

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The habits and behaviors teens establish today can affect their health for years to come. Developing good mental and emotional health helps create patterns of behavior that, with practice, can yield benefits for a lifetime. In this chapter, we will investigate various dimensions of mental and emotional health, such as developing a positive identity, understanding emotions, and managing emotions.

Some questions your teen will explore in this chapter include: *What are the characteristics of good mental and emotional health? What are the different kinds of needs that people have? What factors affect mental and emotional health? What are the assets that help a person build a positive identity? What behaviors constitute healthful risk-taking, and what behaviors constitute unhealthful risk-taking? What causes mood swings, and why do teens sometimes experience them? What are some positive ways to deal with strong emotions?*

Please reinforce our classroom work by discussing with your son or daughter one or more of the following topics:

- Ask your teen to draw and explain a chart illustrating Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Encourage your teen to discuss which needs are most important to her or him and how she or he meets those needs.
- Ask your teen to explain the statement, "Emotions are neither good nor bad." Discuss reasons that some people might be afraid of strong emotions. Make a list of healthful ways emotions can be processed and expressed.
- Discuss the long-term benefits of working to develop good mental and emotional health as a teen.

Please plan other activities you think will help your teen understand and practice the concepts presented in this chapter. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss your teen's health education.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher