

# Woodson Mental Wellness Town Hall



**Moderator:**

*Josh Peters, Directors of Student Services*

**Presenters:**

*School Psychologists- Risha Lamba, Ryan Dickerson, Julie L. Robinson*

*School Social Workers- Shannon Rousos, Amy Young, Kaitlin Collier*



# AGENDA

- How are we feeling?
  - Strategies to support your teen's mental well being during virtual learning
  - Supports at Woodson
  - When should I be concerned with my child's emotional well-being?
  - Resources
  - Q&A





# The Elephant In The Room



None of us  
expected to be  
100% virtual for  
the start of the  
school year.



# How Are We Feeling?



- We all experience a wide range of emotions (anxiety, stress, sadness, frustration, anger, relief, happiness). The uncomfortable emotions such as anxiety, stress, frustration, anger may be heightened during this Covid period. All these emotions are normal.

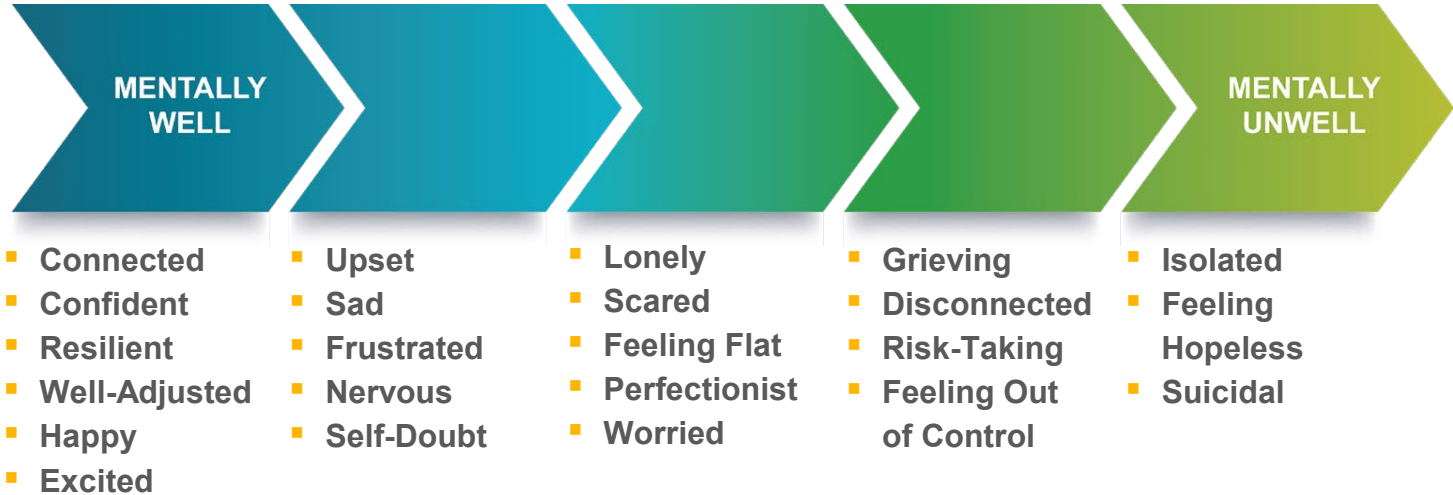
We can experience uncomfortable emotions and not have a mental health condition.

Students are resilient.

For some students, this time has been positive.

