

Take Action

FOR YOUR FAMILY'S MENTAL HEALTH

Checking In with Yourself



Take
Action

FOR MENTAL HEALTH

INCLUDES:

- A meaningful conversation between two friends
- Helpful tips for taking care of your mental health
- Fun games & activities for the whole family

This story is part of a series to help you understand mental health and wellness for your family and community. When you and your family members can talk openly about your feelings, both good and bad, you can support each other in staying mentally healthy. Read the story and play the games together to learn how.

We all go through mental health challenges in life and need help sometimes. When that happens, **it's time to take action for mental health.**

Here's what you can do:

CHECK IN

- Check in on your own mental health regularly to see if your feelings or actions are telling you there might be a problem
- Check in with your family and friends to see how you can support them

LEARN MORE

- Understand how to take care of your own mental health
- Learn about mental health warning signs and symptoms
- Find out the different types of mental health services and supports

GET SUPPORT

- Use self care methods to take care of your own mental health
- Reach out to your family and friends for help
- Join a peer support group or call a warm line
- Make an appointment with your doctor or therapist

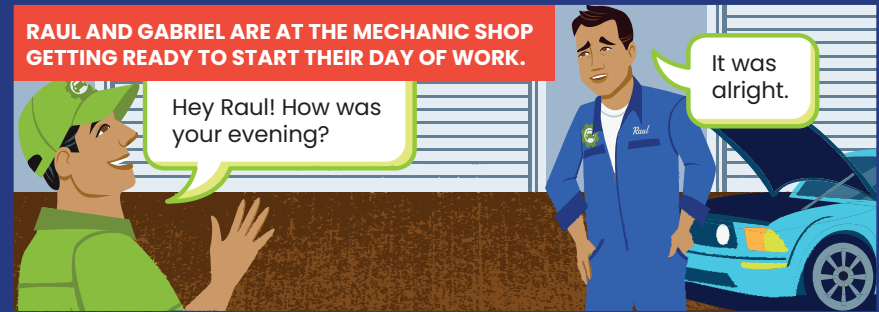
The **Take Action for Mental Health** campaign is a project of the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES,
GO TO www.TakeAction4MH.com.**

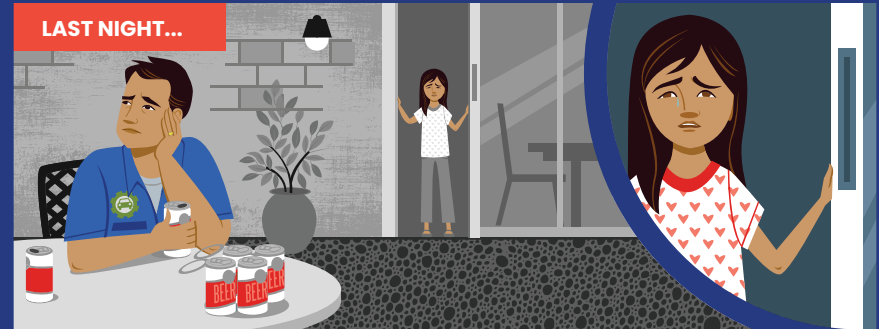


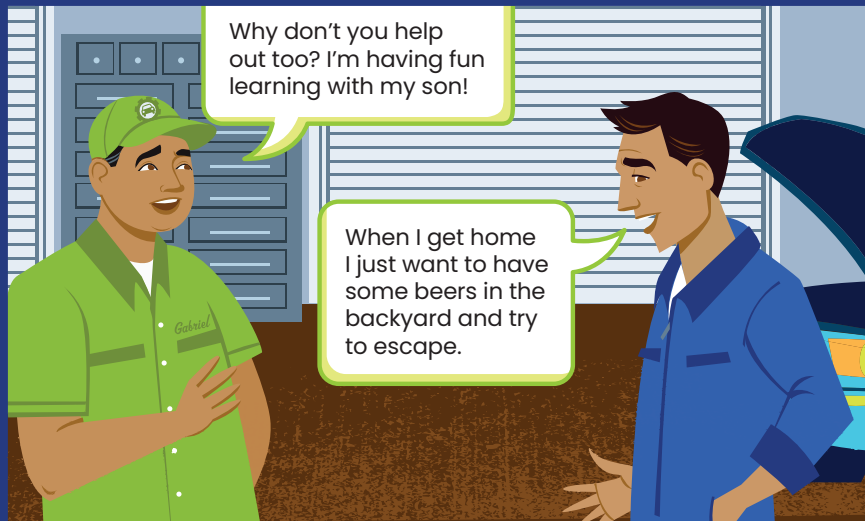
Funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63)

