



Patrick Henry Local Schools

Create an environment where all students discover
their personal best in every opportunity

Monthly Newsletter

Hello! Thank you for reading the monthly newsletter for April from the school social worker. The goal of my monthly newsletter is to provide at least one takeaway strategy, resource, tip, or idea. This newsletter provides tips for checking in with your student and engaging them in conversations about their mental health.

**HOW ARE YOU,
REALLY?**

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This month's newsletter will focus on checking in with your child or the students in your lives. Back in October, when our high school Peer To Peer Guidance group helped with our RemedyLive event, they shared with members of our community what they have been working on. This included talking points for adults to use with the students in their lives. The group created these questions by asking themselves what they wished their parents or other adults in their lives would ask them. It can be easy to get caught up in our fast-paced everyday lives, causing us to forget to stop and really check in with our students. The following are a few of the talking points the Peer To Peer students came up with to help you get started.

- What is your favorite thing about yourself?
- Do you feel like people expect a lot from you?
- What do you spend the majority of your screen time on?
- How was your day today?
- What do you think you are good at?
- What about the future excites you the most?
- Do you value your mental health?
- How are you taking care of your mental health?
- What is your go to comfort movie, show, or song?
- What are the top 3 words someone else would use to describe you?
- What is your biggest fear?
- Compliment each other.

DAILY CHECK-IN

How are you feeling today?



Practical Tips for Checking In:

- **Schedule One-on-One Time:** Dedicate specific times for uninterrupted conversations with your child. This could be during meals, before bedtime, or on the drive to and from a practice.
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Instead of asking yes/no questions, encourage your child to expand on their experiences and emotions. For example, "Tell me about the best part of your day" or "How did you feel when [specific event] happened?"
- **Actively Listen:** Practice active listening by giving your full attention and validating your child's feelings without judgment. Reflect back what they have shared to demonstrate understanding and empathy. Listen to understand, do not listen just to respond.
- **Be Patient and Consistent:** Building trust takes time and it is important to be patient and persistent in your efforts to check in with your child regularly. Consistency sends the message that you care and that you are always there for them, no matter what.
- **Normalize Mental Health Conversations:** Incorporating discussions about mental health into your everyday conversation helps to reduce the stigma and makes it easier for your child to open up when they need to.

It is important to take note of subtle changes in your child's behavior or mood, as this can be an early indicator of an underlying problem. Checking in with your child about their mental health isn't a one-time conversation—it's an ongoing dialogue that requires patience, empathy, and understanding. This is not only crucial for their well-being but also for fostering a strong and trusting relationship. By prioritizing your child's emotional well-being, you empower them to navigate life's challenges with resilience and strength. **#PHStrong**

Additional Resources to Explore

Resource for parents and caregivers about how to have difficult conversations with their children.
<https://bepresentohio.org/caregivers/>

Resource for talking to adolescents and teens: how to start the conversation
<https://mhanational.org/talking-adolescents-and-teens-starting-conversation>

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