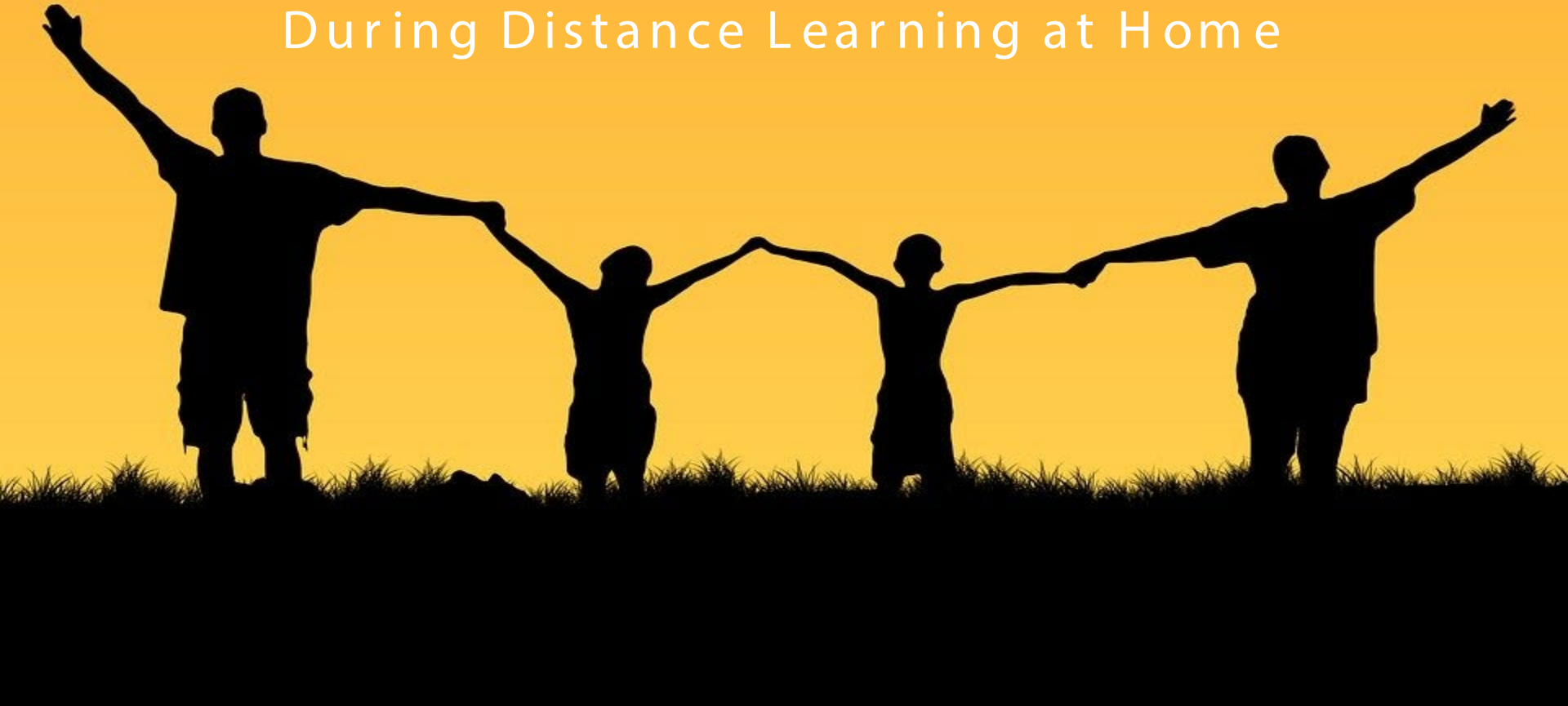


# Mental Wellness as a Continuum





# Strategies to Support Emotional Well-being During Distance Learning at Home





# Recalibrate Your Expectations



It is important to be realistic about how much your child can accomplish while learning virtually. Don't assume that if your teen is not doing something they used to do well, it's because they don't want to.

You may see that your teen has difficulty getting started or organizing their work, but this may be because they are missing the structure and cues that they relied on in the classroom. Sit with them and learn about what's not going well and what they are having trouble with.

Aim to give just enough support for them to be successful and guide them to generate their own solutions to problems.



# Turning Challenges into Opportunities



- Having a growth mindset creates a passion for “stretching” ourselves, increases perseverance, and helps us to thrive in challenging times.

To get better at any skill, we must take on challenges that help us grow.

Praising effort instead of ability helps promote a growth mindset

Teens often enjoy thinking of their brain as a muscle that can become stronger over time. In this way, we can think of any challenge as a puzzle that helps “exercise” our brain.





# Reframing and the Power of “Yet”

- Reframing is a way of looking at the same issue in a different way.

When any of us gets stuck in a fixed mindset, it is natural to think, “I can’t do this!” Instead, try reframing with “How can I do this?”

Using the word “yet” can be another powerful reframe. “I can’t do this” becomes “I can’t do this yet.” Adding the “yet” implies that you are still on the journey of learning and growing, and that with continued effort and use of strategies, you will reach your goals.





