

EAP E-NEWSLETTER

Back to School: Tips for the Transition

Children of all ages are preparing to return to school. For some, the last few weeks of summer are filled with excitement as they anticipate the

coming school year. For others, the last weeks of summer vacation are being savored, the thought of another school year dreaded.

Regardless of how your children are approaching the school year, discussing the upcoming changes can help prepare for the transition.

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Good Mental Health

Research shows that 90% of people who die by suicide suffer from a diagnosable and treatable mental illness at the time of their death¹. Suicide remains a serious public health concern and is the third leading cause of death in youth aged 10 to 24. More youth and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease combined.²

Some important reminders about mental health:

- Mental health is as important as physical health. In fact, the two are closely linked.
- Mental health problems are real, and they deserve to be treated.
- It is not a person's fault if he or she has a mental health problem. No one is to blame.
- Mental health problems are not a sign of weakness. They are not something you can "just

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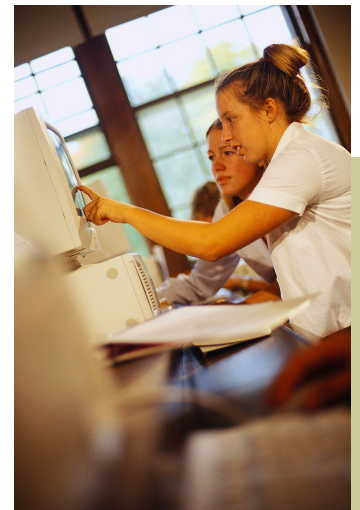
Talk with your children about how life will change such as changes in sleep routine, less time for leisure activities, etc. Both children and teens can benefit from help in determining an appropriate school year schedule.

If children have had more free time during the summer than will be available once school starts, talk about how that time has been spent, which activities can be eliminated and if there are activities that can be continued, perhaps for a shorter duration.

For example, sitting down with a television schedule and determining which programs are important to continue viewing and the programs that can be eliminated once school begins. Teens that have spent a lot of time on the phone or with friends can determine how to maintain relationships in less time.

Assisting children and teens in developing a plan that utilizes these activities to reward themselves for good study habits and academic progress can be very helpful. Learning to use favorite activities such as watching television, talking on the phone or visiting with friends as rewards for completing homework assignments and good grades are important skills to develop.

Learning to prioritize task, budget time and planning rewards for accomplishing task are skills that will serve your child throughout life.



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snap out of,” even if you try.

- Whether you’re male or female, it’s OK to ask for help and get it.
- There’s hope. People improve and recover with the help of treatment, and they are able to enjoy happier and healthier lives.³

Individuals willing to recognize and acknowledge that a problem exist and seek help most often see improvement. If you or someone you care about has been struggling with an emotional or behavioral problem, free and confidential assistance is available through your Employee Assistance Program. Contact a BHS Care Coordinator today at 1-800-245-1150 to discuss your benefit plan and options available.

¹Mental Health: A report of the Surgeon General, 1999

²National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, 2001

³This material was excerpted and edited by D. Lee Stoltzfus, Ph.D. from a brochure entitled CHANGE YOUR MIND (About Mental Health) published by the American Psychological Association. The entire brochure may be viewed on-line at: <http://www.apahelpcenter.org/featuredtopics/feature.php?id=37>