

SEVA HOUSE RESOURCES

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foreword

Welcome,

We have designed this little e-book to celebrate all of the unique and wonderful things about you. The teenage years can be really challenging at times and we want to recognise the stress and pressure that come from this very important stage of your life.

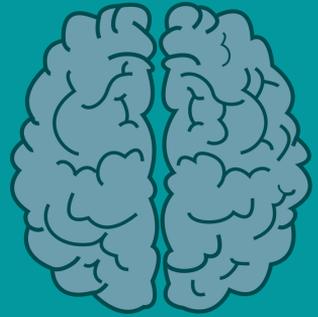
Inside these pages you will find hints, tips and tricks to improve your overall wellbeing so you can get on with having fun and creating memories with the special people (and pets) around you.

We also want to encourage our readers to reach out for additional help if needed. You will find phone numbers, websites and apps listed for your convenience at the back of the book.

Happy reading and warm wishes,

The Seva House Team

Your Beautiful Brain



Even though it feels like you have learnt HEAPS since you were a little kid, your brain is still developing. Some parts of your brain - like the part that recognises rewards or the things you like is hyperactive! It searches for ways for you to have fun and the more you have fun the more it feels good. In comparison, the part of your brain that tells you something is dangerous has not yet fully formed - so your ability to 'slow-down' or put the breaks on isn't as fast as the thrill-seeking part.

What does this mean?

Did you know teenagers are hard-wired or designed to take risks? However, the plus side is that your brain is also designed to learn and to adapt!

You have an advantage over little kids and even adults to adapt to situations more quickly because your brain is more flexible - meaning you can pick up things pretty fast!



Understanding what our emotions are trying to tell us...

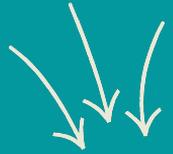
Did you know that every time we have an emotion, it's almost like our body is trying to tell us something? It might be trying to tell us to 'be careful', or 'be safe' or remind you that what someone is saying or doing isn't actually okay - it's making you uncomfortable.

We want to remind you that it's okay to feel those emotions and to notice them.

Noticing our emotions is the first step to knowing what to do with them when they arrive.



Here's a trick we want you to try:



When you feel an emotion rising up in your belly or throat - take the time to just notice it.

Notice what it feels like in your body, notice what the emotion makes you want to say or do and try to notice it as though it's a visitor.

The trick is to remember that feelings come and go - much like thoughts.

We can welcome them or we can want to evict them - but imagining our emotions as a message from your body to your brain might just help you understand what it is that you are needing!



Being a teenager can be FUN or super stressful...

There can be a lot of pressure to look a certain way, act a certain way or always be in contact with someone - either FB, Insta or keeping up your streaks on snapchat...



Sometimes it can even be hard to 'switch' your brain off, which makes sleeping, motivation and eating pretty hard. Or at times feel near impossible!

Did you know the Sleep Health Foundation in Australia recommends 8-10 hours of sleep per night for teens.

Check-up Activity: if you were you calculate how many hours of sleep you get - would you be in credit (meeting the recommended amount) or debt (under the recommended amount)?



HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY USE AFFECT US AT BEDTIME?

The bright screen light from devices can cause increased alertness

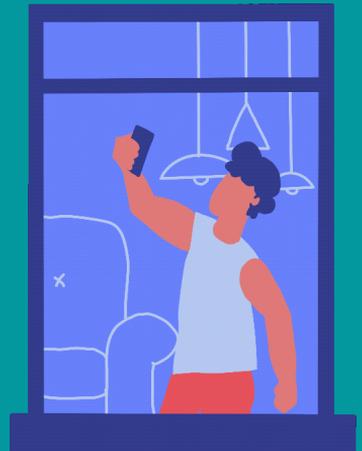
Activities on such devices can be stimulating and make us less ready to sleep

People can become absorbed and continue using technology beyond their usual bedtime.



Checklist - how many devices do you have in your room?
Find a safe place like drawer or cupboard to keep them for morning. if they are out-of-sight, they are out-of-mind!

