

# WAYS TEACHERS CAN HELP MANAGE STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CLASSROOM

## PRACTICE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Normalize validating feelings throughout the day to let students know it is okay for them to feel how they are feeling in the moment and provide tools when they are feeling uneasy

## EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Read-Alouds About Feelings and Mindfulness
- Facilitate Journaling
- Role Playing
- Discussions About Media
- Quick Check-ins About Feelings

## BUILD STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Close relationships with the teacher can be a strong factor in preventing mental health issues. So, if you are comfortable, let students know they can talk to you if anything gets tough

## WAYS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- **Student-Student Relationships:**
  - Playing Games
  - Small Group Discussions
- **Teacher-Student Relationships:**
  - Let Students Know You Available
  - Ask Students "How's class been for you?"



# MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION TECHNIQUES



**FOCUSING ON THE  
MOMENT ON PURPOSE  
WITHOUT JUDGEMENT  
=  
MINDFULNESS**

## SIMPLE EXERCISES FOR THE CLASSROOM

### WAYS TO INCLUDE EXERCISES IN CLASS

- **Relaxation Skill of the Week:** Introduce a new relaxation skill every week and practice it daily as a class to help kids develop various tools they can use like guided imagery
- **Model Skills for Your Class:** When you begin to feel stressed or overwhelmed verbalize those moments and narrate as you use a relaxation strategy to calm down

- **2 Minute Meditation:** Start the day or take scheduled breaks for students to focus only on deep and slow breathing
- **Noticing Details:** Allow kids to practice mindfulness during activities like coloring, dancing, listening to music or eating. Help them notice details about their surroundings like what they hear, smell, see, feel, and taste

## KEEP KIDS IN THE KNOW

- It's important to help your students understand what is happening without overwhelming them to help reduce any anxiety they feel
- When students come to you with questions, please validate their feelings, "I understand the difference in scheduling is making you nervous." and then answer their questions as best you can

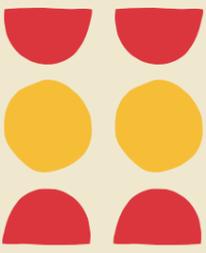
For more information, feel free to check out  
this resource:

<https://childmind.org/article/supporting-students-mental-health/>



# MANAGING ANXIETY FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Tools to help  
parents/caregivers cope  
with the anxiety of  
children returning to  
school



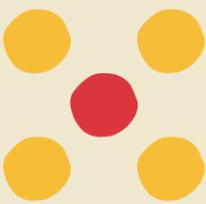
## FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

- Practice acceptance and be flexible because things will likely change
- Talk yourself down from worst-case scenarios and take a rational approach



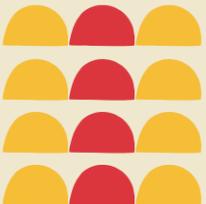
## CONTINUE TO CONNECT

- People who do the best during hard times feel supported and connected to others
- Connect with people who can help you relax
- Don't feel pressured to connect with others if it will be overwhelming



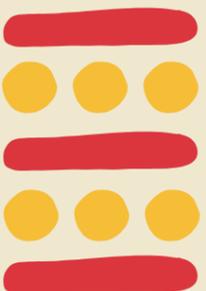
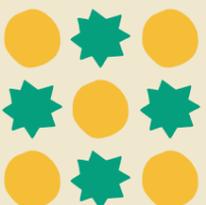
## BE HONEST ABOUT BOUNDARIES

- it's okay to have conversations about masks and social distancing with families you connect with
- If your friends don't have the same boundaries, it's okay to explain that you don't feel comfortable seeing them until you are confident there is little risk



## TAKE BREAKS

- If you are feeling irritable and overwhelmed, it could be a sign that you are anxious. Take a break and breathe
- Take a few minutes to go for a walk or go to a room where you can be alone and do some mindful techniques, like deep breathing



## DON'T HESITATE TO SEEK HELP

- If you are struggling, it's okay to seek help. If informal strategies like deep breathing or taking walks aren't working, find a mental health professional
- If you're having constant sleep, mood, or appetite changes, or constantly dwelling over the same thoughts, then it might be a sign you need professional help

