

Building Resilient Families

By promoting positive mental & physical health



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A resource for parents to help their teens grow up great.

As your teen leaves childhood behind and begins the journey to adulthood, they still need parenting adults – and other caring adults – to guide, support, and cheer them on as they discover themselves and their place in the world. Teens are trying to sort out a complex world and learn how to navigate it successfully. Through exercises to practice mindfulness, move your body, expand your mind, fuel your body and build assets, you can explore the following five themes *with* your teen and discover simple and authentic ways to build your teen's resilience, to help them create healthy practices and routines, and to strengthen your relationship.

Get to know your teen's spark

Connect with your teen

Learn a skill - Teach a skill

Find Balance in the Digital World

Acts of Kindness & Volunteering

PRACTICE Mindfulness

Mindfulness helps us learn to pay attention to our bodies, minds, and the environment and to understand our feelings with a kind and curious mind. Being mindful can help us focus and concentrate better. It also allows us to pause or calm down when stressed, angry or sad.

EXPAND YOUR Mind

Building a strong brain includes understanding feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. It also means learning skills and strategies to cope through difficult times. Through simple actions you can help your teen expand their mind, build resilience and create a healthy growth mindset.

FUEL YOUR BODY

Fuel your body with healthy foods to benefit both body and mind. Healthy eating increases energy levels, supports a healthy immune system, improves mood and concentration, and helps cope with the stresses of daily life. Enjoy food with your family to foster connections and share food cultures and traditions.

MOVE YOUR BODY

Moving your Body is important to build positive self-esteem, improve mental and physical health and decrease stress and anxiety. It can also help with brain development, creativity, learning, and concentration. It is an awesome way to learn new skills and create positive connections with others. Wow! Being active has a lot of benefits!

BUILD ASSETS

The 40 Developmental Assets are building blocks that all children and youth need to grow up great. Research shows that the higher the number of assets a young person has, the more likely they are to grow up caring, healthy, and responsible. You can build assets all throughout a young person's life.

Get to know your teen's spark

TEEN
EDITION

Every teen has a spark! A spark is more than just a passing interest or talent. It's what you're passionate about. It unleashes your energy and joy, gives your life purpose and focus, and allows you to make your own unique contribution to the world. A spark is an activity or interest that truly engages kids to be their best. Find out what spark (passions or interests) your teen has. Ask them what they love to do with their free time. Then help them grow that passion!

When a child knows their spark, and has an adult who supports it, they are more likely to have higher grades, better school attendance and physical health, empathy, concern for the environment, a desire to help others and a sense of purpose. It's never too early to start providing opportunities for your teen to find their spark!

PRACTICE Mindfulness

Mindfully communicate with your teen. Pause, really listen, be curious, ask open ended questions or say "tell me more" to connect more deeply. Help them feel good about what they already know.

EXPAND YOUR Mind

Together as a family, create a dream board or paper collage to capture the passions and interests of each family member. This will help identify each person's spark. Talk together and create a plan on how you can fuel the sparks and help grow that passion.

Fuel YOUR BODY

Get your teen excited and involved with family meals. Encourage them to choose recipes and help prepare meals for the whole family - it may spark a passion for food!

Move YOUR BODY

Help your teen experience a variety of physical activities to discover what they love to do. Provide teens with encouragement and a safe environment to be active; it helps them build skills and confidence in moving their body and can spark them to be active for life.

Build ASSETS

What if you don't share the same enthusiasm for your teen's passion? Ask them to teach you about what they love. Have them show you what they love about their spark. This is a tool to connect with them.

Connect with your teen

TEEN
EDITION

Your teen observes relationships around them. Teens do best when they experience healthy, positive relationships, and as a parent you can model this for your child. Although the teenage years are seen as a natural time for teens to pull away from parents, this is the time that parent connection is more important than ever. Peer influences are strong during these years, however research shows that teens continue to value their relationships with family. Finding ways to stay connected maintains and strengthens these relationships. Staying involved ensures a life-long connection with your teen, setting the stage for lasting well-being.