TOP TIPS: LIMIT USE OF YOUR
PHONE, TV OR IPAD TO NO
SCREEN TIME AT LEAST 1
HOUR BEFORE BED.

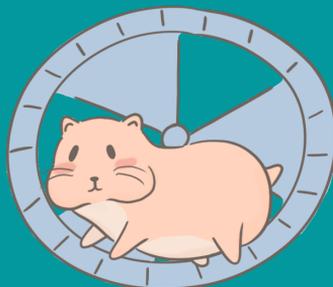




Another really common challenge is feeling like you can't slow down feelings, thoughts or memories running through your head!

The process of feelings, thoughts and memories creating a loop inside your head is called rumination. This just means that a part of your brain or body struggles to let go of the rewind and play setting so that your thoughts or feelings keep playing (a bit like a part of a movie that you can't press skip).

If ever you find that you are ruminating - here are some quick and easy tips that can help...



THE BUTTERFLY HUG

Cross both arms over your chest and place a hand on each shoulder.

Begin tapping each hand one at a time on your chest or your shoulder. Count to 10 and focus on your breathing.

Pause. See where the worries now sit in your body and keep tapping until you feel more comfortable.

The trick to the butterfly hug is to just notice any thoughts or feelings and let them pass by like a cloud without labelling them good or bad. What the hug does is create what is called Bilateral Stimulation - a way to connect the thinking side of the brain and feeling side of the brain and send messages to the body that it is safe now.



Level up challenge:

If a thought, feeling or memory is really upsetting - try the butterfly hug whilst watching your favourite TV show on Netflix or your favourite sport (make sure what you are watching doesn't cause additional stress or worry!). Tap for a short amount of time

then notice yourself begin to feel more comfortable. The reason you react to this is because the brain is holding what is called 'dual attention' - trying to do two things at once.





Using Music...

Music has the power to influence our mood and also express what we are thinking or feeling - especially when it feels like our own words can't!

Listening to 'relaxing music' [something with a slow beat] can reduce the stress chemicals in our brain and signal to our body that we are okay. It's the same with fast-beat or high-pitched music. If you listen to music that makes you feel 'amped' up - cortisol will pump through your body signalling to your brain that to create more adrenaline. This goes way back to our body and a nerve known as the vagus nerve which is highly tuned to detecting danger].

The same goes for movies or TikToks that create stress or feeling 'on-edge'.

The more that you watch these in times of feeling down or angry- your brain and body will continue to feel under stress as well.



CHECKLIST CHALLENGE:

Create a relaxing playlist on your phone that can help your brain signal that it's time to relax and let go of stress.

Whilst stress won't completely go away - it is a good reminder that not just our thoughts can influence our mood.

What we listen to and watch also have a BIG influence...

Movement

Movement is an excellent way to remind our vagus nerve that we are safe - it reminds our brain that we are in the present (not the past or the future) and we need to concentrate on what we are doing in the here and now.

A great tip is to do some stretches or yoga moves to release tension from your body and focus on the strength of your body.



Head to the next page to see some really simple moves.

Bonus points if you make it through all the movements on the page!





We hope that these simple strategies have given you some ideas in tackling any worries you may hold or highlighting how important it is to look after your wellbeing!

If you find you are needing some additional support - we have included some resources you can access:

Emergency phone services:

Mental Health Line NSW: 1800 011 511

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800

Suicide Callback: 1300 659 467

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

Lifeline Web Chat: Text 0477 13 11 14 (12:00pm - midnight)

Q Life: 1800 184 527

National Indigenous Critical Response Service: 1800 805 801

Apps:

Headspace (4+) \$: Free Meditation made simple.

Daylio (4+) \$: Free Self-Care Bullet Journal with Goals - Mood Diary & Happiness Tracker.

CalmHarm (13+) \$: Free Calm Harm provides tasks to help you resist or manage the urge to self-harm. If you want to you can set a password so that it's completely private.

AntiStress (4+) \$: 2.00 When you need relaxation, diversion or just a moment of distraction enjoy this collection of toys.

Woebot (12+) \$: Free Woebot is your very own coach who chats with you and offers insights and skills to help you grow into your best self.