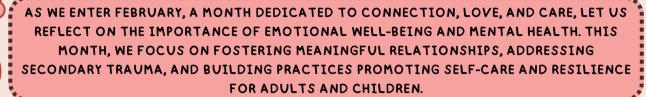
# MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER





# MENTAL CONNECTION & SHARING FEELINGS: THE HEART OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS THE PROFOUND IMPACT
OF SHARING FEELINGS ON MENTAL HEALTH.
ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, "EXPRESSING
EMOTIONS FOSTERS DEEPER CONNECTIONS,
REDUCES STRESS, AND ENHANCES PROBLEMSOLVING SKILLS." WHEN STUDENTS, PARENTS,
AND EDUCATORS FEEL SAFE TO SHARE THEIR
THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS, WE CREATE AN
ENVIRONMENT OF TRUST AND SUPPORT.
TIPS FOR ENCOURAGING EMOTIONAL
EXPRESSION:

- FOR PARENTS: ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS LIKE, "WHAT WAS THE BEST PART OF YOUR DAY?" OR "WHAT MADE YOU FEEL PROUD TODAY?"
- FOR EDUCATORS: CREATE CLASSROOM
   "FEELINGS CHECK-INS" TO ALLOW
   STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY AND SHARE HOW
   THEY'RE FEELING.
- FOR YOURSELF: KEEP A JOURNAL OR TALK TO A TRUSTED FRIEND TO PROCESS YOUR OWN EMOTIONS.

# SECONDARY TRAUMA: UNDERSTANDING & ADDRESSING ITS IMPACT

SECONDARY TRAUMA, ALSO KNOWN AS COMPASSION FATIGUE, REFERS TO THE EMOTIONAL TOLL OF EXPOSURE TO ANOTHER PERSON'S TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES. EDUCATORS AND PARENTS, AS CAREGIVERS, ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO THIS. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT SECONDARY TRAUMA CAN LEAD TO BURNOUT, EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, AND PHYSICAL STRESS.

### SIGNS OF SECONDARY TRAUMA:

- FEELING EMOTIONALLY NUMB OR DETACHED
- DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING
- EXPERIENCING CHRONIC FATIGUE OR IRRITABILITY

# SELF-CARE STRATEGIES FOR SECONDARY TRAUMA:

- <u>SET BOUNDARIES</u>: PROTECT YOUR TIME AND ENERGY BY SAYING NO TO OVERCOMMITMENTS.
- PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION: ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS WITHOUT JUDGMENT.
- <u>SEEK SUPPORT</u>: TALKING WITH COLLEAGUES, A
  COUNSELOR, OR TRUSTED LOVED ONES CAN REDUCE
  THE EFFECTS OF SECONDARY TRAUMA.

FEBRUARY BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES TO SPOTLIGHT IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH:

- VALENTINE'S DAY (FEB 14): BEYOND ROMANTIC LOVE, IT'S A TIME TO PROMOTE SELF-LOVE AND APPRECIATION FOR OTHERS.
  - ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO CREATE "KINDNESS CARDS" OR GRATITUDE NOTES.
  - REFLECT ON PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND WHAT MAKES YOU PROUD.
- RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK (FEB 11-17): SMALL GESTURES OF KINDNESS BOOST MOOD, REDUCE STRESS, AND FOSTER CONNECTION FOR BOTH THE GIVER AND RECEIVER.
- CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK (FEB 5-11): A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL GROWTH THROUGH COMPASSION, ACTIVE LISTENING, AND HEALTHY COPING SKILLS.

"COMPASSION IS THE FOUNDATION OF CONNECTION. IT'S THE ABILITY TO SEE OTHERS' PAIN AND RESPOND WITH KINDNESS." – DR. KRISTIN NEFF

EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO <u>CHANGE</u> THE WORLD." - NELSON MANDELA

MENTAL HEALTH THEMES IN FEBRUARY



ONE CARING ADULT
CAN CHANGE THE
TRAJECTORY OF A
YOUNG PERSON'S LIFE."
– JOSH SHIPP

# "EDUCATING THE MIND WITHOUT EDUCATING THE HEART IS NO EDUCATION AT ALL." – ARISTOTLE

# A SPECIAL NOTE ON COMPASSION AND EDUCATION

EDUCATORS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN SHAPING YOUNG MINDS AND HEARTS.
ACCORDING TO DATA FROM THE NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK, STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE SECONDARY TRAUMA OR EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION OFTEN BENEFIT FROM A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ADULT PRESENCE IN THEIR LIVES.

BY CULTIVATING COMPASSION IN OUR CLASSROOMS AND HOMES, WE GIVE CHILDREN THE TOOLS TO THRIVE EMOTIONALLY AND ACADEMICALLY. REMEMBER, MODELING KINDNESS AND VULNERABILITY INSPIRES STUDENTS TO DO THE SAME.

YOUR PARAGRAPH TEXT

SIMPLE SELF-CARE PRACTICES FOR FEBRUARY

### FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS:

- PRACTICE GRATITUDE: WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR EACH DAY.
- BREATHE DEEPLY: TAKE A MOMENT TO SLOW DOWN AND BREATHE DEEPLY FOR 60 SECONDS.
- UNPLUG FOR A NIGHT:
   DISCONNECT FROM DEVICES AND
   SPEND TIME WITH LOVED ONES.

# FOR STUDENTS:

- MOVEMENT BREAKS: ENCOURAGE DANCE, STRETCHING, OR YOGA TO RELEASE PENT-UP ENERGY.
- POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS: TEACH THEM TO REPEAT PHRASES LIKE, "I AM CAPABLE," OR "I AM LOVED."

STUDENTS DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE." – JOHN C. MAXWELL

IE'RE HERE EOR VOII

AS WE FOCUS ON CONNECTION AND MENTAL HEALTH THIS MONTH, LET'S REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOWING LOVE AND COMPASSION NOT JUST TO OTHERS, BUT TO OURSELVES, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO REFLECT ON THE WAYS YOU CAN NURTURE YOUR WELL-BEING AND THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF THOSE AROUND YOU.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES OR NEED SUPPORT, PLEASE REACH OUT TO THE SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH TEAM FOR ASSISTANCE.

TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD A MORE COMPASSIONATE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY!