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25<sup>th</sup>



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# Wellness Wednesday

## Five Little Ways to Show Your Kids the Importance of Mental Health

When children scrape their knees, they know it's an injury that needs to be treated. But when they suffer from something mentally, they might not know it's just as important to have their minds cared for too. Maintaining good mental health should be considered a lesson not only for adults but for children as well.

"I used to see this level of stress in high schoolers who were applying to college," said Katie Hurley, a child and adolescent psychotherapist and the author of *The Happy Kid Handbook: How to Raise Joyful Children in a Stressful World*. "Now I have 5-year-olds in my office who are dealing with anxiety disorders and excessive stress."



### **TRY THE EMOTIONAL VOLCANO METHOD**

Hurley said she talks to kids and parents about their feelings using the "emotional volcano." She draws a volcano on a whiteboard and explains that everyone has different feelings throughout the day. When we don't express those feelings, they remain in the volcano until it erupts.

"If we just leave those feelings in the volcano, they start to really bubble and bubble and bubble until they come flying out and exploding, and that's when you get the crying, hitting and kicking," she said. Hurley noted that many parents regard these actions as the result of a behavioral problem, but it's more "an explosion of emotions that weren't dealt with." That's why it's important to teach kids to talk about their feelings and release them one by one.

### **TEACH BY EXAMPLE, AND BE MINDFUL OF YOUR OWN HABITS**

Various studies have shown that in excessive amounts, screen time for kids and gaming and social media for teens can have harmful effects on behavior, mood, sleep schedules and overall health. Dr. Katherine Williamson, a pediatrician and the vice president of the Orange County chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said it's important for caretakers to set an example of sensible screen time with habits like having no phones at the dinner table or at bedtime.

Similarly, it's important for parents to lead by example and share their vulnerabilities so their kids will be comfortable exposing and discussing their own. "You can say something like, 'I had something happen at work today, and I'm not even sure I handled it right, but I did my best,'" she said.

## TAKE NOTE OF THE LANGUAGE YOU USE

Rachel Busman, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist and the senior director of the Anxiety Disorders Center at the Child Mind Institute, said it's important for parents to not automatically interpret their kids' facial expressions and instead give them a chance to explain.

"If you see a child making a particular face in response to a stressful situation, rather than saying, 'Oh, don't be frustrated,' you can say, 'Your face looks upset. What's up? What's going on?'" she said. "It's beneficial to provide an opportunity for kids to tell you how they feel, rather than narrate what you think your kid is experiencing."

When looking for the right language to use when asking about a child's day, caretakers should avoid very general questions like "How's school?" or "How was the playdate? Those conversations often don't end in a lot of information," she said. "Instead ask, 'What was something interesting that happened today?' or 'What did you do in gym class?'"

## TEACH THEM MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES

Mallika Chopra, an author and wellness expert and the daughter of spiritual leader Deepak Chopra, learned how to meditate at the age of 9. She said it's a "great gift" she also passed down to her kids. The experience inspired her to write her children's book, *Just Breathe: Meditation, Mindfulness, Movement, and More*.

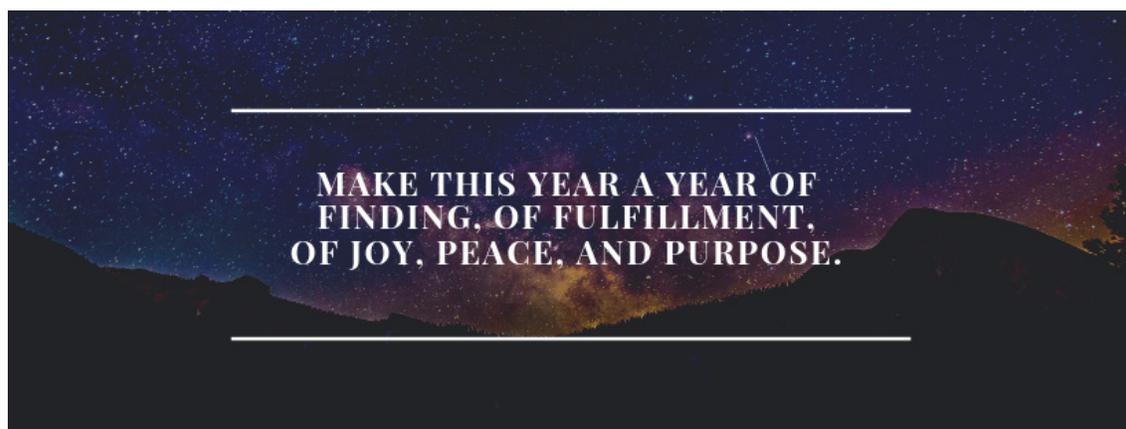
Aside from meditations, the book features gratitude exercises as well as suggestions about movement, like walking and yoga, and being aware of how you use your words. "The goal of this book is to share the tools that I had growing up," she said. "As a mom, I can see that this generation has a lot of pressure."