PRACTICE *Mindfulness*

Spend time together outside. Take a walk or bike ride, kick a ball at the park. Getting in touch with nature helps you connect with the moment and one another. Observe what you see, hear or smell, notice how it feels to just be together.

MOVE *YOUR BODY*

Be active with your teen. It is a fantastic way to create connection and have fun with them. Learn about your teen's day by going for a walk, bike ride or shoot some hoops. Sometimes the best conversations happen when you are active together.

EXPAND YOUR *Mind*

Music can be a powerful connector and enhances mental well-being. Share your favourite music with your teen and have them share their music with you. Together, build a playlist of family favourites; then press play and get your groove on.

FUEL *YOUR BODY*

Family meal time is a great time to connect with your teen and offers a touch point to talk about what's going on in your teens life. Try to find time for family meals throughout your week. Ask about their day and share something about your day.

Build *ASSETS*

Have one-on-one time with your teen. Take time to talk to your teen about things that matter to them. Ask their opinion often. Involve them in planning & decision-making for family activities.

Learn a skill - Teach a skill

TEEN
EDITION

The teenage brain is wired for learning and skill development. When your child tries new activities, it builds their brain and it helps them to discover what they enjoy. Teaching others these new skills is a great way for teens to build their own confidence and responsibility. When teens learn and teach others, it fosters connections and creates a sense of belonging. Everyone has something to teach and something to learn.

P.S. Help your teen be prepared to take in this new information by staying active. Physical activity improves the brain's ability to focus and learn new information. Exercise releases BDNF, a protein which is like "miracle grow" for the brain. It allows the brain to take in information, to process and remember it.

Mindfulness PRACTICE

You can carry mindfulness into all areas of your life. When you teach each other activities, or are being creative, focus on the task at hand and notice how it impacts your body and mind. Teach your children to find the joy in the journey.

EXPAND YOUR *Mind*

Pay attention to those times when your teen is hanging around or expresses interest or curiosity in your passions, activities or chores. This is a good cue that they want to connect. Invite them to join in the activity which creates an opportunity for them to learn, connect and engage in good conversation.

Fuel YOUR BODY

Experiment in the kitchen. Find some new cuisine, cooking technique or a new recipe to make with your teen. Build and foster healthy eating habits and life skills to take with them into adulthood.

Move YOUR BODY

Teach your teen and their friends one of your favourite active childhood games. Ask them to teach you their favourite active game and be ready to play and sweat! You may be surprised at how much fun everyone has together.

Build ASSETS

Have your teen take the lead and teach you about something they love doing - sport, creative activity, music, woodworking, cooking. When you empower them to lead, you are helping them grow up great.

Find Balance in the Digital World

TEEN
EDITION

Technology is a fascinating world. It has impacted every aspect of our lives, especially that of teens. The challenge is to find ways to say "yes" to technology that creates a healthy balance. Through discussion and goal setting with your child, look for creative ways to use technology that promotes good communication and establishes boundaries. Exposing your child to other activities like sports, art lessons, crafts, book clubs, volunteer work, or taking care of a pet, etc. will help them balance technology use.

Role model responsible technology use for your family. You can set limits, promote safety, encourage creativity, and build healthy connections in order to find balance in the digital world.

PRACTICE Mindfulness

Meaningful moments occur when we slow down and tune in to ourselves, one another and our environment. Together, use apps to practice activities that focus on breathing, identify and label emotions, or listen to sleep stories to decrease stress and promote sleep.

Move YOUR BODY

Find creative ways you can be active together using technology. Ask your teen to show you a game like Just Dance, the latest active Tik Tok challenge or a workout video online. Step outside of your box and move together. Explore fun and easy ways to get your heart rate up to improve your heart and lung health.

EXPAND YOUR Mind

Hang out online with your teen and help them find ways they can use technology. Build a toolkit of resources to access reliable information and support to navigate life's challenges. KidsHelpPhone.ca is a great place to start; check out the *Get info* and *Get help* tabs together and start building their toolkit.

