

# THRIVING FAMILIES ALLIANCE



## Mental Well-Being

When it comes to our overall health system, it pertains to more than just physical and dental health. Mental well-being is an essential part of this system as well. Maintaining good mental well-being is crucial for a happy and fulfilling life. It is about how we respond to the good and the bad in life, our sense of self, and our ability to meet our potential. Mental well-being includes our emotional, cognitive, and social well-being. Basically, it's about how we think, feel, and interact with others. Good mental wellbeing allows us to cope with stress, build strong relationships, and achieve our goals.



Research has shown there are many ways to help improve mental well-being. Taking care of our physical health is one of the most important examples. Being physical does not have to be strenuous; it can be as simple as taking a walk or engaging in a group activity. The important thing is to find an activity that is enjoyable and integrate it into your schedule. Taking care of your physical health also includes eating well and getting enough sleep. Taking care of your body can help to improve mental well-being.

Another significant factor in strengthening mental well-being is the social support system. Having strong, positive relationships with friends, family, or others in the community. This can provide a sense of belonging and support that can help people through difficult times. Take the time to build relationships within your community, it will not only help you, but will also benefit others. Taking time for ourselves and engaging in enjoyable activities, as well as learning new things are great ways to boost mental well-being. Learning something new can build confidence and give a sense of achievement. Taking time for ourselves can be a part of self-care and will help us to relax and re-energize, which can also have a positive impact on our mental wellbeing.

Finding opportunities to be kind to others, even the smallest act, counts. A smile or asking how someone's day is going can make an impact. Finding time to volunteer in the community can be rewarding and provides a chance to connect with others. This also benefits mental well-being. Reducing stress and practicing mindfulness is another way to care for mental well-being. Mindfulness allows one to be present in the moment versus getting stuck in thoughts about the future or past. Taking time to be in the here and now will help to feel more grounded.

Finally, seeking professional help when needed is an integral part of maintaining good mental well-being. Seeing a professional can benefit your mental well-being even if you are not in a place of struggle. Professionals can help with life coaching as well as acting as a sounding board. If you are struggling with your mental health, it's essential to reach out to a mental health professional for support.

This is a short list of ways to maintain or improve your mental well-being. By taking care of our physical health, building strong relationships, engaging in activities we enjoy, learning new things, being kind to others, practicing mindfulness, and seeking professional help, we can improve our mental well-being, lead happier, more fulfilling lives, and achieve goals.



## Mental Health Affects the Whole Family

*Psychology Today*

Any parent or caregiver will tell you that they are only at their best when their kids are doing well. When their kids are struggling, they struggle. They worry. They lose sleep. They'd do anything to help their child. Often, that anything includes taking time off work to support their child. This might range from using PTO or sick days to manage doctor and therapist appointments, to having to take leaves of absence, to actually having to quit their jobs. So it is not an exaggeration to say that youth mental health affects the whole family.

Recently, a group of pediatric medical providers declared a national mental health emergency among children, teens, and young adults (*American Academy of Pediatrics*). Prior to 2020, there had been a steady, decade-long rise in *depression, anxiety*, and other mental health concerns, with suicide becoming the second leading cause of death for 10-24-year-olds by 2018. But since the COVID pandemic, rates of all kinds of mental health concerns have increased among youth. *Recent survey data* found that more than 68 percent of teens report clinically significant anxiety and over 52 percent report clinically significant depression. And while anxiety, depression, and *suicidality* remain among the most common mental health concerns among youth, many also struggle with *ADHD, OCD, trauma, loneliness, grief, and stress*.

[Read More at Psychology Today](#)

## The Five Ways to Well-Being - Boosting Mental Wellbeing



The Five Ways to Wellbeing - researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation for the Department of Health and Social Care - are five simple things we can implement in our daily lives to improve our mental and physical well-being.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES  
ALLIANCE

## Professional Development & Training Opportunities

*Upcoming learning opportunities offered by our partners*

November

**28**

Tuesday

### Anxiety in the Child & Adolescent Population: Is this Anxiety or Something Else and What Can I Do About it?

If you worked with kids in any setting during the pandemic, you might have noticed a slight or significant change in their overall mental health. The pandemic exacerbated existing mental health problems in the adult and pediatric population. For clinicians, teachers, social workers, community partners, parents, and you, there is a desire to understand what we are witnessing in our kids so we can best help them. Have you found yourself wondering, "Is this anxiety or something else, and what can I do about it.?" This session will examine different presentations of anxiety disorders and situations that mimic anxiety disorders in kids. Through experiential learning, we will delve into different ways in which adults can help kids manage anxiety and thrive. [To register](#)

December

**5**

Tuesday

### SEL Youth Work Methods: Emotion Coaching

In this workshop, we explore how and why to coach youth through their emotions. Referred to as "emotion management" in Preparing Youth to Thrive, this skill is defined as "abilities to be aware of and constructively handle both positive and challenging emotions." Emotions are integral to all parts of life. Research shows that emotion management skills also support young people's cognitive and social development. Research shows differentiating and understanding emotions helps people handle their emotions better. [To register](#)

December

**12**

Tuesday

### Protective Factors: Social Connections

The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework™ is an evidence-informed tool for strengthening families and reducing the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. The framework helps professionals work with children and families to promote the optimal development of all children while protecting vulnerable children from maltreatment. During this session, the following will be discussed: everyday strategies to help families value, build, sustain, and use positive and healthy social connections. This session will be presented in an engaging lecture format [interpretación en español]. [To register](#)

December

**15**

Friday

### Tough Conversations

Our ability to make strong, impactful decisions and recommendations as a team requires we confront what is getting in our way. Regardless of the elephant in the room, ignoring it keeps us from doing our best work. Conversely, more aggressive approaches also fail. This workshop utilizes research on conflict, communication, and negotiation to take a closer look at proven techniques to help you get unstuck. Identify your approach to difficult conversations, learn how to manage your feelings when the stakes are high, and create opportunities for learning conversations that move you out of impasse and into healthy conflict and resolution. [To register](#)

December

**19**

Tuesday

## Only Human: Caring for and Working with LGBTQ Identified Individuals

This training discusses appropriate current terminology to use and which words to avoid, places sexual orientation and gender identity in the child/adolescent development span, addresses disclosure and documentation of identity, and how to recognize when an identity is driving a family crisis that may result in removal or delay reunification. It also addresses how to affirmatively care for LGBTQ identified youth in foster homes or in congregate care settings. *To register*



*See upcoming webinars and register for these opportunities today.*

### Program Spotlight:

*Mindspring Mental Health Alliance*

Mindspring provides no-cost mental health education, support, and advocacy programs. All of Mindspring's programs feature evidence-based curriculum and are available to all community members. Mindspring provides free mental health education opportunities to the public through webinars on a wide variety of mental health topics. Webinars are offered for free each week with the generous support of Polk County, Polk County BHDS, and United Way of Central Iowa. All webinars are free and open to the public. Webinars are recorded and emailed to all registrants

