

Discover Your Happy

Six Sustainable Happiness Skills Family Toolkit

Studies show that two out of three American teens are stressed and many don't know how to handle it. The inability to reduce and cope with stress and anxiety can negatively impact different facets of a teen's life including their health, friendships, relationships with parents, and academic performance. Discover Your Happy aims to create awareness that happiness is more than a fleeting feeling, that sustainable happiness is achievable, and that there are a set of skills that can be taught, learned and practiced to help anyone in their journey toward happiness.

Your children are learning about the Six Sustainable Happiness Skills – mindfulness, human connection, positive outlook, purpose, generosity, and gratitude – in their classroom. Extend the happiness and bring Discover Your Happy into your home with these thought-starters highlighting each skill.

Mindfulness

Take A Breath

Disagreements happen in every family, but they're not fun. We've all been in conversations where we say something we don't mean or get carried away. The next time you find yourself in a tough conversation with a family member, pause the conversation and set a timer for one minute. During that minute, take deep breaths and pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in for a count of eight and out for a count of seven. Where do you feel your breath in your body? Pay attention to the sensations of breathing. Once the minute is complete, return to the conversation and notice how taking a minute has de-escalated the disagreement.

Purpose

Family Values

Gather your family members together and give each person a sheet of paper and pen or pencil. Instruct your family members to list down as many values as they can think of on the piece of paper. Values could be anything -- kindness, honesty and generosity and more. Provide 2-3 minutes for everyone to write down their lists. When they're finished, have everyone review their list and select the ten values that stand out as being most important. Finally, they'll select their top three values from that list of ten. Once everyone has selected their three, engage in a conversation about those top three values. Are they the same across family members? Are they different? What would you say your "family values" are? Use these values to give your family a Purpose to rally behind by turning them into action (dedicated family time, volunteering, saving for donations, etc.).

Positive Outlook

Change Your Self-Talk

Sometimes the person that is the most critical of us is our own inner voice. Have everyone in your family think of a mantra - a short phrase that they can repeat to themselves in times of challenge ("I am strong and capable" or "There's no such thing as a mistake" are examples). Ask your family members to write down their mantras and post them in an area for all to see. When you start to notice negative self-talk creeping in ("I can't do this" or "no one understands," for example), replace it with your mantra. If you notice a family member engaging in self-defeating talk, remind them of their own mantra!

Generosity

Pay It Forward

Perform a random act of kindness for one of your family members -- make their bed for them, make them a snack, whatever comes to mind -- and get the kindness party started! When you've completed that act, inform your family member that they must now "pay it forward" by performing a random act of kindness for another family member. You'll create an endless cycle of kind actions!

Human Connection

Compliment Jar

Everyone loves to receive a compliment! Give each member of your family a stack of post-it notes and a pen. Set up a jar in a centrally located area of your home and encourage each member of the family to write a post-it compliment about someone whenever the mood strikes and put it in the jar. Your family members will experience a thrill whenever they see a new note in the jar and rush over to see if the compliment is for them! Get the jar started by putting in lots and lots of compliments about your family members!

Gratitude

Gratitude Journal

Studies have shown that writing in a gratitude journal for a few minutes before bed each night increases our well-being. Create a family agreement that you'll each spend five minutes a night writing in a gratitude journal right before sleep for one week. You can choose to do this together as a family or each person can fill in their journal on their own. At the end of the week, connect for a discussion about the gratitude journaling process. Did you notice any changes in your family throughout the week? Did you notice changes in your own happiness and well-being? How can your family work together to experience more gratitude?

Extend the Learning – Check out the Discover Your Happy website to learn about a fun way to activate happiness in your home! Go to <https://www.learnexperiencehappiness.com/parents> today to learn more.