Fuel YOUR BODY

Connect with your teen about social media and how diet culture in the digital world can impact your teens self-image and view of food. Help your teen view food as nourishment and fuel for their growing body. Foster a healthy relationship by role modeling food enjoyment and respect for your body.

Build ASSETS

Have a conversation about digital safety. What does it mean to use the internet safely? Set boundaries and expectations about responsible use.

Acts of Kindness & Volunteering

TEEN
EDITION

Kindness is choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, motivated by genuine warm feelings. An act of kindness is good for your mental well-being. It can improve mood, self-esteem and happiness, as well as reduce stress. Kindness gives us hope, it's heartwarming and gives us a sense of purpose. Acts of kindness may also encourage others to repeat the good deeds they themselves have experienced – creating a ripple effect!

Volunteering is the ultimate act of kindness. One of the many benefits of volunteering as a family is to develop skills that you can apply in all aspects of your life. When you volunteer together, your family bond and community awareness will increase, while you learn new skills and build new connections.

PRACTICE *Mindfulness*

Invite each member of your family to intentionally perform 5 acts of kindness, big or small, to anyone in your community. Smile, walk your neighbour's dog, donate a toy to charity, silently offer good wishes to those who may need help. Kindness fosters compassion and connections to others.

Move *YOUR BODY*

Think of ways to move your body by doing acts of kindness together. Perhaps your family takes a few hours to clean up a local park, mow a neighbour's lawn, or plant some beautiful flowers for everyone to enjoy. Maybe your teen is on a sports team that you can volunteer on. When you take time to volunteer with your teen, you make a difference and everyone wins!

EXPAND YOUR *Mind*

Help your teen embrace who they really are and practice self-love. When teens treat themselves with kindness it improves their sense of self-worth, resilience, and ability to cope with problems. Guide them to create a list of affirmations they can tell themselves daily. Role model this practice for extra benefits.

Fuel *YOUR BODY*

Talk to your teen about what interests them and how they could share and support others with food. For someone who lives alone, offer to take over a meal, help with groceries, or do some gardening. Giving to others fosters an appreciation of food and can create a ripple effect of kindness.

Build *ASSETS*

Together, think of 10 ways your family can serve others. Choose one idea and set a date to do the activity. Then talk about your experience.

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RESOURCE PAGE

Click on the links below to access more resources to build resilience and create simple connections to help your teen grow up great.

Booklets from MentalHealthLiteracy.org



40 Developmental Assets



AHS help is on the line

Healthy Together



Mental Health Help Line
1-877-303-2642

PRACTICE Mindfulness

Want to learn more about practicing mindfulness?
Check out these great websites and apps:
[Mindful Schools](#)
[Mindfulness for Teens](#)



MOVE YOUR BODY

Looking for creative ways to help you and your teen move your body? Visit:
[Active for Life](#)
[ParticipAction](#)
[YMCA Free Workouts Anytime, Anywhere](#)
[Canadian 24 Hour Movement Guidelines](#)

EXPAND YOUR Mind

Do you want to learn strategies to expand your mind? Visit:
[Greater Good - Parenting and Family](#)
[Mindvalley - Affirmations for Teens](#)
[Screenagers - Screen Time Contracts](#)

FUEL YOUR BODY

Interested in new recipes, ideas for healthy eating, and ways to fuel your body? Visit:
[Recipe ideas from Cookspiration](#)
[AHS Healthy Eating Starts Here](#)
[Canada's Food Guide:](#)

- [Healthy Eating for Teens](#)
- [Eat Meals with Others](#)
- [Diets and Food Trends](#)

[Campaign for Real Beauty](#)
[The Journey from Dieting to Healthy Eating](#)

BUILD ASSETS

Looking for simple ways to build your teen's assets and help them grow up great? Visit:
[Keep Connected](#)
[Sparc Red Deer: Strengthening Positive Assets and Resiliency in Communities](#)