



POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICES

- **Breathe.**
 - Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body.
 - When you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress.
- **Talk it out.**
 - Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled.
- **Play!**
 - Unstructured play can improve problem-solving skills, emotional intelligence, and ability to empathize.
 - Playing can trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.
 - Playing chess, completing puzzles, or pursuing other fun activities that challenge the brain can help prevent memory problems and improve brain function.
 - Play can also stimulate your imagination, helping you adapt and solve problems.
 - Sharing laughter and fun can foster empathy, compassion, trust, and intimacy with others.
 - In the words of George Bernard Shaw, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."
 - Play can boost your energy and vitality and even improve your resistance to disease, helping you function at your best.



- **Opt Outside:**
 - Spending just 20 minutes in a park — even if you don't exercise while you're there — is enough to improve well-being.
 - Being in green space is enough to spark a change in mood.
 - Green spaces reduce stress, help enhance their mood, creativity and imagination. It also helps increase kids' focus and attention.
 - Kids and adults who spent more time in green spaces growing up had lower rates of mental illness.
 - The majority of children in our country are sleep deprived by about two hours a day. One of the most helpful impacts of nature is that it's shown to help dramatically improve children's sleep.
- **Rest.**
 - Sleep restores both your mind and body.
 - Rest is vital for better mental health, increased concentration and memory, a healthier immune system, reduced stress, improved mood and even a better metabolism
- **Give back.**
 - Volunteer for a cause or an issue you care about.
 - Expressing gratitude can improve your mood.
 - People who regularly express gratitude for the positive things in their life are shown to be happier overall, leading to lower rates of stress and depression.
- **Connect with others.**
 - Develop and keep strong relationships with people who will support you.
 - A key difference between very happy people and less-happy people was good relationships.
 - People with strong social and community ties were two to three times less likely to die compared to those without ties.