



**ESSEX COUNTY OFFICE OF
PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGEMENT**
IN COLLABORATION WITH BLOOMFIELD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HEALTHY MONDAY'S TOOL KIT: MARCH 2025



900 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, NJ 07044

NATIONAL EATING DISORDER AWARENESS WEEK

FEBRUARY 24TH 2025 - MARCH 2ND 2025

National Eating Disorder Awareness Week (NEDAW) serves as an opportunity to raise awareness, promote understanding, and break the stigma surrounding eating disorders. This week reminds us that eating disorders do not discriminate—they affect people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds.

Eating disorders can include behaviors like restrictive eating, binge eating, or purging, often driven by deep emotional struggles. It's important to recognize the signs and understand that eating disorders are not just about food—they are complex mental health conditions that require compassion and support.

During NEDAW, we encourage everyone to:

- Learn about the different types of eating disorders and their warning signs.
- Support those who may be struggling by offering a non-judgmental, open space for conversation.
- Seek help if you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of an eating disorder. Professional treatment is essential for recovery.

Together, we can work toward creating a supportive environment where individuals feel empowered to seek help and heal from eating disorders.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Healthy Monday's?	3
<u>Lesson 1: The Process of Understanding Emotions</u>	4
Discovering Your Emotions Flyer for Ages 5-12	6
Understanding Emotions Flyer for Ages 12 and up	7
<u>Lesson 2: Learning How to Show Your Emotions</u>	8
Feelings Are Super, Learn How To Show Yours Flyer for Ages 5-12	9
Speak Up, Speak Out! Flyer for Ages 12 and up	10
<u>Lesson 3: Letting Your Emotions Out in Healthy Ways</u>	11
Express Yourself Flyer for Ages 5-12	12
Healthy Ways to Share How You Feel Flyer for Ages 12 and up	13
<u>Lesson 4: Mastering Emotional Strength</u>	14
Becoming Emotionally Resilient Flyer for Ages 5-12 up	15
Mastering Emotional Strength Flyer for Ages 12 and up	16
PSA about Mental Health	17



WHAT IS THE HEALTHY MONDAY CAMPAIGN?



Even though we are encouraged to stay healthy every day. The healthy Monday campaign is Healthy Monday, a public health initiative that encourages individuals and organizations to commit to healthy behaviors every Monday to help prevent chronic diseases.

From the Essex County, Healthy Monday will focus on children and their parent and providing them with a toolkit every Monday that will focus on a different topics per month that are pertinent to children from K-12.

Welcome to the Essex County Healthy Monday Campaign for the month of March with Mental Health being the main topic.

LESSON 01: THE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS

Understanding emotions is a critical aspect of children's development, particularly from kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12). This process not only contributes to emotional well-being but also plays a significant role in enhancing academic success, improving social relationships, and promoting overall mental health. In this age range, children experience a broad spectrum of emotional changes, and learning to understand and regulate their emotions is vital for their personal growth and success in life.

1. Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Emotional understanding directly correlates with academic performance. Children who can recognize and manage their emotions tend to focus better in class, make thoughtful decisions, and approach challenges with a positive mindset. For instance, a student who can identify feelings of frustration during a difficult math problem is more likely to persist in solving it, rather than becoming discouraged. By understanding their emotions, children are able to shift their focus away from emotional turmoil and redirect their energy towards learning. In the classroom setting, emotional awareness also allows children to develop better communication skills. When students can articulate their emotions clearly, they are more equipped to express their needs and seek help when necessary. This not only fosters a healthier classroom environment but also strengthens relationships with teachers and peers. Consequently, children with better emotional regulation often experience fewer disruptions and higher engagement in school activities.

2. Social and Interpersonal Skills

The ability to understand emotions is also essential for social development. From K-12, children form friendships, experience peer pressure, and navigate complex social dynamics. Children who have a strong grasp of their emotions are more likely to develop empathy, a critical social skill. Empathy enables students to understand the emotions of others, promoting compassionate behavior and reducing instances of bullying, aggression, and social isolation. For example, a child who can recognize when a peer is feeling sad or left out is more likely to offer comfort or support. This ability to respond appropriately to others' emotions creates positive social interactions, builds strong friendships, and nurtures a sense of community in the classroom. Furthermore, children who understand their own emotions can better navigate conflicts, manage disagreements, and practice effective problem-solving strategies.

LESSON 01: THE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS

3. Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being

One of the most significant benefits of understanding emotions is its role in supporting mental health. Adolescence, which spans much of the K-12 years, is a time of heightened emotional intensity. Without adequate emotional regulation, children may struggle with anxiety, depression, or anger management. Being able to identify and label emotions gives children the tools to deal with difficult feelings before they escalate into more significant mental health challenges.

Additionally, children who understand their emotions are more likely to engage in healthy coping strategies. Instead of resorting to unhealthy behaviors like lashing out, avoiding challenges, or suppressing their feelings, emotionally aware children are equipped with skills like self-reflection, mindfulness, and seeking support. These practices can help them build resilience, better handle stress, and maintain a positive outlook on life.

4. Self-Concept and Identity Formation

As children grow, they begin to develop a sense of self and their place in the world. A strong understanding of their emotions is a key part of this process. When children recognize and validate their feelings, they are more likely to have a secure sense of self-worth and confidence. They understand that their emotions are valid and that it is okay to experience a wide range of feelings.

