



WESTBROOK PARTNERS FOR PREVENTION

Supporting a safe and healthy future for Westbrook youth

CHOOSE HEALTHY HABITS IN CHALLENGING TIMES

While there is light at the end of the tunnel, there is no doubt that we are currently facing some of the biggest challenges in recent history. Remote work and learning have led to an increased feeling of isolation for many teens and adults; uncertainty about work, post-high school plans, child care, and our health have all added to increased stress-levels for many of us; however, when faced with stressful situations or challenges, there are many healthy ways to cope instead of using alcohol or other substances.

GET ACTIVE: Walk, run, play, lift weights, dance... just get moving! You will release body chemicals that will help your mood and mental well-being.

Tip: There are several apps you can use to track your activity, including [Google Fit](#) available for free on both iOS and Android.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW: Learn how to do something you have always wanted to try, master a new language, or enjoy a hobby you haven't done for a while.

Tip: A quick online search for "hobbies during quarantine" will yield tons of ideas! To start, here is a list of [11 ideas from Health](#).

REACH OUT TO SOMEONE: If you're feeling lonely, pick up your phone, tablet, or computer and talk to a friend or family member.

Tip: Have you tried watching (remotely) a movie with friends and family? There are a number of [easy ways](#) to do it via video/chat platforms like Zoom, and services like [Netflix Party](#) and [GroupWatch from Disney+](#) allow subscribers to chat and watch the streaming service together at the same time.

LAUGH: When it comes to relieving stress, [Mayo Clinic says](#) laughing has both short- and long-term benefits. So, find funny things in your daily life to reduce stress – watch a comedy, tell jokes, or share funny stories with friends and family.

Tip: Get a joke of the day calendar, watch funny animal videos on YouTube, or sign up to receive free jokes of the day.

LIMIT NEWS & SOCIAL MEDIA: Too much negative news or social media can increase your anxiety and become distracting, so being mindful of how this information affects you is important and you might want to try tools that help you set limits on how and when you receive information.

Tip: There are a [number of free and paid "focus" apps](#) that can help you control when you receive stressors and/or distractions on your devices.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS: Mindfulness helps you focus on being aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness, which may include meditation or breathing exercises, has a [number of benefits](#) including reducing stress and anxiety, lowering blood pressure, and improving sleep.

Tip: There are many great free mindfulness resources, including [Mindful.org](#) that provides information, tools, and training; plus, there are also a [number of apps](#) to help with meditation and mindfulness.

Remember, drinking or using substances to escape, relax, or numb your feelings can lead to unwanted health risks and possible addiction, so try a fun, healthy habit instead. **If you are concerned about drinking or substance use, 211 Maine has local specialists to provide information and help. Dial 211 or text your zip code to 898-211.**



FOR MORE INFO

Email: partnersforprevention@westbrookschoools.org

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