HEALTHY HEARTS & MINDS

CCYSB YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

AUGUST 2025

What's Inside:

HELPING KIDS COPE WITH CHANGE: NEW TEACHERS, SCHOOLS, AND ROUTINES

The back-to-school season brings a lot of change for children—new teachers, unfamiliar classrooms, different routines, and sometimes entirely new schools. While change can be exciting, it can also stir up feelings of worry, sadness, or even fear in kids and teens. Whether your child is starting kindergarten, moving to middle school, or just adjusting to a new classroom environment, here's how you can support them through the transition with empathy, structure, and confidence.

Normalize the Feelings

Let your child know it's okay to feel nervous, unsure, or even grumpy about the changes ahead. You might say: "It makes sense that you feel a little nervous about starting at a new school. New things can feel tricky at first."

Resist the urge to jump into "fix it" mode. Instead, listen, validate, and remind them that their feelings are valid—and temporary.

Practice the New Routine Ahead of Time

Children feel more secure when they know what to expect. Predictability helps reduce anxiety by giving kids a sense of control. A few ways to ease them into new routines:

- Do a practice run of the school morning routine a week before school starts.
- Walk or drive by the new school or classroom if possible.
- Role-play what drop-off or meeting the new teacher might look like.

Talk About What Will Stay the Same

In the face of change, it helps to highlight what's familiar:

- "You'll still ride the bus with your friend."
- "We'll still read together at bedtime every night."

Stability in one area helps kids feel more resilient in others.

Expect a Bumpy Adjustment—and Be Patient

Some kids might bounce back quickly. Others may show signs of stress like: trouble sleeping, clinginess or irritability, regression in behaviors (like bedwetting or tantrums). This is normal. Offer extra patience, connection, and reassurance. Let them know it's okay to take time to get used to change.

Give Them Tools to Cope

Teach age-appropriate coping skills such as:

- Deep breathing or grounding techniques
- Drawing or journaling about their feelings
- Talking through fears in a safe, non-judgmental space

Keep the Communication Open

Regular check-ins help your child feel seen and supported. Open-ended questions foster connection—and help you catch any bigger issues early on. Try asking:

- "What was one good thing and one hard thing about today?"
- "What would make tomorrow feel easier?"

Change is hard—even for adults. But with your support, kids can learn that they are strong, capable, and able to navigate new beginnings. When we approach transitions with compassion and consistency, we're not just helping them get through the school year—we're helping them build lifelong resilience.

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY?

Every year on August 31st, people around the world come together to honor the lives lost to overdose, support those who are grieving, and raise awareness about how we can prevent future tragedies.
An overdose happens when a person takes too much of a substance — like drugs or alcohol — and it harms their body. Sometimes this can lead to serious health problems, unconsciousness, or even death.

Why It Matters for Teens:

You might be thinking, "I don't use drugs — why should this matter to me?" The truth is, substance use and mental health are closely connected, and overdose can affect anyone, including young people.

- Fentanyl and other dangerous substances are being mixed into pills and vapes without people knowing.
- Some teens may experiment with drugs due to stress, anxiety, trauma, or peer pressure.
- Others may be trying to cope with emotional pain, depression, or feeling overwhelmed.

Even if it's not your story, it might be a friend's — or someone you care about.

Myth Busting: What You Need to Know:
MYTH: "Prescription pills are safer than street drugs."
TRUTH: Many pills sold online or shared by friends are fake and can contain deadly fentanyl.
MYTH: "Only people who use drugs every day overdose."
TRUTH: Even one-time use can be dangerous — especially if the drug is mixed with something unexpected.
MYTH: "Talking about drugs makes people more likely to try them."
TRUTH: Talking openly helps people stay safe, ask questions, and get support when they need it.

How You Can Help:
Whether you're supporting a friend or just learning more, here are ways you can make a difference:

- Stay Informed: Learn the facts about substances and mental health.
- Talk Openly: If you're struggling, speak to a trusted adult, school counselor, or therapist. You're never alone.
- Check In on Friends: If someone you know seems down, distant, or is using substances to cope, don't ignore it. Say something.
- Know the Signs of Overdose: Slow or no breathing, unconsciousness, blue lips or fingertips. If you see this, call 911 immediately.