**RAUL AND GABRIEL ARE AT THE MECHANIC SHOP
GETTING READY TO START THEIR DAY OF WORK.**



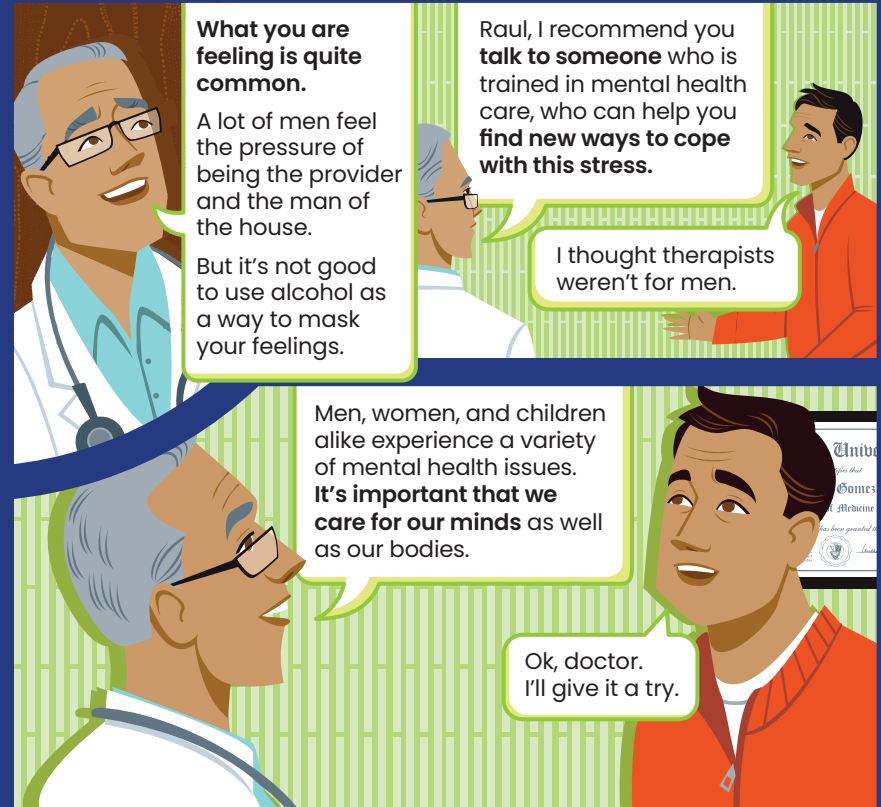
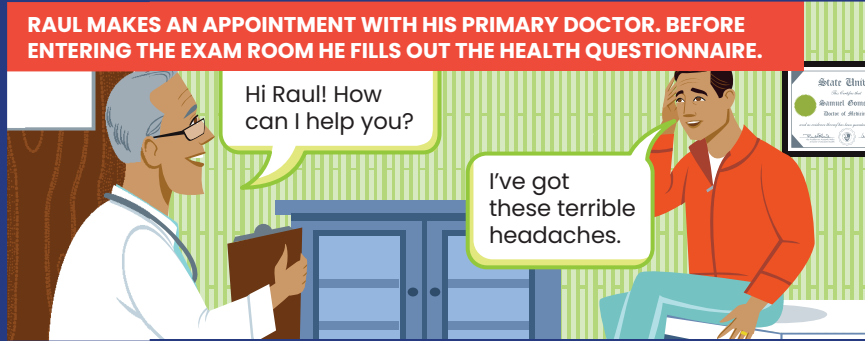
LAST NIGHT...





We all can use help sometimes. Whether you start a conversation with people you trust or see a mental health professional, take action to support your mental health.

RAUL MAKES AN APPOINTMENT WITH HIS PRIMARY DOCTOR. BEFORE ENTERING THE EXAM ROOM HE FILLS OUT THE HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE.



RAUL CALLS THE THERAPIST, WHO HELPS HIM LEARN HOW TO MANAGE HIS SYMPTOMS.





Wellness Wisdom

from Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, M.D., Ph.D.

Director, UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities,
Professor of Clinical Internal Medicine

Q: Why is mental health important?

A: Our mental health supports our thinking and feeling, our mood, our ability to relate to others and to function in daily life. Sometimes we experience mental health challenges that disrupt our mental health, which take the form of medical illnesses like depression, anxiety or eating disorders.

Q: How common are mental illnesses?

A: Just like physical illnesses, mental illnesses are very common and nothing to be ashamed of. Research shows 1 in 5 Latino adults are living with a diagnosable mental illness in any given year. So, it's almost certain that someone in your family needs your support.

Q: Can mental illnesses be treated?

A: Yes. With appropriate support and treatment, people can improve their symptoms and live happy, full and productive lives.

Q: Is there anything I can do to help if a friend or family member's mental health is suffering?

A: Yes. Be supportive and encourage the person to see a doctor or counselor. Remind them that there is hope. Speak and act from a place of compassion and acceptance, rather than fear.