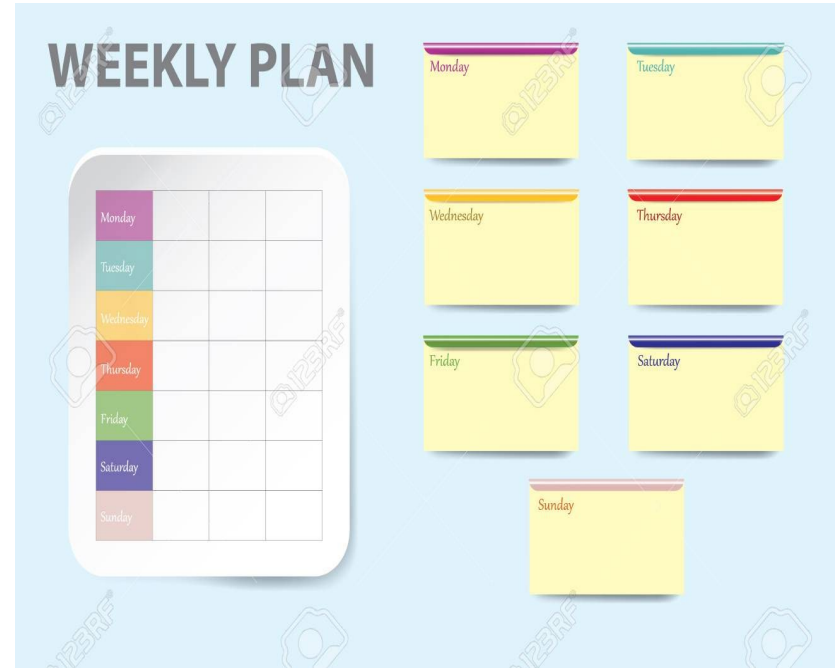
# Establish and Maintain a Daily Routine

Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and wellbeing.

Set routines include:

- Consistent wake-up and bedtime  
Identified times to be attending classes, completing school work, time for play, etc.  
Reviewing the schedule the night before, making note of changes.  
Specified time for uninterrupted virtual visits with friends to maintain social connectedness

Routines help student develop self-management skills and foster independence and resiliency!





# Model and Support Executive Skills

Discuss with your teen what your level of engagement will be throughout virtual learning.

Model organizational and problem-solving skills to facilitate a level of independence. Share with them how you are organizing yourself while allowing them to develop their own organizational style.

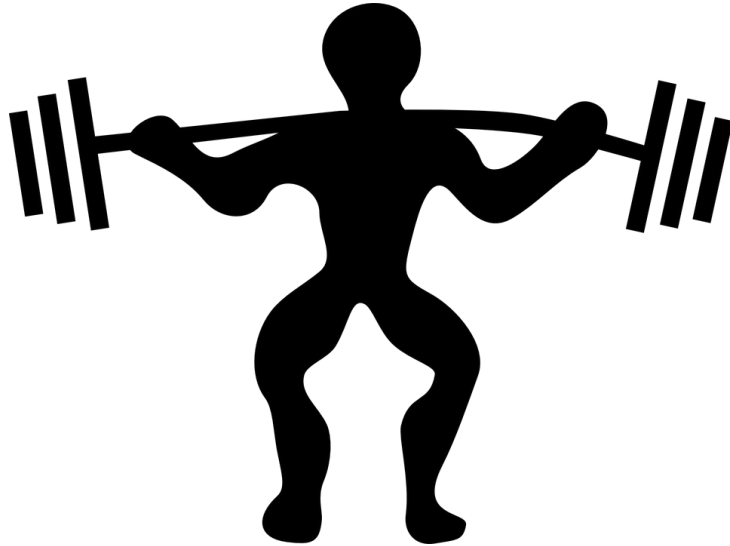
- Ask, “How can you remind yourself to start and complete assignments?”
- Ask, “How might you break this assignment down into smaller parts?”
- Ask, “Do you think a planner, checklist, or calendar might work for you?”

Stress that the practical skills teens are learning in school now (planning ahead, meeting deadlines, managing their workspace) will help them succeed and encourage them to make choices about how they will fulfill their responsibilities and offer them advice on how they can succeed.





# Focus on the Positives: Observe Their Strengths



While your adolescent may be struggling in some areas, the current circumstances may also bring out strengths that you didn't know they had. For instance, they could be excelling with the technological aspects of virtual learning, or they may be independently creating new organizational systems for themselves.

Take every opportunity to let them know that you notice these strengths and that you appreciate their efforts, however big or small.

It works best to praise effort over ability.



# Maintain Social Connections

- Ensure that youth have positive connections with their peers and adults.

Help connect them to extracurricular activities and to caring, trusted, and supportive adults.

For more information on [Clubs at Woodson](#), including meeting times and location, please contact the club sponsor or check Cav Kiosk for links. For the 2020-2021 School Year all clubs will meet virtually.





# Keep Active and Healthy

- Good physical health prepares the body and mind to be more resilient.

Healthy eating habits, regular exercise, and adequate sleep protect kids against the stress of tough situations.

Regular exercise also decreases negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression.





# Connect with Caring and Support

- Create a safe space to talk to your teen. Let your teen know that you are there to support them and you care about how they are feeling. Listen to your teen and validate his or her feelings.