Resources & Support:

- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988
- Partnership to End Addiction: drugfree.org
- Never Use Alone (Overdose Safety Hotline): 1-800-484-3731

You don't have to have all the answers — but being aware, asking questions, and caring makes you a part of the solution. Let's break the silence, end the stigma, and keep each other safe.

💜 On August 31st, wear purple or light a candle to honor lives lost to overdose. You are not alone. We remember.

SETTING HEALTHY TECH BOUNDARIES BEFORE THE SCHOOL YEAR STARTS

As summer winds down and the back-to-school season approaches, many families are navigating the tricky transition from relaxed routines to more structure. One of the biggest shifts? Technology use. Whether it's video games, social media, or endless YouTube scrolling, tech can easily dominate a child's day during summer break—and adjusting those habits before school starts is key to setting your child up for success.
Here's how you can gently ease into healthy tech boundaries that support your child's mental health, focus, and overall well-being.

1. Reflect on What's Working (and What Isn't)
Start by observing your child's current relationship with screens:

- How much time are they spending on devices each day?
- How do they act after screen time—irritable, calm, overstimulated?
- Is tech helping them connect or isolate?

This reflection can guide your conversations and help set intentional boundaries—not just arbitrary rules.

2. Create a Gradual "Tech Reset"
Instead of an abrupt cut-off the day before school starts, try slowly adjusting routines:

- Move bedtime earlier each night by 15–30 minutes.
- Establish tech-free times, such as during meals, mornings, or one hour before bed.
- Introduce structured screen time limits (e.g., 1 hour of video games after homework).

Kids often respond better when change is predictable and gradual.

3. Set Expectations Together
Involve your child or teen in creating the plan. This can include:

- Choosing tech-free zones (like bedrooms or dinner table).
- Setting daily screen limits for entertainment use.
- Brainstorming alternative activities (board games, crafts, books, outdoor time).

When kids have a voice in the process, they're more likely to respect the rules—and less likely to push back.

4. Tie Tech to Responsibilities
Link screen time to priorities like:

- Homework completion
- Chores
- Physical activity
- Sleep hygiene

This helps build a healthy association: "Screens are a privilege I earn, not a right I expect."

5. Talk About Why It Matters
Kids are more motivated to follow rules when they understand the why. Explain how too much screen time can:

- Disrupt sleep
- Increase anxiety or irritability
- Interfere with focus and learning
- Make social interactions harder

Keep the tone collaborative, not punitive. You're on the same team.

6. Model the Boundaries Yourself
Children learn far more from what we do than what we say. If you're glued to your phone at dinner or scrolling right before bed, your child will absorb that behavior too. Show them what healthy tech use looks like.
Try:

- Putting your phone away during meals
- Setting your own "screen curfew"
- Choosing screen-free activities as a family

Technology is a part of modern life—and it's not inherently bad. But without limits, it can start to chip away at sleep, school readiness, mental health, and family connection.
By setting thoughtful, consistent tech boundaries before the school year starts, you're helping your child walk into the year with more focus, emotional balance, and confidence.
And remember: boundaries aren't just limits—they're acts of love.

Safety Plans Work

There is hope.

1. Write 3 warning signs that a crisis may be developing.

2. Write 3 internal coping strategies that can take your mind off your problems.

3. Who/What are 3 people or places that provide distraction?
(Write name/place and phone numbers)

Phone
Phone
Phone

4. Who can you ask for help? (Write names and phone numbers)

Phone
Phone
Phone

5. Professionals or agencies you can contact during a crisis:

Clinician: Phone

Local Urgent Care or Emergency Department:
Address Phone

Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

6. Write out a plan to make your environment safer.
(Write 2 things)

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Modified from Stanley & Brown (2021)

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Crisis Resources

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:
9-8-8 (Call or Text)
Chat: https://988lifeline.org/chat

The Trevor Project
thetrevorproject.org
1-866-488-7386
text 678-678

Carroll County Mobile Crisis:
410-952-9552

To access assessment and treatment services at CCYSB call
410-848-2500 x 1
or
Walk-in Assessment Hours:
Tuesday: 8:30am-11 am & 2-5pm
Wednesday: 11:30am-2pm
(We have a limited number of assessment slots available each day. See our website for arrival and check-in details)

CARROLL COUNTY YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU
"It Starts With the Heart."

