



# Momentum

*Understanding your teenager's  
mental health*

## Stay plugged in with your teen

Would you want to go back and be a teenager again? It's not likely you'd want to navigate all those mystifying challenges again—from peer pressures to academic stress to an ever-changing body. If you're parenting a teen now:

- Listen carefully and nonjudgmentally. Regularly encourage your child to share feelings with you. It's important for them to know they don't have to endure things alone.
- Don't just notice the problems. Teens respond better to positive feedback than frequent criticism. Tell them why you are impressed with or proud of them.
- Be alert for changes. Talk with your child if you notice them seeming often sad, tearful, lacking motivation, having sleeping or eating problems, and/or exhibiting sudden school problems. If you're unsure what to do, contact your physician or your program.

### Teen talk tips

**Stay at it...gently.** Teens are pretty good at shutting out parents when there's trouble. Don't give up. Continue to emphasize your concern for them and your sincere interest in listening.

**Be on their side.** If your teen's frustrated or upset, do some joint brainstorming with them for possible solutions to problems. Don't just take over and tell them what to do.

**Show them you're human, too.** Be transparent about your experience of having faced emotional and psychological challenges. Reassure your teen that their feelings are normal; offer your unconditional love and support.



EMPLOYEE  
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Air Force EAP  
1-866-580-9078 (TTY 711)  
[www.AFPC.AF.MIL/EAP](http://www.AFPC.AF.MIL/EAP)

Contact your program

**24/7/365**

for confidential, no-cost help  
for you and your household  
members.

**Live Webinar**—Please join us online for *Helping Your Teen Learn Emotional Regulation*, a parenting webinar on Wednesday, May 12, 2021. Register [here](#).

## Mind Your Mental Health

### May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. This health observance highlights the importance of mental health and wellness.

- **Get your body moving.** When you exercise, you release endorphins that trigger positive feelings and increase emotional well-being. It can be as simple as a short walk a few days a week.
- **Surround yourself with supportive people.** Your way of thinking is influenced by those around you. Find people who make you feel good about yourself.
- **Put your needs first.** Make sure to take care of yourself so that you can be there for others.
- **Cut out bad habits.** Look at your lifestyle. If you see habits that don't work well for you, come up with a plan to stop them. Consider whether short-term gratification is worth the long term consequences.

Visit [www.MagellanHealthcare.com/About/MYMH](http://www.MagellanHealthcare.com/About/MYMH) or call your program for confidential mental health resources.

## Working on Wellness

### May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

- More than 60 million Americans suffer with asthma and allergies. This peak allergy season is an optimal time to educate patients, families, friends and co-workers about the conditions so many must manage.
- Asthma symptoms include coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Environmental triggers of asthma attacks include passive smoking, molds, pet hair, dust mites and certain foods (for those with specific food allergies).

## Showing Support

### Join World No Tobacco Day in May

- The World Health Organization sponsors World No Tobacco Day on May 31. If you've struggled to quit smoking, make sure your reason for wanting to quit is meaningful for you.
- Plan a quit date. Cut down on smoking prior to that date. Try over-the-counter quit tools such as nicotine gum, lozenges or patches.



## Managing Work-Life Balance

### Plan a fun summer regardless

Even if COVID-19 restrictions close down pools, summer camps, theaters and concerts, you can still engage the kids in fun. Schedule a daily workout (bike ride, walk or dance party). Camp out under the stars in in your back yard. Check out area public lakes for swimming options. Take a culinary vacation, bringing the flavors of far-flung cuisines to your home kitchen; have the kids help out. Plan a scavenger hunt or socially-distanced party.