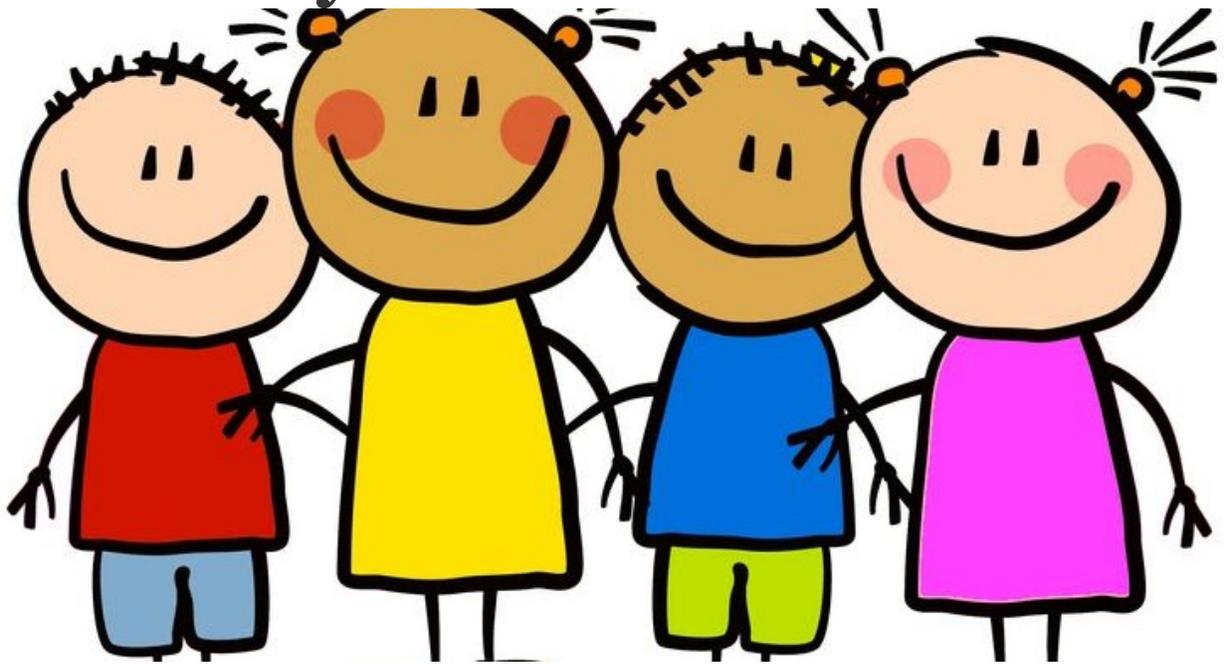




MENTAL HEALTH INCLUDES OUR EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING. IT AFFECTS HOW WE THINK, FEEL, AND ACT.

FIVE MOST IMPORTANT STEPS TO KEEP OURSELVES MENTALLY FIT ARE:

1. Value yourself:



Treat yourself with kindness and respect, and avoid self-criticism. Make time for your hobbies and favorite projects, or broaden your horizons. Do a daily crossword puzzle, plant a garden, take dance lessons, learn to play an instrument or become fluent in another language.

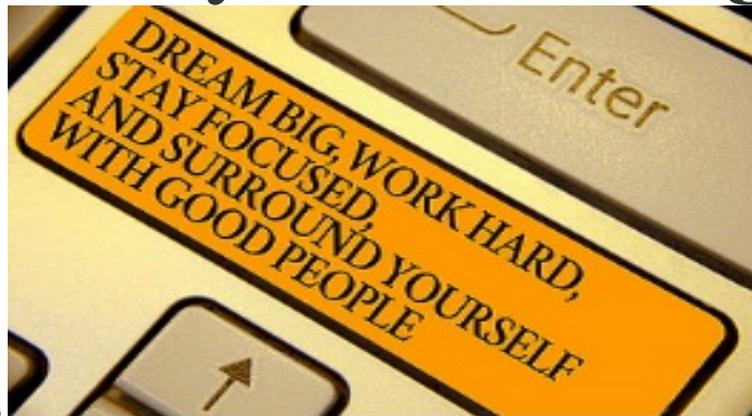
2. Take care of your body:



Taking care of yourself physically can improve your mental health. Be sure to:

- . Eat nutritious meals
- . Drink plenty of water
- . **Exercise**, which helps decrease depression and anxiety and improve moods
- . Get enough **sleep**. Researchers believe that lack of sleep contributes to a high rate of depression in students.

3. Surround yourself with good



people:

People with strong family or social connections are generally healthier than those who lack a support network. Make plans with supportive family members and friends, or seek out activities where you can meet new people, such as a club, class or support group.

4. Give yourself:

Volunteer your time and energy to help someone else. You'll feel good about doing something tangible to

help someone in need — and it's a great way to meet new people.

5. Learn how to deal with stress:



Like it or not, stress is a part of life. Practice good coping skills: Try [One-Minute Stress Strategies](#), do Tai Chi, exercise, take a nature walk, play with your pet or try journal writing as a stress reducer. Also, remember to smile and see the humor in life. Research shows that laughter can boost your immune system, ease

pain, relax your body and reduce stress.