



GOWANDA CENTRAL SCHOOL

Engaging students in learning through the development and use of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

PAWS For Your Mental Health

January 2019 Edition

A New Year, A New Focus on Mental Wellness

Tis the season for New Years Resolutions. How many of our resolutions get forgotten about as the year goes on? This year, instead of a resolution, focus on your family's mental WELLNESS!

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes mental wellness as "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community".

Focus on Yourself Do NOT try to be someone you are not or compare yourself to others. Teach your child to appreciate who they are and to always be kind to themselves. Remember being kind starts with being kind to yourself!

BE POSITIVE Demonstrate a positive attitude especially in front of your children. Instead of looking at the negative in situations, focus on how you can grow from them and the good things that you have in your life. Be careful of the way you portray your own self and your situation as your children can see this!

Enjoy a New Activity Try new activities or hobbies. Find something you enjoy, include your child in it, and explain how this keeps you healthy. Give your child the opportunity to find something they love to do!

Maintain Healthy Relationships Laugh and affiliate with people who focus on the positive and enjoy health activities. Encourage your child to be involved in relationships that are healthy and lift each other up.

Get ACTIVE! Physical activities can help to increase energy and release neurotransmitters in the brain that fight anxiety and depression. For mental exercise try practicing mindfulness which helps us focus on the present moment without worrying about the past or future!

BE Proactive If you or someone in your family appears to be struggling, reach out for help. Teach your children who they can go to if they need help before it becomes a serious issue.

Did you know?

January 11th is Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Here are some ways to help your child stay safe!

- **TALK** to your child about the dangers of social media and get INVOLVED in their accounts. Ensure your child has proper privacy settings and monitor their activity. Many apps have location settings which can place your child at risk of harm.
- **KNOW** who their friends are and where they are hanging out. Give them emergency contact numbers to call if they are in need of help.
- **TEACH** your child how to be safe in the community. Enforce the use of a buddy system. Talk about what to do in potentially dangerous situations.
- **PAY ATTENTION** to your child's relationships especially anyone who is significantly older than them or if they are coming home with expensive new items or clothing from the person they are hanging out with.
- Visit <https://humantraffickinghotline.org> for more information or if you believe a child is being trafficked, call the hotline at 1-888-372-7888

Do you have additional questions about mental health supports in the area or concerned about your child? Please contact your child's school counseling office and ask to speak with a counselor or social worker.

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