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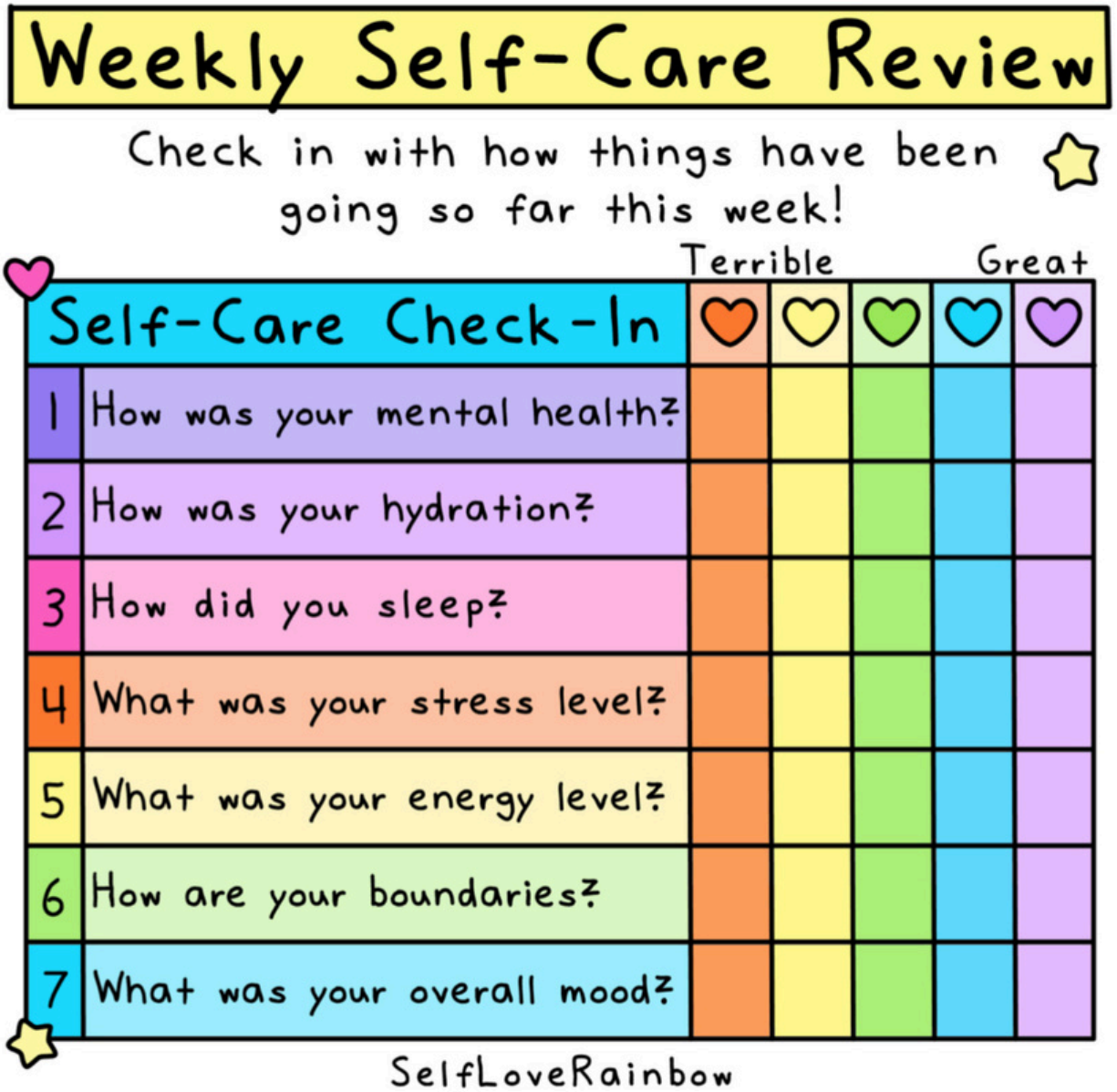
Self-Care Activities



How was your self-care this week?