According to the University of Rochester Medical Center, journaling can reduce stress and help people manage anxiety and depression. Dianne Maroney, who has a master's degree in psychiatric and mental health nursing, has also seen the impact of giving kids the power to tell their stories, and in 2015, she founded the Imagine Project Inc., which offers a seven-step process focused on expressive writing.

The journals used in the project (offered in age groups from kindergartners to adults) are available on the nonprofit's site at no cost. The project allows kids to process stress and trauma and gain confidence while letting parents, teachers and caretakers in on difficult times the child may be going through.

"The Imagine Project helps kids talk about what's happened to them, if it's stress, minor trauma, major trauma, anything," Maroney said. "It's a point where they can still talk about it, overcome it and write a new story in its place. It helps give kids hope, and hope is something that kids really need. I think they're struggling with that in our society right now."

Article source: <http://bit.ly/2E15sVh>



# This Week's Exercise

## Massage Your Muscles (AKA Self-Myofascial Release)



**USING A FOAM ROLLER IS ESSENTIALLY A MORE AFFORDABLE WAY TO GIVE YOURSELF A DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE. BY SLOWLY ROLLING OVER VARIOUS AREAS OF YOUR BODY, YOU'LL HELP BREAK UP ADHESIONS AND SCAR TISSUE AND SPEED UP THE HEALING AND RECOVERY PROCESS AFTER YOUR WORKOUT. USE IT TO LOOSEN UP COMMON AREAS OF TIGHTNESS SUCH AS YOUR OUTER THIGH (ILIOTIBIAL BAND, ITB), QUADRICEPS, OR UPPER BACK.**

**HERE'S HOW: POSITION YOURSELF ON TOP OF THE ROLL AND USE THE WEIGHT OF YOUR BODY TO SLOWLY ROLL BACK AND FORTH OVER IT (AS IF YOU'RE USING A ROLLING PIN TO ROLL OUT SOME DOUGH). TRY NOT TO USE YOUR ARMS FOR SUPPORT, BUT ALLOW YOUR BODYWEIGHT TO RELAX (AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE) OVER THE ROLL.**

Source: <http://bit.ly/2EBwJh>

*Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.*

## TEX MEX BREAKFAST CASSEROLE



### Ingredients

14.5 ounce can diced potatoes (or 1 3/4 cups diced cooked potatoes)  
2 links cooked chorizo sausage, diced (3 1/2 ounces)  
2 cans (4.5 ounces) chopped green chiles, undrained  
2 cups shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese  
12 large eggs  
1/2 cup chopped scallions  
1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt 1 jalapeno, sliced thin  
4 ounces (1 small haas) avocado, sliced  
1 cup chunky mild salsa

### Directions

1. Spray a 3-qt (9" x 13") oblong glass Pyrex baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Place the potatoes in the baking dish. Top with chorizo, green chiles and 1 cup of the cheese.
3. In medium bowl, beat eggs, scallions and seasoning salt with a whisk until well blended. Pour over potato mixture.
4. Cover with lid and refrigerate overnight, if preparing the night before.
5. When ready to bake, remove from the refrigerator and let it come to room temperature.
6. Pre-heat the oven to 325°F.
7. Bake uncovered 55 to 60 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean.
8. Remove from the oven, top with the remaining 1 cup of cheese and jalapeno slices.
9. Bake 2 more minutes, until the cheese melts. To serve, cut into 10 squares and serve with salsa and avocado.

### Nutrition Information

Yield: 10 servings  
Serving Size: 1 square

Amount Per Serving:  
Freestyle Points: 6  
Points +: 6  
Calories: 248  
Total Fat: 15.5g  
Saturated Fat: 7.5g  
Cholesterol: 246.5mg  
Sodium: 561mg  
Carbohydrates: 12g  
Fiber: 2g  
Sugar: 3g  
Protein: 15.5g

Recipe source:

<http://bit.ly/2EBFGWz>