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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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Start Talking!

Building a Drug-Free Future



## Know! What You Can Do To Improve Your Mental Health

With the start of each New Year, people commonly vow to improve their physical health, including diet, nutrition, and exercise. While this is a vital measure to take, it is equally important to resolve to improve one's mental and emotional health as well.

A healthy mind is fundamental to a person's overall well-being, regardless of age. Our mental state affects how we think, feel, and act. Mentally healthy people are better positioned to:

- Realize their full potential
- Cope with the stresses of life
- Work productively at school or on the job
- Relate positively to others
- Make good decisions
- Make meaningful contributions to their communities

**In this New Year, here are 10 Things You (teens and adults) Can Do for Your Mental Health** (shared by The University of Michigan – Student Life University Health Service, *adapted from the National Mental Health Association/National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare*):

1. **Value Yourself:** Treat yourself with kindness and respect and avoid self-criticism. Make time for things you enjoy.
2. **Take Care of Your Body:** Eat more nutritiously, drink more water, exercise, get plenty of sleep, and avoid tobacco.
3. **Surround Yourself with Positive People:** Happiness is contagious, so is negativity – which will only bring you down. Keep company with people who choose to laugh more than they complain and focus on the positives in life.
4. **Give of Yourself:** Seek out volunteer opportunities at churches and/or organizations that interest you, or simply take advantage of the endless opportunities to help family, friends, and neighbors. It is uplifting to help others.
5. **Learn How to Deal with Stress:** Stress is a normal part of life and the sooner one learns how to cope with it in a positive way, the better. Different things work for different people, but in general some common stress reducers include physical exercise, deep breathing exercises, visualization, journaling, playing with a pet, or taking a good old-fashioned walk outside.



Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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6. **Quiet Your Mind:** Meditation, prayer, and mindfulness are known to help people feel calm and relaxed, and can improve one's outlook on life.

7. **Set Realistic Goals:** Decide what you want to achieve in school, work, or personal life and write it down. Then, plan out the steps needed to make those goals a reality. Aim high, but be realistic and don't overschedule yourself.

8. **Break Up the Monotony:** Routines are good, but a change of pace now and then is even better. Take a walk in a different park, shoot some hoops instead of doing your daily run, come up with a different spot to hang with friends, try a new food or restaurant, etc.

9. **Avoid Alcohol and Other Drugs:** For youth, this is a given. Alcohol is illegal for those under 21 and a danger in many ways. For some adults, alcohol in moderation is okay. While some people turn to alcohol and other drugs to self-medicate, the opposite is likely to occur as self-medicating will only make the situation worse.

10. **Get Help When Needed:** Seeking help is a sign of strength – not weakness. People who get appropriate care can and do recover from mental illness and addiction and lead happy, healthy, productive, and rewarding lives.

It's a new year—a clean slate, a chance for new beginnings, and a time to push away the negatives, focus your energy on the positives, improve your mental and emotional health, and find balance in life.

Sources: [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - MentalHealth.gov](http://U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - MentalHealth.gov): What is Mental Health? Aug. 29, 2017. [The University of Michigan – Student Life University Health Service](http://The University of Michigan – Student Life University Health Service), adapted from the [National Mental Health Association/National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare](http://National Mental Health Association/National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare): [Ten Things You Can Do for Your Mental Health](http://Ten Things You Can Do for Your Mental Health).

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