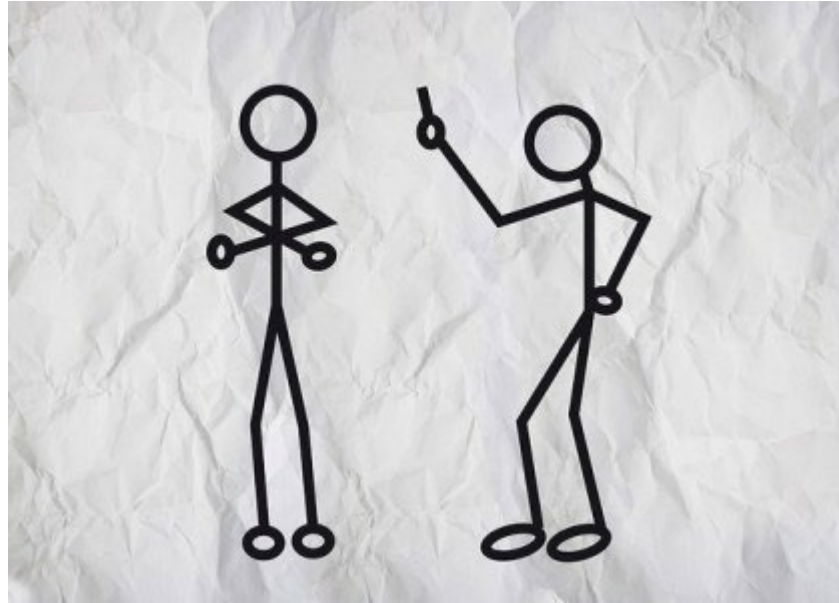
Problem-solve collaboratively. Take a cooperative stance as you talk through possibilities and work together to find solutions..

Ask your teen what supports they need to manage challenging emotions.



# Recognize and Avoid Recurring Arguments

While you can expect some conflict with your teen, try to avoid recurring arguments about the same problem. Arguing about the same thing signals that you are expecting your teen to do something that is too difficult for them or that they are strongly opposed to doing.



When a teen is simply averse to doing something that is not difficult for them, involve them in a conversation about how they may overcome their discomfort, and reward them when you see that they are taking small actions towards the task.





# Encouraging Your Teen to Ask for Help



- We all need to ask for help at times. It is OK to need help!

Asking for help is a key component to reaching success.

Help your teen identify the supports who are available to help them.

Share with them times when you've reached out for help.



# Supports at Woodson

- Teachers
- School Counselors
- School Psychologists
- School Social Workers
- Administrators
- Other Support Staff

**ALL OF US ARE HERE TO  
SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS  
AND FAMILIES!**





# Integrating CASEL Competencies and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into School-Wide Practices





# When Should I be Concerned with My Child's Emotional Well-Being?

When should I be concerned about my child's emotional health? Is my child acting differently? Is it significantly impacting daily functioning...in school, in social settings, in daily activities?

What should I be looking for?

- Social Withdrawal or Isolation
- Increased Anxiety or Frustration
- Increased Depression or Hopelessness
- Limited Emotional Control
- Changes in Sleep and Eating Patterns
- Increase in Risky behaviors
- Reluctant to Participate





**NEED  
HELP?**

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**  
**24/7 EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

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**In case of a life threatening emergency, call 911**

CrisisLink Regional Hotline: **703-527-4077**

CrisisText: Text **NEEDHELP** to **85511**

Dominion Hospital Emergency Room:  
**703-536-2000**

Inova Emergency Services: **703-289-7560**

Mobile Crisis Unit: **1-844-627-4747**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
**1-800-273-TALK** or **1-800-SUICIDE**

Merrifield Center Emergency Services:  
**703-573-5679**

TTY dial **711**



# Resources

[Healthy Minds Blog](#)

[Healthy Minds Podcast](#)

[FCPS Mental Health and Resiliency](#)

[Parent Resource Center](#)

[Our Minds Matter](#)

[CASEL](#)

[Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board](#)

24/7 Emergency Support, call 703-573-5679

DFS Parent Support Line: 703-24-7720

[Healthy Minds Fairfax](#)

[Kognito](#)

[myStrength app](#)





# Contact Us

Josh Peters, Director of Student Services [fjpeters@fcps.edu](mailto:fjpeters@fcps.edu)

## Contact Your School Counselor

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Kaitlin Collier, CSS School Social Worker [kgcollier@fcps.edu](mailto:kgcollier@fcps.edu)

## Request a Mental Wellness Parent Consultation