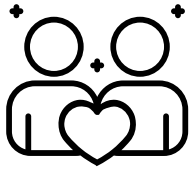


7-9th Grade Stress-Buster | Supportive Relationships



What is a supportive relationships? A supportive relationship is developing and maintaining healthy connections with peers, family, and mentors. This involves mutual respect, trust, and the ability to offer and receive support.

How do supportive relationships enhance my well-being? Supportive relationships provide a sense of belonging, reduce feelings of isolation, offer different perspectives on challenges, and build resilience through shared experiences.

Choose from the following activities (or create your own!):

Activity 1: Relationship Builder Tally

List 5-8 people you could talk to if you were having a hard time (like family, friend, teacher, coach). Write a positive quality about each relationship. Send a quick, genuine text to 1 person on your list or call to say hello. Think: "I belong to this group of people, and they belong to me. If I felt isolated, which 3 people would remind me that I am not alone?"

Activity 2: Walk a Mile Perspective Swap

Choose a household item (a pet, a favorite stuffed animal, a plant, a pair of shoes) and imagine a challenge that item might have if it were a middle school student. (like My Shoe's Challenge: Feeling left out because I'm always covered in mud, but that's just my nature.) Using the item's "voice," write a piece of funny or insightful advice to a real middle schooler dealing with a similar challenge. Take a picture of the item and post the advice, anonymously or with a silly item name (like "Advice from Barry the Houseplant").

Activity 3: Belonging Blitz

List 3 people you talk to every day (online or in person). In the next 5 minutes, complete 1 of the following "random acts of connection" for each person, using whatever platform is fastest (text, DM, email, sticky note): Send a funny meme or GIF that made you think of that person, send a link to a song you think the person would like, or send a simple message: "Just wanted to say hi, because [a positive memory]." Take a mental note of how you feel immediately after sending the messages.

Activity 4: Bad Advice Monster

Draw, digitally sketch, or verbally describe a ridiculous "Bad Advice Monster" that pops up when you're angry (like The Screeching Squirrel whose advice is to yell, The Ghost of Blame who tells you everything is the other person's fault). Then quickly write down 2 lines of terrible advice the Monster would give for a common conflict (like "Yell louder!" or "Just block them forever!"). Write a polite "I-Statement" (Starts with "I," which is focused on what YOU can choose) that could defeat the Monster's bad advice. Rip up/delete/crumple the Monster's script and only keep the good advice. Think about how imagining this Monster is talking to you when you feel anxious or afraid, and try to remember your "I" statement.

Activity 5: Social Media Scroll Detox

Open your preferred social media app (Instagram, TikTok, etc.) and scroll through your feed for exactly 60 seconds. When the timer stops, choose the first person whose post you see and mentally tag them with a positive affirmation that fits them (like "You are creative," "You are strong," "You are funny"). Do not send it, but instead immediately turn the camera on yourself (or look in a mirror) and say that exact same affirmation out loud to yourself. Think about how positive affirmations regularly said aloud could make a difference on how you feel about yourself.

7-9th Stress-Buster | Balanced Nutrition



What is balanced nutrition? Balanced nutrition means making informed food choices that include a variety of nutrients to support physical and mental health during adolescence. It's understanding that a variety of foods fuel our body and we know what are healthy or unhealthy choices.

How does balanced nutrition enhance my well-being? Balanced nutrition supports energy levels, concentration, mood regulation, and healthy physical development. Good nutrition can also improve resilience to stress!

Choose from the following activities (or create your own!):

Activity 1: Fuel & Feeling Log

Food provides energy, but some types of energy feel better than others. For 3 different meals eaten, observe 2 things: Name the main item or group of items eaten and 30 minutes later, check in with your energy by rating it on a scale from 1 (sluggish) to 5 (energized) and assigning a one feeling word (like focused or sleepy). Review your 3 observations and identify which fuel source gave you the most steady energy and which caused the quickest drop. Reflect on how different types of fuel are useful for different times (like preparing for a soccer game vs. preparing for a long test). You are the expert on your body's needs and can work together with body cues to make healthy choices. Discuss with a friend or adult how you can incorporate this practice into your daily life.

Activity 2: Decoding Food Media Messages

Many food messages online are selling a product or an idea, not necessarily promoting true health. We can educate and empower ourselves to be smart consumers of media. Scroll through a social media feed or search "healthy eating ad" to find 2 different examples of food or nutrition-related content. For each example, explore 2 things: What is the content creator really trying to sell or promote then write a single sentence that refutes the message with a balanced, non-judgmental perspective (like "All carbs are unhealthy" turns into "Carbs are a primary source of energy for the brain and body and are part of a balanced diet"). You can empower yourself by questioning media and trust your knowledge. Discuss with a friend or adult ways you can identify trustworthy sources of information.

Activity 3: Nutrient Superpower Mashup

Our foods are made up of different categories with unique functions or "superpowers", including: Protein = building and repairing muscle, Fats = Long-lasting energy and protecting organs, Carbs = quick energy for brain and muscles. Imagine you have a big exam in the morning and a soccer game in the afternoon. Choose 3 different foods you like and write down the main "superpower" each food provides (by looking at the nutrition label) and why it would be helpful in this scenario. Reflect on how the food you eat impacts your performance and remind yourself that we can make wise decisions based on our individual needs.

Activity 4: My Food Autonomy

Balanced nutrition is about making small, manageable choices that work for your life and schedule. You have more control than you think! Identify 2 food areas where you have some choice (like what you pack for lunch or a drink you pour at dinner). For each one, create a small, non-stressful "upgrade" that promotes balance, ensuring that your change is a choice, not a rule. For example, if you usually pour a few glasses of soda with dinner, upgrade by adding some sliced fruit to your water for at least one refill to see if you like it. Select one upgrade to commit to for a full week and see how it impacts your energy and mood.

Activity 5: Comfort Meal Map

Food connects us to our family, culture, and feelings. Comfort food is an important and normal part of a healthy life. Identify a favorite "comfort meal" from your family, culture, or childhood. List the feelings and connections associated with this meal by asking yourself: What emotion does this food/meal bring up? Who usually makes this food, or who do I usually eat this with? What memories are attached to it? What specific smell, sound, or taste makes this food uniquely special to me? Remember that food is more than fuel; it is also a source of nostalgia, comfort, and happiness. All foods, even the comfort ones, have a place in our balanced diet and healthy lifestyles. Share your comfort food with a friend or family member and ask about their comfort foods.

7-9th Grade Stress-Buster | Quality Sleep



What is quality sleep? Quality sleep means establishing consistent sleep schedules and creating a relaxing bedtime routine to ensure sufficient and restorative sleep. It's the understanding that screens and caffeine have an impact on sleep.

How does quality sleep enhance my well-being? Quality sleep is crucial for cognitive function, academic performance, emotional regulation, and physical health during a period of significant growth and change.

Choose from the following activities (or create your own!):

Activity 1: Sleep Power-up!

Search YouTube for "Sleep and It's Impact on Mental Health" from Stanford CME or click [here](#). Design a Sleep Power-up Card by writing down information from the video, including a slogan, sketches, and 3 facts from the video on a notecard. Post your Power-Up Card where you will see it as a reminder before bed. Commit to applying this new knowledge for a week and reflect on the impact.

Activity 2: Screen Time Sleep Sabotage

Do a Google Image search for "how exposure to blue light affects your brain and body" and select the eyeTrust Network infographic or click [here](#). Review the infographic and choose 1 nighttime habit you occasionally or regularly do that might be hurting your sleep. Then, research an alternative, sleep-promoting activity on your own, from the article [here](#), or visit KidsHealth.org and search for the article titled "5 Ideas for Better Sleep". Commit to this replacement activity for a week and share with a family member or friend how it impacted your well-being.

Activity 3: My Ideal Sleep Scene Design

Sleep is impacted by factors we can control. Score your bedroom on the Sleep Scene Scorecard: 1) Is your sleep/wake time consistent (within 1 hour)? 2) Is your room cool, quiet, and dark? 3) Do you have a consistent wind-down routine? 4) Do you avoid screens during wind-down? 5) Do you avoid late caffeine? 6) Do you get daily exercise and sun? Now, identify 2-3 items from this scorecard where your environment or routine could be better. Next, design your ideal sleep scene by listing or sketching how you would fix those areas (like adding blackout curtains or moving your phone charger). Choose a low/no-cost, easy-to-do change from your design to implement this month. Share your design with a family member and talk about how you might add this element to your bedroom this month,

Activity 4: 10-Minute Wind Down Challenge

A consistent bedtime routine signals to the brain that it's time to transition from "busy mode" to "sleep mode." Search YouTube for and choose 1 of these 5-minute guided activities for better sleep: Body Scan, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Square Breathing, or Mindful Imagery. Create your own 10-minute wind-down routine where you try to slow down and prepare your body for sleep. Commit to trying it for at least a week. After a week, post about your routine to your social media platform or talk to your friends about their routines. See what you can do to add or enhance your routine.

Activity 5: The Night Owl Dilemma

Visit nigms.nih.gov and search for "Average teen circadian cycle" or click [here](#) to view an infographic explaining the melatonin shift in adolescence. Create your ideal wake time and bedtime, aiming to reach the recommended sleep window of 8-10 hours. Reflect on 1-2 small, non-sleep-related compromises (like homework, social time, screen time) you can make to move closer to your ideal bedtime. Share these compromises with a family member and ask for their support in helping you reach your goal.

7-9th Grade Stress-Buster | Mindfulness Practices



What is a mindfulness practice? Mindfulness practice is practicing techniques to bring your awareness to the present moment, such as focusing on your breath, body sensations, or surroundings. It is also learning to observe thoughts and feelings without judgment.

How do mindfulness practices enhance my well-being? Mindfulness practices can help you manage anxiety and stress, improve focus and attention, enhance emotional regulation, and foster a greater sense of calm and self-compassion.

Choose from the following activities (or create your own!):

Activity 1: 5-4-3-2-1 Senses

Pause and take 2 deep breaths. Look around you and name 5 things you can see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you can taste. Notice how your mind and body feel now compared to the start. Think to yourself about when this kind of practice would be most helpful to your body and mind and try it out!

Activity 2: Emotion Weather Report

Scan your body and mind and ask yourself: What is the weather inside of me right now? Observe it for a while, then open a journal or your notes app and write what emotion you are feeling strongest right now. Reflect and write about where the "weather" in your body is happening. Then, write 1 sentence about this weather to remind yourself that whatever you feel is okay. Try this regularly to practice noticing changing emotions.

Activity 3: Mindful Snack

Find a small snack like a piece of chocolate, a raisin, a piece of fruit. For 4 full minutes, examine it without eating it. Look at every texture, color, and shadow. Touch and really feel the texture and temperature. Smell it and label every aroma you notice, as if you are encountering this food item for the first time. Take a small bite, place it on your tongue, but don't chew yet. Let it sit for 30 seconds and pay attention to your thoughts and sensations. Slowly chew it and think about all the people and natural elements that were involved in getting this food to your mouth (like farmers, truck drivers, grocery stores). Notice how this added awareness can change how the food tastes. What was this experience like for you? What did you discover that you normally miss? How could you practice this more often?

Activity 4: Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

Using your phone or digital device, take a photo of 5 things in your immediate area: something soft, something that makes you feel safe, something that makes you smile, something green, and a pair of shoes you love most. Move around to find and photograph these ideas, taking time to really look at each object before snapping a pic. Open your photos and title an album "My Calm Collection." Add to it when you come across other people, places, or things that make you feel calm. How did you choose which items to snap photos of? Consider captioning each photo with a quick sentence of gratitude for each one.

Activity 5: Ocean Wave Breath

Sit comfortably and place the tip of your tongue gently against the tissue behind your upper front teeth. Keep it and your gaze soft throughout the whole exercise. Start with a loud, audible sign through your mouth, making a whooshing sound, like a wave in the ocean. Inhale through your nose for 4 counts, hold your breath for 7 counts, and sigh out with your whoosh for 8 counts. Repeat this for 3 minutes. Let go of the pattern and notice the stillness around you, the heaviness or lightness in your body, and whether you feel more relaxed. Remember that you can always use your breath to be present and calm.

7-9th Grade Stress-Buster | Physical Activity



What is physical activity? Physical activity is moving our body in a variety of ways like running, playing sports, dancing, walking, as well as strength training.

How does physical activity enhance my well-being? Improves cardiovascular health, builds strength and endurance, reduces stress and anxiety, enhances mood, and promotes better sleep.

Choose from the following activities (or create your own!):

Activity 1: Ad Break Energy Boost

Any time an ad pops up in your scrolling or tv watching, try to add some movement into your day. Here are some ideas: stand up and shake every limb for 30 seconds--arms, legs, even your head (be gentle!); Perform a circuit of fast movement, 30 seconds per movement: high knees (running in place), arm circles (forward then backward), jumping jacks, & fast feet (tiny quick steps in place); Take 5 deep breaths, focusing on a longer exhale, and finish with a quick forward folding stretch (reach for your toes, then reach for the ceiling). How can short bursts of movement be beneficial for you?

Activity 2: Household Hero

Grab 2 similarly weighted items (like books or water bottles). Complete the following circuit 2 times, focusing on slow, controlled movements: 10 overhead presses (lift from shoulders, straight up), 10 bicep curls (straight arm, bend at elbow, holding weight toward the shoulder), 15 squats (hold weights close to chest), 15 calf raises (lift up on toes, weights overhead). Put weights down, shake it out, and stretch your arms and quads. Think about when you might be able to do this workout another time.

Activity 3: Mindful Musical Movement

Turn on your favorite song and MOVE (jump, spin, flail, stomp). Don't think about how it looks, just visualize pent-up energy, tension, and stress being shaken from your body and mind until the song ends. Close your eyes and notice your heart beating, rapid breath, and any tingling sensations. Hold still for a full minute, then try another song and choose to movements based on your added awareness. Repeat through multiple songs. After each song, take 3 big sigh breaths and notice if your body feels lighter, calmer, or looser than before. How does this kind of movement feel in your body and your mind?

Activity 4: Dice Roll Cardio

Assign a movement to each number on a die (you can also use an online dice). For example: 1=20 seconds of mountain climbers 2=30 seconds running in place. 3=10 squat jumps. 4=20 second burpees. 5=15 high knees on each leg. 6=45 seconds of walking in place. Roll the die and perform the corresponding activity until 10 minutes pass. Finish with 60 second burst of jumping jacks and 2 minutes of stretching the legs and back.

Activity 5: Sleep Stretching Sequence

Lie on your back, in bed or on a comfortable floor space. Allow shoulders to sink deeper into the space beneath you. Cross your right ankle over your left knee and gently pull your left knee toward your chest for 90 seconds. Repeat on the other side. Bring both knees to your chest and let them fall to the right, stretching your lower back with arms out wide for 90 seconds. Repeat on the other side. Lie flat, palms up, and close your eyes. Say to yourself, "My body is supported and my mind is quiet." Focus on this calm feeling.