



It's that time of year again- another school year comes to a close!

Holidays can take students away from friends and their usual support network...

The end of school can mark relief for young people and families, and the summer break will hopefully provide some rest and relaxation, however, for some it may come as a challenge or lead to an increase in worry.

Changes to routine can cause some young people to feel stressed, isolated and alone. Parent support is very important at this time. Below is some information to help you support young people to stay in a healthy headspace in school holidays. There is also some information that may help you to identify when your young person might need some extra support and where to go for help.

1. Make time for Family Time

Most of us are busier than ever, with work, school, social activities and a growing to-do list. Sometimes this can mean important activities such as quality family time can be neglected and pushed to the back of the agenda. However, the benefits of spending time as a family are hard to ignore, which is why it's crucial to make the time as often as you can. Not only can it have a positive effect on your child's mental health but make a real difference in their general wellbeing and academic performance. Family time also provides the opportunity for children to learn how to deal with all kinds of life situations, and where they learn innumerable lessons. It is encouraged that family time is prioritised and scheduled into our busy lives!

2. Encourage them to stay connected

Social relationships are important to your young person's general wellbeing. It is okay if they take time out for themselves at times, but encourage them to keep in contact with friends over the holidays. Friends can provide both play and support, and spending time with friends is also important for keeping and building on existing friendships. If your young person is not feeling up to going out, even a phone call, email, text message or Facebook message can help them to feel connected to friends and family.

3. Encourage them to stay involved

Encourage involvement with volunteer work, hobbies, clubs or committees, or sports – these can help young people feel connected to their wider community. Participate with them when you can. Involve them in decisions and give them responsibility at home (e.g. deciding what to eat for dinner and helping to prepare it). Help them to identify and set realistic goals. Setting and achieving realistic goals can be incredibly motivating and can help build self-confidence.

4. Encourage physical activity

Physical activity is important for everyone's health and wellbeing. If your young person is feeling down or finding things are difficult, physical activity may be the last thing they feel like doing. But even small activities, like walking around the block, can help relieve stress and frustration, provide a good distraction from worrying thoughts, improve concentration and improve mood. If your young person is struggling to get active, find a physical activity that you both enjoy and can do together (e.g. swimming, playing sports with friends or cycling) and make a plan to do it regularly.

5. Encourage a regular routine

Getting a good night's sleep helps young people to feel energised, focused and motivated. Adolescence is a time when a number of changes to the "body clock" impact on sleeping patterns and young people are more likely to have problems with sleep. Developing a sleeping routine can help. Encourage your young person to wake up around the same time each day, get out of bed when they wake up, and go to bed around the same time each night. Avoiding caffeine after lunchtime, having a quiet, dark and uncluttered bedroom and shutting down electronic devices before bed can also help them to get a good night's sleep.

6. Encourage healthy eating habits

Eating well doesn't only reduce the risk of physical health problems, like heart disease and diabetes, but it can also help with sleeping patterns, energy levels, mood, and general health and wellbeing. A good balanced diet with less junk food/ lots of sugars and more vegies, fruit, whole grains and plenty of water will ensure your young person has all of the vitamins and minerals to help their body and brain function well.

7. Encourage play!

Devoting time to just having fun can help to recharge your young person's battery, revitalise their social networks and reduce stress and anxiety.

Tips to help you support your young person

- **Recognise** their distress or concerning behaviour
- **Ask** them about it (e.g. "I've noticed you seem to be sad")
- **Acknowledge** their feelings (e.g. "That seems like a really hard place to be in/ I can understand why you are upset about that")
- **Get appropriate support** and encourage healthy coping strategies (e.g. "Do you need some help in handling this")
- **Check-in** a short time afterwards to see how they are going

Support Service Options

- Kids Helpline is a 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 – kidshelpline.com.au 1800 55 1800
- Beyond Blue offers telephone or online support with a trained mental health professional ny time of the day or night – 1300 22 4636
- Lifeline is a 24-hour telephone counselling service – lifeline.org.au 13 11 14
- headspace centres provide support, information and advice to young people aged 12 to 25 – headspace.org.au
- eheadspace provides online counselling and telephone support to young people aged 12 to 25 – ehespace.org.au 1800 650 890

- Parentline 1300 301 300
- ReachOut.com for information about well-being.

Credits/Resources

headspace- supporting your young person during the holidays

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