

Chapter**7****Parent Letter and Activities**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

In your teen's health class, we are currently studying mental and emotional health. We are defining *mental and emotional health* as the ability to deal in a reasonable way with the stresses and changes of daily life. Students learn to recognize the signs of good mental and emotional health, including building self-esteem, having a positive outlook, being resilient, and acting responsibly. Our exploration will include understanding emotions and finding healthful ways to deal with them. Students will learn skills to help manage stress. Finally, students will take a look at mental and emotional disorders and sources of help for these health problems.

In studying various aspects of mental and emotional health, your teen will consider some important questions, such as: *How can I tell if I am in good mental and emotional health? What factors shape my personality? What are the advantages of a positive self-concept and high self-esteem? How can I recognize and express my emotions in a healthy way? How can I understand and cope with loss? What are some of the sources of stress? How do people respond to stress and how can I manage it in a healthy way? What are some types of mental and emotional problems? What are the warning signs of serious mental and emotional problems? How can I help myself or a friend with mental or emotional problems?*

It is during adolescence that mental health habits of a lifetime are formed. Answering the questions above will help your teen better weather the stormy time of adolescence.

To support and extend our classroom work, please set aside some time during the next few weeks to complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Discuss your home life together. Do you have a place where family members can relax and unwind? If not, work together to create such a place.
- Discuss situations with your teen that each of you finds stressful. Share with one another the coping skills you use to deal with and overcome problems.
- Encourage your teen to share and discuss emotional problems with you. Offer support and the benefit of once having been an adolescent yourself.

Other activities that will encourage your teen to develop lifelong habits that promote good mental and emotional health are, of course, a welcome addition to our efforts here. As always, do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher