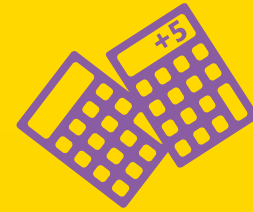


Wellbeing at Home: **Coping with Back to School**



Positive mental health

Mental health is a person's emotional and social self, their inner well-being. People look after their physical health through exercising, and by eating and sleeping well. It's just as important to take time to look after their mental health, too.

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Confidence and self-esteem	86-87 >
Resilience	90-91 >
Stress	92-93 >
Anxiety and depression	94-95 >

Feeling positive

Positive mental health consists of four main elements: the ability to recognize emotions, dealing with those emotions, practising healthy mental habits, and establishing strong support networks. When a person has these four things in place, it is easier to feel mentally positive. And when someone feels mentally positive, they are able to live life to their full potential while handling any hurdles and hiccups that life sends their way.

PARENT TIPS

Supporting your teen

- Talk to your teen about the qualities you admire in them, such as their thoughtfulness towards friends and family.
- Model thoughtfulness for your teen. When you are frustrated, talk about how it makes you feel and the positive steps you plan to take to resolve the issue.
- Encourage your teen to take time to do things they enjoy, even during exam time. This will prevent getting overwhelmed which will help their performance.

A healthy mind

Even if a person feels on top of the world, it's important that they take time to do something for their inner well-being. When a person is mentally healthy, they're aware of what makes them feel positive and what gets them down. Paying attention to their mental health helps teens to become better equipped to acknowledge what they're feeling and to keep a balanced perspective on both life and themselves.

> **Positive thinking strategies**
There are many ways to build positive mental health – in good times and bad.

Appreciate your talents

When a person takes time to acknowledge and appreciate their own talents and accomplishments, it can help to ward off negative thoughts and feelings, such as not feeling good enough or comparing their own achievements with those of others. Everyone is different, with their own unique talents and ways of doing things. Acknowledging that can help teens to celebrate their own.

Attempt mindfulness

Mindfulness is a technique that encourages a person to focus their attention on the present moment, and to their immediate thoughts and feelings. By acknowledging each individual thought, they stop feeling down or overwhelmed. This gives them a sense of control. Breathing exercises help with mindfulness.

Talking about it

If teens are feeling overwhelmed, and negative thoughts are hard to escape, checking in with a friend or parent and talk about how they feel can help. An outside perspective can help a person to see that they're actually managing a situation better than they think. Keeping in mind the positive comments made by friends or parents can make a big difference the next time things are feeling difficult.

> Not alone

It can be hard to open up about feeling sad or low, but talking about it with someone else usually helps to put things in perspective.



Build positive relationships

Supportive friends can give a person confidence, and push them to meet their potential. Good friends reinforce a person's positive thoughts, celebrate each other's achievements, and offer support in hard times, which can be invaluable to a person's inner well-being.

Help others

Helping friends and noticing their needs can help people to feel good about themselves and their friendship.

Be kind to yourself

People are often kinder to others than they are to themselves. Self-talk is the way people speak to themselves. While people tend to find it easier to believe negative things about themselves, it is important that teens catch any negative self-talk and replace it instead with more positive and compassionate thoughts. This will help a person to feel confident and in control.

Learn new skills

Developing skills outside of a teen's comfort zone can test and develop their resilience, as well as give them a chance to meet and become friends with new and different people.

Stay active

Exercise releases endorphins – the body's natural mood elevator – good for both the body and mind.

Set goals and ambitions

Having goals – big or small – focuses the mind on a task. Staying on track and focused when working towards a goal is an important part of building resilience. Hard work and setbacks are part of the journey and make successes even sweeter.

Meditate

People have used meditation for thousands of years as a way to manage thoughts and feelings, and to relax a busy mind. It is similar to mindfulness, but uses different methods to encourage feelings of calm.

Relax

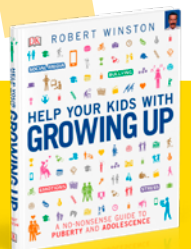
Whether it's watching a new film, listening to a favourite band, or reading a book, making time for oneself to relax and just "be" is important for well-being.



Returning to school can be stressful.
Use this page to help encourage a healthy, happy mind.

Suitable for 12+ years

Content from: *Help Your Kids With Growing Up*
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Confidence and self-esteem

Confidence and self-esteem are often thought to be the same thing, but they are actually very different. Confidence describes how teens feel in specific situations, while self-esteem is related to how teens feel about themselves.

Confidence

Someone's confidence is all about their trust and belief in themselves to do something well. Confidence is also specific to a situation – a person might be confident in their abilities to wow a crowd with a speech, but not confident in writing an essay.

A self-confident person, someone who believes in their own abilities, is more likely to embrace new challenges and responsibilities. Self-confidence is a positive trait that helps a person to make the most of their talents and develop new ones.

Onwards and upwards

When someone feels confident, they are more likely to tackle challenges with determination and spirit, which increases their chances of achieving their goals and ambitions. A lack of confidence can actually curb a person's progress, making small obstacles feel daunting. Obstacles are a part of life, but they shouldn't stop a person from doing what they want.

SEE ALSO	
< 72-73	Body image
Introversion and extroversion	88-89 >
Resilience	90-91 >
Bullying	150-151 >

▽ Overcoming obstacles

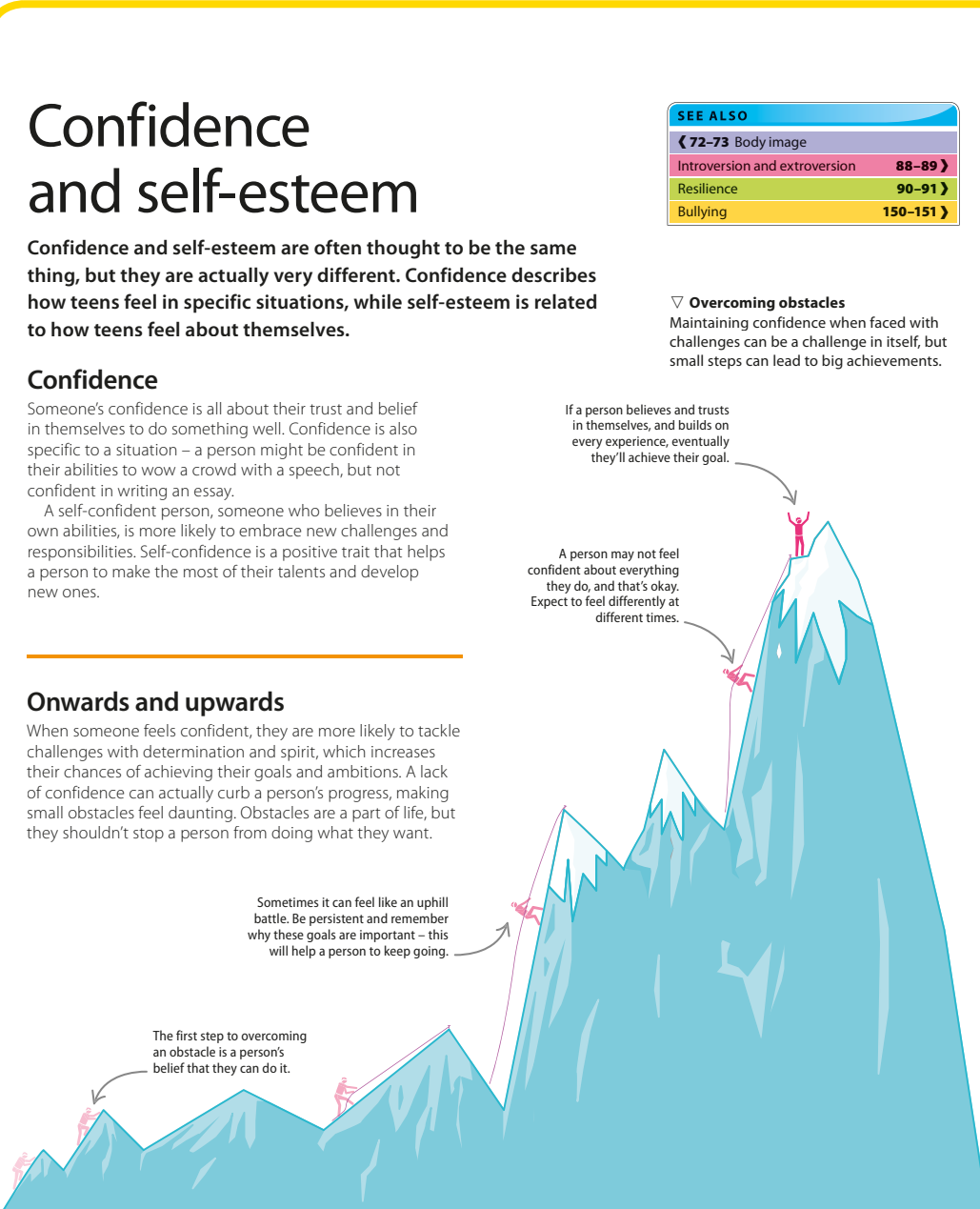
Maintaining confidence when faced with challenges can be a challenge in itself, but small steps can lead to big achievements.

If a person believes and trusts in themselves, and builds on every experience, eventually they'll achieve their goal.

A person may not feel confident about everything they do, and that's okay. Expect to feel differently at different times.

Sometimes it can feel like an uphill battle. Be persistent and remember why these goals are important – this will help a person to keep going.

The first step to overcoming an obstacle is a person's belief that they can do it.



"The fact that I'm me and no one else is one of my greatest assets."
Haruki Murakami, author

Self-esteem

Self-esteem relates to the way that people feel about themselves. It's their inner sense of their own importance, value and worth. Confidence is specific to an aspect of a person's life, and it's okay not to be confident in everything – but to have low self-esteem affects more than a person's goals and abilities: it affects their mental health.

People with low self-esteem are extremely critical of themselves, and this constant stream of negative thoughts can lead to anxiety or depression. The good news is that people can choose what to think and say about themselves, and so can kick the negative thoughts, and replace them with positive opinions that are kind and affirmative.

Shyness

Shyness is when people feel uncertain or awkward during social encounters, especially with new people. It can influence how they behave or feel around others, and make them uncomfortable, self-conscious, or nervous. Shyness can also lead to physical responses, such as blushing, sweating, breathlessness, or being unable to speak.

Shyness is quite common, but it isn't a problem unless it causes a person emotional pain and stops them from achieving their full potential. If this occurs, it is advisable to talk to friends and family, or to see a counsellor.

TEEN HINTS

Building self-esteem

Self-esteem affects almost every part of a person's life, from their relationships with others to academic and work performance, and so it is essential to value yourself and give yourself the recognition that you deserve.

- Think and say positive things to yourself, about yourself, every day.
- Don't say mean things to yourself – treat yourself like you would your best friend, with kindness and respect.
- Accept compliments from other people.
- Each day, write down three things you accomplished.

PARENT TIPS

Leading by example

There are steps that parents can take to help boost their teens' self-esteem.

- Let your teen hear you congratulate yourself when you do something well, and say good things about yourself.
- Highlight and repeat your teen's qualities and achievements.
- Encourage resilience by talking about your own challenges with self-esteem. This will help them realize that we all struggle with self-esteem from time to time.



△ Conversation topics

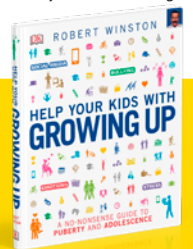
Thinking about what to talk about with new people in advance can help conversation flow, and alleviate any awkward feelings.



Use this page to help tackle any confidence and self-esteem problems that have arisen whilst being away from school.

Suitable for 12+ years

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Digital self

The Internet is a liberating space for teens – they can control how they present themselves, as well as socialize and explore the wider world. But it's also vast, so it's essential teens learn to be aware of how they are perceived online.

Selfies

Self-portraits taken with a smartphone, more commonly called "selfies", allow young people to have control over their online image. Through a selfie, teens can shape how they want to be seen, express their mood, and share important experiences with their online community, who can then comment on and "like" the selfie. Unfortunately, negative comments can be made online as easily as positive ones, which can influence a teen's self-esteem and become a real problem if the teen relies on selfies and other people's opinions to boost their self-worth.



Selfie esteem

Selfies can be an effective way for teens to increase their confidence, test out new identities, and let their friends know what they're doing.

SEE ALSO	
130-131	Social media
Making judgements	134-135
Digital habits	136-137
Cyberbullying	138-139

ALERT!

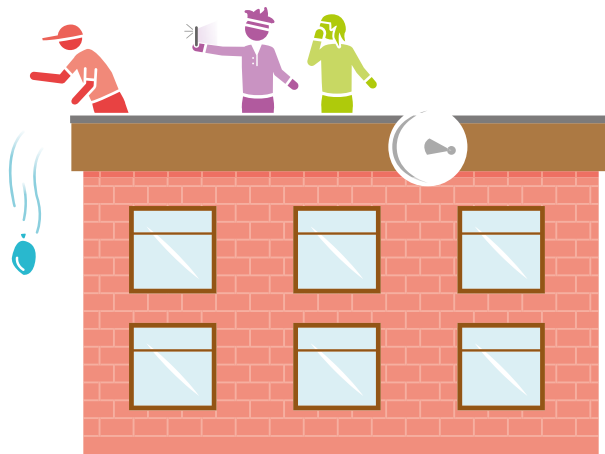
Dangerous selfies

Selfies of people in precarious positions have become widespread on social media. Across the world, creating daredevil selfies is putting people's lives at risk. With teens more prone to risk-taking due to the changes that are taking place in their brains, it is important that they don't buy in to this dangerous trend, in which people have been injured and died. Instead, a person should be aware and ensure that they're safe before taking a selfie.

Think before posting

While posting a photo or comment on social media may feel like the most natural thing in the world, it is important to pause and think about what a post is saying or showing.

Although the comment or picture might only be intended for a specific person or group, the person writing the post needs to remember that it can actually be seen by a wider community of people. It will remain online beyond the moment, years into the future, as a part of their digital history.



Consider the consequences

It's a good idea before posting to think about whether or not it would be embarrassing or awkward if a family member, teacher, or future employer saw the post.

Oversharing

Social media can be a useful tool for teens to establish friendships, and share memories and thoughts. But sometimes these shared thoughts can cross the line into "too much information". Most people have read a post or viewed an image uploaded online by a friend, and cringed at the intimate details that have been shared with the world. Being too honest, or "oversharing", can have consequences. All information posted online remains online, and if inappropriate or hurtful comments are made, relationships can be damaged as a result.

PARENT TIPS

Lead by example

Parents can help their teens to feel comfortable in what they are posting by speaking to them about oversharing, and by modelling appropriate social media content in their own posts.

- Show your teen how your profile is set to private in order to limit who can view posts, and help them set theirs, too.
- Remember that as a parent your teen is unlikely to appreciate you sharing embarrassing photos or too much information about them online.

Avatars

In video games, avatars are three-dimensional electronic images that represent the player in the game and interact with other elements of the game. Based on the gaming avatars, two-dimensional avatars are increasingly used on social media platforms, so that users have a visual representation of themselves without needing to use a photograph. Using an avatar instead of a photograph gives people more control over their digital footprints and the information that they are sharing with people.



△ **Unintentional clues**
Photos can give away clues to a person's identity, such as their hobbies and places they like to go.



△ **Unique but anonymous**
Teens can still show their personality through an avatar, without revealing any personal information.

Digital footprints

A person's online activities leave a trail, commonly called a "digital footprint". It's a record of everything that they do on digital devices. Sometimes users intentionally leave their information online, such as through social media, but it's possible to unintentionally do this, too. Data about a person and their Internet usage and activity may be collected by websites without a person knowing. It is increasingly common for employers and universities to "cyber vet" people to make sure that their online history doesn't have any objectionable or potentially embarrassing content.

GOOD TO KNOW

Cookies

Cookies are small text files that are created when a person visits a website, and record what that person did while on that website. These cookies download onto the person's computer ready for the next time they visit the same site. On future visits, the cookie sends information back to the website, allowing the site to tailor information that pops up based on what the user browsed and clicked on during their previous visit. Cookies also record what site a person navigated from, what adverts they saw, and what site they went to afterwards – information that can be used to build up a profile of a person's online actions.



We've all been on the internet more lately – help adjust to life on social media after school with this helpful information.

Suitable for 12+ years

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Understanding the news

As teens start to take more interest in the world around them, they discover how to find news and they learn to digest it. Seeking out various points of view on a news item helps a teen to have a balanced understanding of issues and politics.

SEE ALSO
◀ 18–19 Thinking independently
◀ 82–83 Positive mental health
◀ 134–135 Making judgements
◀ 158–159 Citizenship

News media

Some news sources are more reliable than others. News items should be provided in a transparent and accountable way – this means they are examined critically, without any bias, and that the provider is responsible for what they report. The facts should be verified and the people they source the details from should be trustworthy. It's important to find out where news comes from before digesting its content.



△ **Newspapers**
A traditional medium of news, newspaper journalism follows a strict code of ethics to promote transparency.



△ **News websites and apps**
Websites and apps allow people to get news on demand. Some websites and apps are reliable, but a lack of regulation means many spread false information.



△ **Social media**
The lack of regulation on social media means that news released there is often misleading, unreliable, and without accountability.



△ **Television**
Traditionally a widely viewed news source, TV news has strict guidelines to ensure the news is properly sourced and verified.

Critical analysis

It's important to be critical about the news, rather than accepting everything as fact. Some news companies may focus heavily on negative news, or sensationalize stories and events in order to attract interest. Others may be biased towards a particular ideal or owned by people with an agenda. A company's owner might support a particular political party, for example, and want to influence voters in an election. All of this can lead to stereotyping and a narrow, selective presentation of events.

▷ **Seeking answers**
Questioning news outlets about their sponsorships, agendas, and transparency ensures they are held accountable for the content they broadcast.

Ask yourself

- Who put this information here, and why?
- Does the author have an agenda?
- Is it a sponsored news item? Or is the information sourced independently?
- Is there a balanced outline of viewpoints, with reliable evidence to support each argument?
- Are they asking questions and looking at detail, or making generalized statements?

Social media bubbles

Social media is designed to identify a person's interests and tailor the content they see according to their "likes" and what they share. This can be really useful in filtering out things they aren't interested in, but also means that the news that appears on their social media platforms only offers a narrow point of view. When people simply absorb this news without seeking other perspectives, they don't get the full story. This creates a "bubble" effect that stops people seeing viewpoints that differ from their own.



TEEN HINTS

Keep an open mind

Try to look for news and opinion from a variety of sources and many different opinions, including those that you don't like or agree with. Taking measures to be an active news consumer will help you to form your own, informed, thoughts and opinions on important matters.

Escaping overexposure

It can sometimes feel like there's no escape – especially when the news focuses on alarming events. It's natural to feel angry, sad, or anxious about it all. Taking time away from the media can help teens to digest the news and properly understand their reactions to it.

▽ Taking time out

Going for a walk, playing with a pet, and speaking to friends are all great ways to relax.



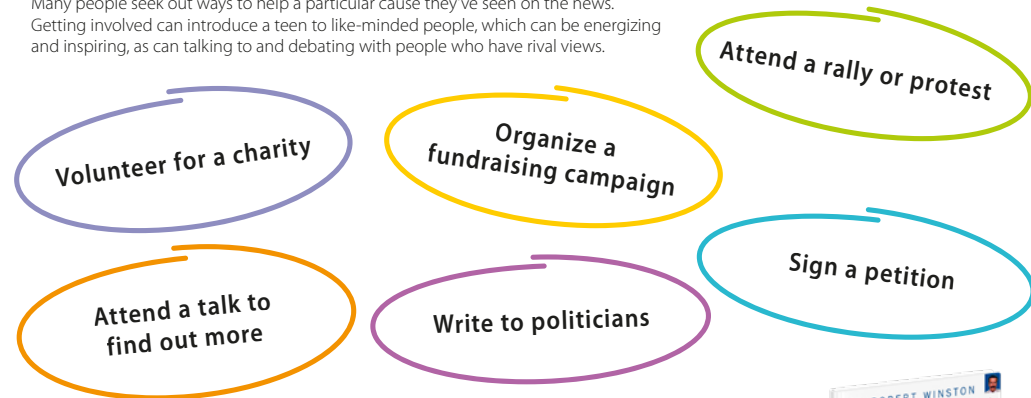
PARENT TIPS

Disturbing news

It can be exciting when teens take an active interest in current affairs, but it's also important to help them digest the news they consume. Ask their opinions on different viewpoints, including difficult topics. When there are particularly distressing news items, remind them that it's possible to be informed about what is happening without knowing every detail.

Social conscience

Many people seek out ways to help a particular cause they've seen on the news. Getting involved can introduce a teen to like-minded people, which can be energizing and inspiring, as can talking to and debating with people who have rival views.



With information coming at us from all angles, use this page to help navigate and understand news about our world.

Suitable for 12+ years

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