A Guide for Parents and Children to Explore Together

FOR YOUR FAMILY’S MENTAL HEALTH

Checking In with Yourself

INCLUDES:
- A meaningful conversation between two friends
- Helpful tips for taking care of your mental health
- Fun games & activities for the whole family
Hey Raul! How was your evening?

I helped my son with his science project. I think my daughter is doing something like that too.

It was alright.

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

Hey Raul! How was your evening?

It was alright.

LAST NIGHT...

I helped my son with his science project.

I think my daughter is doing something like that too.

How’s it going?

I don’t know. Her mom is helping her.
Why don’t you help out too? I’m having fun learning with my son!

When I cut back on drinking, I started to realize that my kids were growing up so fast and I was missing out.

When I get home I just want to have some beers in the backyard and try to escape.

The kids do ask me to help them with their homework or to go on a bike ride...

...But I just never have the energy.

I used to be really stressed knowing my family depended on me and I was drinking a lot too.

I don’t drink too much. I just have a few beers at night. It’s the only way to deal with my headaches.

You are their dad; they love you!

When I went to see the doctor, he told me about healthier ways I could deal with my stress.

You know, I haven’t been to the doctor in years and my wife has been asking me to go. Maybe it’s time.

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.
Hi Raul! How can I help you?

I've got these terrible headaches.

What you are feeling is quite common. A lot of men feel the pressure of being the provider and the man of the house. But it's not good to use alcohol as a way to mask your feelings.

I've got these terrible headaches.

Men, women, and children alike experience a variety of mental health issues. It's important that we care for our minds as well as our bodies.

Raul, I recommend you talk to someone who is trained in mental health care, who can help you find new ways to cope with this stress.

I've got these terrible headaches.

I see on your health questionnaire that you don't smoke but you do drink. How often?

I have a few beers every day, sometimes more if my headache is really bad.

So you think drinking helps with the headache? Raul, when do the headaches happen?

After a long day at the shop, I come home tired, and then I can't help but start worrying about the future. It never ends.

Ok, doctor. I'll give it a try.

Raul calls the therapist, who helps him learn how to manage his symptoms.

I thought therapists weren't for men.
Hey Gabriel! How are you, my friend?

I’m feeling a lot better lately. I went to the doctor, and he recommended I see a therapist for my stress.

I get to talk about what’s bothering me without any judgment, and I don’t have to take my stress home to my family. We’ve also started to take bike rides after dinner.

We all do!

Hey Raul. You’re in a good mood today!

Good for you!

Hey Raul.

A FEW WEEKS LATER...

Why is mental health important?

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.

How common are mental illnesses?

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.

Can mental illnesses be treated?

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

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

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.

How can I support my family’s mental health?

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.

Wellness Wisdom

from Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities, Professor of Clinical Internal Medicine

Why is mental health important?

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.

How common are mental illnesses?

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.

Can mental illnesses be treated?

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

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

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.

How can I support my family’s mental health?

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELPFUL</th>
<th>HURTFUL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use sentences that start with “I feel”</td>
<td>“You make me feel” or “Because of you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make observations: “The dirty laundry is on the floor.”</td>
<td>Make judgments: “How did I raise such a messy child?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name your feelings, and be specific: “I feel frustrated when I see clothes on the floor.”</td>
<td>Make others responsible for your feelings: “It makes me so mad when you don’t pick up after yourself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express your needs: “I have a need for the house to be tidy, and for everyone to help.”</td>
<td>Repress your needs: “No one cares about what I want anyway.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a request: “Would you be willing to pick up your clothes in the next five minutes?”</td>
<td>Make a demand: “Pick up your clothes or no dinner for you tonight!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELPFUL</th>
<th>HURTFUL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen with attentiveness</td>
<td>Interrupt or tell our own story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be respectful</td>
<td>Give advice or try to “fix” the feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show support and compassion</td>
<td>Criticize or blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge feelings with “oh” or “I see”</td>
<td>Deny or ignore feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With young children, give a name to the feeling to help them understand it</td>
<td>Label feelings as bad, or tell a child they should not feel them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

DID YOU KNOW?

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.

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.

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELPFUL</th>
<th>HURTFUL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use sentences that start with “I feel”</td>
<td>“You make me feel” or “Because of you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make observations: “The dirty laundry is on the floor.”</td>
<td>Make judgments: “How did I raise such a messy child?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name your feelings, and be specific: “I feel frustrated when I see clothes on the floor.”</td>
<td>Make others responsible for your feelings: “It makes me so mad when you don’t pick up after yourself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express your needs: “I have a need for the house to be tidy, and for everyone to help.”</td>
<td>Repress your needs: “No one cares about what I want anyway.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a request: “Would you be willing to pick up your clothes in the next five minutes?”</td>
<td>Make a demand: “Pick up your clothes or no dinner for you tonight!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELPFUL</th>
<th>HURTFUL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen with attentiveness</td>
<td>Interrupt or tell our own story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be respectful</td>
<td>Give advice or try to “fix” the feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show support and compassion</td>
<td>Criticize or blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge feelings with “oh” or “I see”</td>
<td>Deny or ignore feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With young children, give a name to the feeling to help them understand it</td>
<td>Label feelings as bad, or tell a child they should not feel them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 www.TakeAction4MH.com/find-help-now.

**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.

**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.

To search for more local services online, visit: www.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**

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

**Know the Signs**
www.SuicideIsPreventable.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.
MATCH the feelings with the face!

1. Angry
2. Sad
3. Happy
4. Silly
5. Tired
6. Worried
7. Surprised
8. Scared
9. Excited

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

FIND these words in the puzzle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY FEELINGS</th>
<th>HEALTHY</th>
<th>SMILE TALK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRIEND HAPPY</td>
<td>MAD</td>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

More Games!

FAMILY FEELINGS
FRIEND
HAPPY

FIND these words in the puzzle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY FEELINGS</th>
<th>FRIEND FEELINGS</th>
<th>HEALTHY</th>
<th>SMILE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY FEELINGS</td>
<td>FRIEND FEELINGS</td>
<td>HEALTHY</td>
<td>SMILE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIEND HAPPY</td>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>MAD</td>
<td>TALK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Angry

Happy

Excited

Frustrated

Disappointed

Nervous

Shy

Bored

Hopeful

Afraid

Sad

Jealous