



WELLNESS Newsletter

Fall 2018

This publication is brought to you by the District Wellness Council, which is dedicated to educating Rush-Henrietta families about important topics to keep your children healthy.

Mental Wellness:

What is it and why is it a District Priority

According to the World Health Organization, mental health is defined 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.”

Early Warning Signs

Many factors contribute to our well-being, including relationships (family, friends, colleagues), work/school demands, financial concerns, coping skills and self-worth. When acute or chronic stress occurs these factors can improve or hinder our well-being. These reactions to stressors trigger chemical changes in our brains (automatically and out of our conscious control). The chemical changes can bring about feelings of anger, depression, and anxiety which can lead to physical symptoms ranging in severity from headache, heart palpitations and bowel problems, to heart attack and stroke. This stress also affects relationships and interactions with others. Everyone alive has experienced increased stress and a decreased mental well-being at some point.

Not sure if your stress is normal or an early warning sign that help may be needed? Here is a list of several early warning signs, if you/a loved one are experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors it can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks such as taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

Resources and Important Links

Resources for Help:

- [Monroe County Lifeline](#)
- [National Crisis Text Line](#)
- [Mental Wellness Routine](#)
- [Mental Health America](#)
- [NAMI: Rochester](#)
- [Support Groups List](#)
- [Henrietta Rec Center Activities](#)

Service Announcements and Podcasts on Mental Health:

- [Not Another Anxiety Show](#)
- [The Hardcore Self-Help Podcast](#)
- [ADHD ReWired](#)
- [Change Direction.org](#)
- [Mental Health: What Parents Can Do](#)
- [Health/Safety Coalition](#)

A few of many healthy activities in our schools:

- Food collection for Rush-Henrietta food cupboard
- Running clubs for students and staff
- Health focused clubs for students
- Mindfulness in classrooms
- Health Classes

Positive Coping Techniques

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, you may need to seek help to get back to a better mental state. The following are positive ways to cope and improve your stress, health, and mental well-being:

- First, acknowledge to yourself that you are not where you want to be with your mental health and that it is ok to concentrate on getting yourself back to a healthy balance which may include seeking help from others.
 - Find a coping skill to relieve the stress/feelings you are experiencing which is not going to further worsen your physical health. Some examples include:
 - Using **Meditation and Relaxation Techniques** such as deep breathing and muscle relaxation.
 - **Time to Yourself.** Setting aside time every day to allow yourself to relax and escape the stress of life. Take a bath, spend time singing in the shower or just yelling it out in a private room.
 - **Physical Activity.** Getting the heart rate up causes the body to release endorphins (the body's feel good hormones) and provides some stress relief.
 - **Reading.** Escape from reality completely by reading. Reading can help you to de-stress by taking your mind off everyday life.
 - **Friendship.** Having friends who are willing to listen and support you through good and bad times is essential for stress relief.
 - **Humor.** Finding something humorous in a stressful situation can help to lighten the mood. Laughter is the best medicine.
 - **Hobbies.** Having creative outlets such as listening to music, drawing, or gardening are great ways to relax and relieve everyday stress.
 - **Spirituality.** Actively believing in a higher power or divine being can have many health benefits. In recent studies, it has been found that people who pray have better mental health than those who do not.
 - **Pets.** Taking care of a pet helps distract the mind from stressful thoughts. Studies show that pets are a calming influence in people's lives.
 - **Sleeping.** The human body needs a chance to rest and repair itself after a long and stressful day. Sleeping gives the body this chance so that it is ready to perform another day. But sleeping too long can be detrimental; keep it to 8-9 hours.
 - **Nutrition.** Eating foods that are good for you not only improves your physical health, but plays a major role in your mental health. When your body gets the proper nutrients, it is better able to function in every capacity.
- If you have tried the above skills and still are experiencing the warning signs or have thought about harming yourself or others, you need to seek medical help. Contact your health care provider or counselor. If you feel you need to act on these harming thoughts now, contact the suicide hotline @ 2-1-1 (or Toll Free: 877-356-9211). You can also text about any crisis and a live trained volunteer will text with you until you are in a more calm state. The text line is 741741. You can also visit an Emergency Department in the area for help.

Positive mental health allows people to realize their full potential, cope with life stress, work productively and make meaningful contributions to their communities. The Rush-Henrietta School District as well as the District Wellness Council is committed to providing our students and community with education and resources to find their best selves. Please see the Resource links on the first page of this newsletter for links to articles and services to help with your mental well-being. If you would like to be a part of this important initiative, keep reading/checking back on the district website for articles and educational media sources to improve your well-being. You are also welcome to attend our District Wellness Committee meetings four times a school year. More Information can be found on the District Website: [District Wellness Council](#)