that happened today...*
- *My favorite part of today...*
- *Something I was happy about today...*
- *Something good I saw someone do today...*

Summer might be a whirlwind of chaos, but remember: connection doesn't require a formal sit-down. Some of the best breakthroughs and conversations happen during informal activities like a car ride, a shared chore, or while eating popsicles on the porch. Keep it light, stay curious, and enjoy the extra time with your favorite people.

Self-Care

Summer can be a challenging time for both parents and children. Along with the long days and fun experiences come disrupted routines and increased demands. While children feel excitement during the summer, it can be a very overwhelming time for parents. Trying to juggle schedules, arrange childcare, and create fun summer memories can spread caregivers thin. It is important to make time for self-care in the busy summer season.

- **Keep it Simple**

Self-care doesn't have to be another event that is added to an already busy schedule. Self-care can be something simple, such as enjoying a quiet moment, practicing deep breathing, doing a couple of stretches, eating a full meal, and getting enough sleep.

- **Reduce Stress with Schedules and Routines**

Another way to practice self-care is to make a summer schedule. Many families struggle with a lack of routine in the summer. The schedule isn't intended to plan every minute of the summer, but rather to add a sense of structure and predictability to an otherwise chaotic season. Some activities that can be added to the schedule are movement, reading, and screen-free time. Schedules and routines help reduce stress and create a sense of security and safety in both children and adults.

- **Establish Healthy Boundaries**

During a season filled with events and plans, it is also important to remember that it is okay if you can't commit to everything. Sometimes self-care looks like declining an invitation in favor of some much-needed alone time.

Being a parent is hard work, and in order to take care of your family, you must first take care of yourself. This summer, make sure to take some time for yourself and practice self-care.

Helpful Resources



Please scan the QR code to explore a variety of mental health articles and videos.