Q: How can I support my family's mental health?

A: To support mental health and prevent mental illness, pay attention to triggers like stress and warning signs such as trouble sleeping or mood swings. Get routine medical care, and seek mental health care when you need it. Finally, take good care of yourself: good sleep, healthy eating and regular physical activity are important to mental health and physical health.

Talking about Feelings

Getting to know our feelings can be one of the most confusing parts of growing up. In fact, many of us adults haven't quite figured them out for ourselves yet! Feelings guide our thoughts and actions, so getting to know them is very important.

DID YOU KNOW?

Everyone has feelings. Some of us try to hide them, but they are always here inside.

Feelings are always changing. Sometimes we are sad. Other times we are happy. Usually, a sad feeling will be replaced by a happy feeling in time.

Our feelings — and other people's feelings — are true for each of us in this moment. Even if we feel good, we can still accept that our friend or family member might not feel good at the same time. We cannot force ourselves or others to feel a certain way.

If sad feelings stick around too long, we can turn to someone we trust for support. This may be a family member, a friend, a faith leader, a counselor or a doctor.

Talking about feelings is good for our health. It feels good to talk about feeling good and being happy. It may not be so easy to talk about feeling sad, hurt, lonely or stressed, but talking about these feelings is the first step to feeling better.

When we try to hide our feelings or keep them inside, they don't go away. They get stronger and stronger over time. They start to take control over our words and actions, even when we don't want them to. By trying to ignore our feelings, we actually give them more power. They can even make us sick! It's better to let them out by talking about them with people we trust.

There are many ways to talk about feelings. Some are helpful, others are hurtful.

HELPFUL

Use sentences that start with "I feel"

Make observations: "The dirty laundry is on the floor."

Name your feelings, and be specific: "I feel frustrated when I see clothes on the floor."

Express your needs: "I have a need for the house to be tidy, and for everyone to help."

Make a request: "Would you be willing to pick up your clothes in the next five minutes?"

HURTFUL

"You make me feel" or "Because of you"

Make judgments: "How did I raise such a messy child?"

Make others responsible for your feelings: "It makes me so mad when you don't pick up after yourself."

Repress your needs: "No one cares about what I want anyway."

Make a demand: "Pick up your clothes or no dinner for you tonight!"

Here are ways to be helpful — not hurtful — when someone is sharing their feelings with us.

HELPFUL

Listen with attentiveness

Be respectful

Show support and compassion

Acknowledge feelings with "oh" or "I see"

With young children, give a name to the feeling to help them understand it

HURTFUL

Interrupt or tell our own story

Give advice or try to "fix" the feelings

Criticize or blame

Deny or ignore feelings

Label feelings as bad, or tell a child they should not feel them

Check in with Your Feelings

Checking in with yourself and how you are feeling is an important first step towards understanding what you may need to help yourself.

Your feelings are always changing.

Sometimes you may feel sad, worried, or mad. By checking in with yourself often you can learn what steps help you the most.

Our feelings — and other people's feelings — are true for each of us in the moment.

We cannot force ourselves or others to feel a certain way. But if sad feelings or stress stick around for too long, it may be time for you to get support from someone you trust. This may be a family member, friend, faith leader, counselor, or a doctor.

Talking about your feelings is good for your health. If you hide your feelings or keep them inside, they don't go away. They may get stronger and stronger over time. You may not be sure how to start, but if you are feeling sad, hurt, lonely, or stressed, telling someone about it can help you feel better.

Some of the most common signs that you may need help are:

- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Feeling anxious, worried, or overwhelmed
- Being unable to concentrate on work or school
- Having wide changes in moods
- Withdrawing from friends and activities
- Difficulty coping with daily problems or stress
- Consuming alcohol or drugs more than usual or more often
- Becoming easily irritable
- Undergoing changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Thinking people are out to get you

If any of these feelings or problems don't go away, it's time to get support.

Healthy Ways to Deal with Stress

When you realize you are feeling down or stressed, you can try different things to start feeling better.

Here are Five Actions you can do to take care of your physical and mental health:

1. Get enough sleep
2. Stick with healthy food and drinks
3. Move your body
4. Connect with other people
5. Stay away from alcohol and drugs

If these don't help, it's time to get support from someone you trust or a mental health professional.

What else can you do to give yourself a mental health boost? Here are some ideas:

- ☐ Go outside to get some sunshine
- ☐ Listen to music and sing along
- ☐ Meditate or use a mindfulness app
- ☐ Take a break from your screen
- ☐ Join a peer support group
- ☐ Pray
- ☐ Make a list of 10 things in your life you are grateful
- ☐ Take something off your to-do list
- ☐ Call someone who makes you feel good
- ☐ Write in a journal



Information & Services

If you or someone you know needs help, there are resources available to assist you.



