Mental Health-Care Tips for Families

Here are tips to help you create and nurture a healthy mental-health environment for your family members during challenging times.

+ Actively listen.
Talk about your feelings together to foster understanding. Talking about feelings can help people gain a sense of control over emotions instead of feeling controlled by emotions.

+ Spend time together.
Mental-health stress can lead to people withdrawing from one another. But that's exactly the opposite of what is needed. We need other people! Being physically present together helps us shoulder the burden of sad feelings, allows for rest, staves off loneliness, encourages laughter, and provides strength.

+ Suggest enjoyable activities.
Focus on finding joy. Suggest activities others enjoy or that you enjoy. We all long to do enjoyable things, but mental health stress can bury those desires. So be persistent—human contact and enjoyable activities are good for everyone!

+ Exercise.
It's a vicious cycle. Fatigue, stress, worry, and lack of motivation can impair our ability or desire to exercise…but regular exercise has been shown to be a buffer against depression and stress. Commit to regular exercise with one another. Do it once a week, twice a week, or even once a day—any little bit will help! Play a sport, take an exercise class, or walk together after dinner.

+ Prepare meals.
Plan menus, make grocery lists, and prepare meals together. The food and fellowship are invaluable!

+ Be nonjudgmental.
The last thing any of us need to feel judged by one another. Focus on communicating patience and grace and overflowing, unconditional love. By doing this, you'll help each other become more patient and gracious toward yourselves, too.