



Wellness Today *For Parents & Families*

Warning Signs of Emotional Struggles

Early recognition is key to overcoming challenges. Signs your child may be struggling emotionally include:

- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Mood or behavior changes including appetite and sleep
- Withdrawing or isolating
- Taking excessive risks or behaving recklessly
- Repeated unexplained body aches and pains
- Anxiety interfering with activities
- Frequent anger, irritability, criticizing, or tantrums
- Change in academic performance
- Preoccupation with death or dying
- Talking about wanting to die or being a burden

When to Get Help

If your child is not responding to support being offered, not improving, or worsening, seek help by consulting with a medical or mental health professional. If having thoughts of suicide or feeling unable to keep self safe call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Kid & Teen Signs of Stress

Aggressive Behavior
Shyness
Anxiety in social settings
Feeling Sick
Less interest in activities

Managing Stress:

Carefully manage how much is on the schedule. If your child or teen is struggling with stress consider the following:

How full is the daily schedule, including with good things?

Having too much on the schedule, even enjoyable activities, can interfere with children and teens times to effectively rejuvenate. Relaxation time is essential to increasing the ability to handle stress and make healthy choices.

Is play time scheduled in?

Some families have video/computer game time scheduled in, but is non-electronic play time scheduled in? Children's best form of communication is play. It helps them understand the world around them, express their thoughts, problem solve and reduce stress.

Is family time scheduled in?

Family play time, family dinner, family work time and other family enjoyable times can help in rebuilding a sense of security and lowering stress. While many parents continually invite their children to talk with them about concerns, many children and teens report feeling/thinking their parents are inaccessible, too busy to time to talk, or are not in a place where they can talk. Time with the family

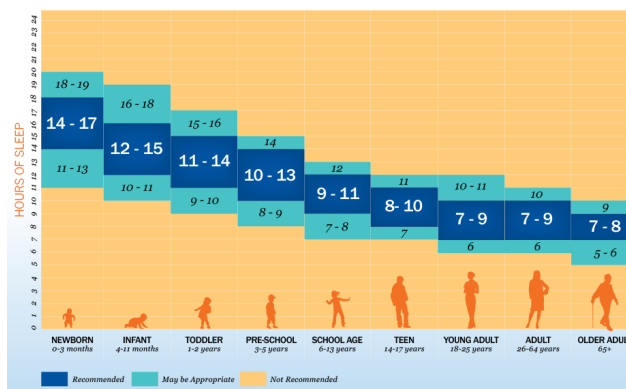
together without the daily distractions can help in overcoming this difficulty.

Is sleep scheduled in?

Having enough sleep scheduled in helps rejuvenate the body, mind and emotions. It helps with feeling overwhelmed, memory and adaptability.

 NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION


SLEEP DURATION RECOMMENDATIONS



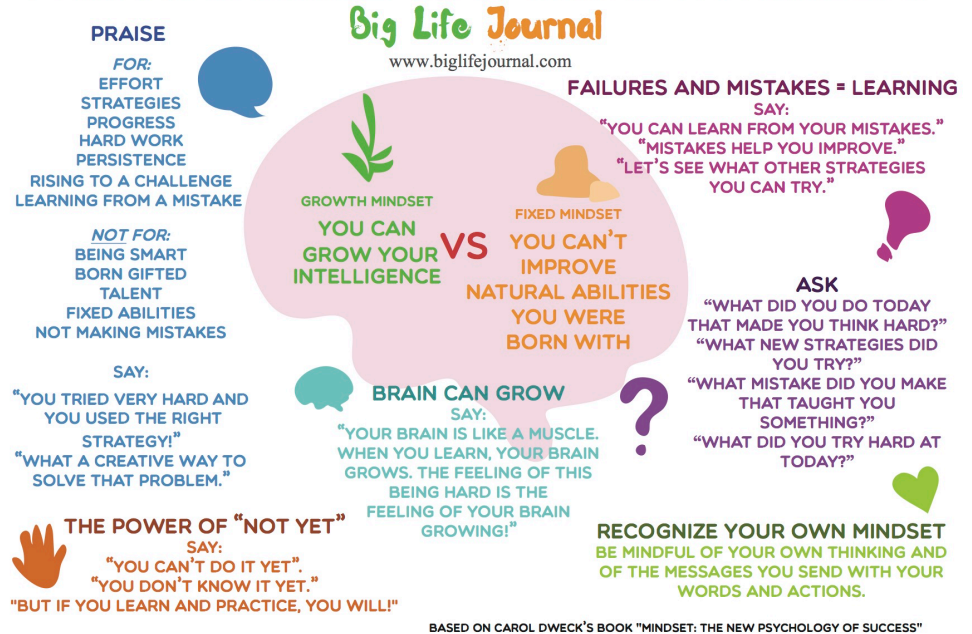
How to Get Help

If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or behaviorally, support is available. Begin by talking with a medical doctor or a mental health professional.

Below are resources available in the community to help:

- **Hope4Utah** provides resources for parents on talking with children and teens about suicide and mental health, as well as offering practical guidance for accessing help. www.hope4utah.com
- **SafeUT**  app provides real-time crisis intervention through a phone call, chat, or submitting confidential tips to school administrators on bullying, threats, or violence.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** offers information regarding mental health conditions and support groups for families. www.nami.org
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (English and Spanish) 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress. 1-800-273-8255
- **Crisis Text Line** is the free, 24/7, confidential text message service for people in crisis. Text HOME to 7417414.

PARENT'S GUIDE TO A GROWTH MINDSET



Dealing with Mistakes

From slipping to spilling, forgetting a book to losing shoes, marking a wrong answer when you knew the right one to under estimating time to complete an assignment, mistakes happen. For some children and teens making mistakes can feel like a defining tragedy rather than a learning opportunity.

Help your child understand that sometimes when mistakes are made their brain says things to them that are not helpful or kind, like "You're a failure." "You always mess up." "You're a problem." They can talk back to their brain and challenge those thoughts with more helpful statements. Help them practice these more helpful statements.

Managing Stress: Feeling Heard

At times, children and teens feel their concerns are not heard or understood. Feeling heard is less about knowing the listener physically heard what was said and more about "feeling felt." Feeling felt refers to knowing the other person heard and is communicating an understanding of what the other person may be feeling. Much of this communication comes through non-verbal communication of

- Eye contact
- Tone of voice
- Facial expressions
- Body posture
- Gestures

To increase your child feeling you hear them, seek to not just say "I hear you" but have the non-verbals also matching.

Disclaimer—The information in these articles are for general educational purposes only. It does not constitute and should not substitute for individual professional advice, psychotherapy, or the provision of psychological services.

This newsletter is produced by Hope4Utah, a nonprofit organization providing trainings, resources and supports to prevent, intervene, and respond to suicides and to improve mental health. Articles contributed by Jessica Williamson, LCSW, who specializes in mental health treatment of children, teens and adults at her a private practice in South Jordan, Utah