Take Action for Mental Health www.TakeAction4MH.com

As part of California's ongoing mental health movement, the *Take Action for Mental Health* campaign helps you check in, learn more, and get support for your own mental health or the mental health of someone who needs help. Start taking action with the information and tools at www.TakeAction4MH.com.

The site includes a directory of **resources and support options available locally**, including help lines, warm lines, and contact information for your nearest behavioral health services at TakeAction4MH.com/find-help-now.



Directing Change www.DirectingChangeCA.org

The Directing Change Program engages students and young people throughout California to learn about the topics of suicide prevention and mental health by creating short films and art projects.



SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration) National Helpline www.SAMHSA.gov 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Call SAMHSA's National Helpline for 24/7, free, and confidential treatment referral and information services in English and Spanish for people and families facing mental and/or substance use issues.

If you or someone you know needs help, there are resources available to assist you.

Pain Isn't Always Obvious



suicideispreventable.org

Know the Signs www.SuicidelsPreventable.org 1-800-273-8255

The *Know the Signs* campaign aims to help Californians recognize the warning signs of suicide and support a loved one by finding the words to ask directly about suicide and reaching out to resources.



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline www.988lifeline.org 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) Spanish: 1-888-628-9454

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



CalHOPE Connect www.calhopeconnect.org

CalHOPE Connect live chat connects you with trained, supportive peers when you need to talk with someone.

To search for more local services online, visit:
www.TakeAction4MH.com/find-help-now



Games!

MATCH the feelings with the face!

1. Angry

2. Sad

3. Happy

4. Silly

5. Tired

6. Worried

7. Surprised

8. Scared

9. Excited

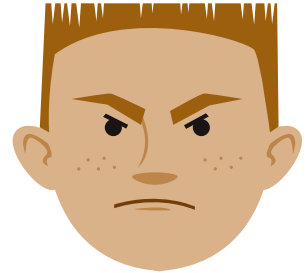
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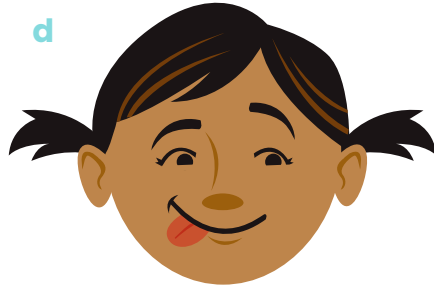
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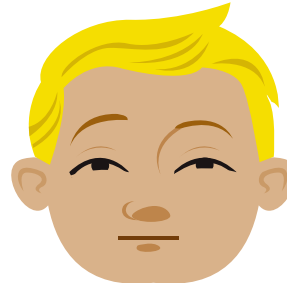
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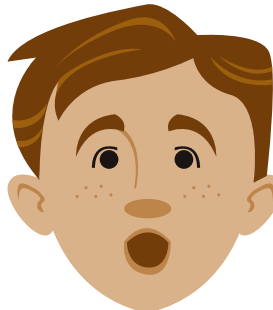
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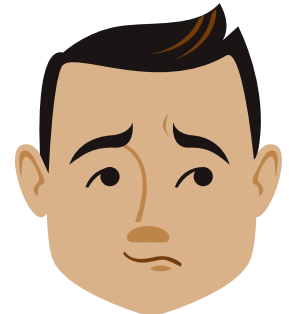
g



h



i



Answers: 1) c 2) b 3) a 4) d 5) e 6) i 7) g 8) h 9) f

More Games!

FIND these words in the puzzle:

**FAMILY
FEELINGS
FRIEND
HAPPY**

**HEALTHY
MAD
SAD
SCHOOL**

**SMILE
TALK**

M N Z S W X I X P Z R U U C K
V A Y M N C W D Q Y K W P U C
I F R I E N D J P V T D C L P
S I J L P B E P K A B A O Q P
A X P E N L A Y I P U O L E Y
A B V E W H Y W B Q H R F K Q
Z F I A P F F Q A C E I A W G
X J E L M A D E S N J H M I Z
Z H B R J V J G E M B P I T N
D E A K I I M G K L G N L K Y
Z A T E S F V Y B S I G Y H U
M L D F A O N G R X H N B I C
X T J D D V H Y X I H A G F W
X H U I V A D P W N V M O S V
H Y A P W X F G R Q H M X F Y

NAME THAT FEELING!

Cut out each word and put them all in a bag. Each family member will select one word from the bag and silently act out the feeling that word represents using body and facial expressions. Whoever names the correct feeling gets a point! Continue until all feelings are named and add up points to find the winner.



Angry	Happy
Excited	Frustrated
Disappointed	Nervous
Shy	Bored
Hopeful	Afraid
Sad	Jealous

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