

# BACKPACK NEWS **TEENS**

## Simple Steps for a Calmer Mind

Life as a teen can be overwhelming—school pressure, friendships, and all the changes happening around you. Stress and emotions can feel like they're building up, but there are ways to manage it all. Here are a few simple steps to help you keep your cool:

### 1. **Breathe Deeply**

When you're feeling anxious or stressed, take a few deep breaths. Inhale for four seconds, hold for four, and exhale slowly for four. This helps your brain relax and shift your focus away from the stress.

### 2. **Exercise Regularly**

Physical activity releases endorphins, the "feel-good" hormones in your body. Whether it's walking, dancing, or playing sports, exercise is a great way to manage stress and boost your mood.

### 3. **Talk It Out**

Sometimes, the best way to deal with emotions is to talk to someone you trust. Whether it's a friend, parent, or counselor, sharing how you're feeling can lighten the load.

Remember, it's okay to feel stressed or emotional—it's part of being human. But with a few healthy habits, you can manage it and feel more in control.

## School Nurse Expertise

From Janet Perez,  
School Nurse of Whitewater  
School District:

"I'm a school nurse. While many think I'm the person you come to only when you need an ice pack or band aide, I care about more than just your physical health. My door is always open to have a confidential conversation. You belong here; you are valued here."

## Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness, break the stigma, and remind ourselves that mental health is just as important as physical health. It's okay to not be okay, and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Let's support one another, take time for self-care, and have open conversations about mental health.

## Mindfulness in Teens

Mindfulness might sound like a big word, but it's really just a way of paying attention to the present moment without judgment. It's like pressing the pause button on your busy mind. Practicing mindfulness regularly can help you manage anxiety, stress, and emotions. Here's how you can get started:

### 1. **Start with Breathing**

A great way to practice mindfulness is by simply focusing on your breath. Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and take a deep breath in, then exhale slowly. If your mind starts to wander, gently bring your attention back to your breath. This simple exercise helps you stay grounded in the present moment.

### 2. **Mindful Walking**

Next time you take a walk, try doing it mindfully. Focus on the sensation of your feet touching the ground, the sound of your steps, and the sights around you. This will help calm your mind and reduce stress.

### 3. **Body Scan**

Take a few minutes to check in with your body. Start at your toes and work your way up, noticing any tension or discomfort. Just acknowledging how you feel can help release built-up stress and anxiety.

### 4. **Gratitude Practice**

Spend a few minutes each day thinking about things you're grateful for. Whether it's a friend, a favorite hobby, or just a good cup of coffee, practicing gratitude helps shift your focus from stress to the positives in your life.