This emotional awareness plays an important role in identity formation, particularly during the teenage years. Adolescents are exploring who they are and what they value. By understanding their emotional responses, they can better align their actions with their true selves, leading to healthier self-esteem and a stronger sense of identity. This process is essential as they prepare to transition into adulthood and face more complex life decisions.

5. Long-Term Benefits

The benefits of emotional understanding are not limited to childhood. The skills and awareness gained during K-12 years shape individuals into emotionally intelligent adults, who are capable of managing personal and professional challenges with confidence and empathy. Emotional intelligence has been linked to greater success in the workplace, stronger personal relationships, and overall life satisfaction. By investing in emotional education from a young age, schools equip students with skills that last a lifetime, enhancing their ability to lead fulfilling, balanced lives.

In conclusion, understanding emotions is a cornerstone of children's development from kindergarten through high school. It impacts academic success, social relationships, mental health, and identity formation, all of which are crucial to navigating the challenges of growing up. By fostering emotional intelligence in children, we provide them with the tools they need to thrive both inside and outside the classroom. As they learn to understand and regulate their emotions, they build a foundation for a healthier, more connected future.



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DISCOVERING YOUR FEELINGS: UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS!



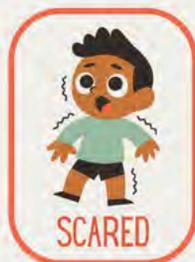
**Emotions are signals from our
body and mind!**



**GOAL : Learn to recognize and name
different emotions**



- Emotions are signals from our body and mind
- Identify basic emotions like happy, sad, angry, excited, etc.
- Practice using emotion words to express feelings.





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Understanding Emotions: How Do You Feel?

Identify Your Feelings

Taking a moment to recognize how you're feeling helps you understand your emotions better.



Talk to Someone You Trust

Sharing your feelings with a friend or family member can help you process emotions.



Take Deep Breaths

When emotions feel overwhelming, deep breathing helps calm your body and mind.



Write Down Your Thoughts

Journaling your emotions can help clear your mind and understand what's going on.



Take Time for Yourself

If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a break and do something that relaxes you.



LESSON 02: LEARNING HOW TO SHOW YOUR EMOTIONS

Learning how to show your emotions is an important skill that helps you connect with others and understand yourself better. Emotions are a natural part of being human, and expressing them can lead to healthier relationships and improved mental well-being. Whether you're feeling happy, sad, frustrated, or excited, it's important to find safe and respectful ways to communicate those feelings. This might involve talking with a friend, using art or music, or simply taking a moment to breathe and reflect before responding.

In school, you might sometimes feel overwhelmed by assignments, social situations, or expectations. When these feelings arise, it's helpful to identify them and express them in a calm and constructive way. For example, you might say, "I'm feeling stressed because I have a lot of homework," rather than holding it all in. Talking to someone you trust, like a teacher or counselor, can also help you gain perspective and find ways to manage your emotions effectively.

As you grow older, learning to show your emotions becomes an even more valuable tool in managing relationships with family, friends, and future colleagues. It's about being honest with yourself and others while also respecting boundaries. Whether it's joy, anger, sadness, or excitement, expressing emotions helps build understanding and connection, making it easier to navigate the challenges of life.



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FEELINGS ARE SUPER: LEARN HOW TO SHOW YOURS!



Feelings are a part of who we are! Everyone has different feelings like happy, sad, mad, or excited. They are SUPER powerful because they help us understand what's happening inside!



Why Are Feelings Super?
Feelings tell us what we need. If you're happy, it might mean you're having fun! If you're mad, it could mean someone crossed a boundary. Learning about feelings helps us understand ourselves and others better.



How to Express Your Feelings Like a Superhero:

- Use Words – "I feel happy because I got to play with my friend."
- Use Your Face – Smiling shows happiness, while a frown shows you're feeling upset.
- Use Your Body – Crossed arms might show you're mad, and jumping around shows you're excited!





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SPEAK UP, *Speak Out!*

What Does It Mean to Navigate Your Emotions?

Everyone experiences a wide range of emotions, from excitement to frustration to confusion. But how do we understand, express, and manage those emotions in a healthy way? It starts with speaking up and speaking out—expressing what you're feeling and why it matters.



Why Should You Speak Up About Your Emotions?

- **It Helps You Understand Yourself:** By identifying and talking about your emotions, you get to know yourself better.
- **It Builds Healthy Relationships:** Open communication with others makes you more connected and empathetic.
- **It Strengthens Mental Health:** Acknowledging your emotions can reduce stress and anxiety, leading to better mental well-being.



How Can You Speak Up with Confidence?

1. **Be Honest with Yourself** - Know what you're really feeling. Is it anger, sadness, frustration, or something else?
2. **Use "I" Statements** - Instead of blaming others, focus on how you feel. ("I feel upset when...")
3. **Practice Active Listening** - When expressing yourself, listen to others and give them the space to do the same.
4. **Find Healthy Outlets** - Writing, art, sports, or talking with trusted friends can help you navigate your emotions.



When Emotions Feel Overwhelming, Try These Strategies:

- **Take a Break:** Step away from the situation, breathe deeply, and let your emotions settle.
- **Talk It Through:** Whether with a friend, family member, or counselor, talking helps you understand your feelings better.
- **Get Active:** Physical activity can help release built-up emotions and improve your mood.
- **Journal or Reflect:** Write down your thoughts to gain clarity and perspective.

LESSON 03: LETTING YOUR EMOTIONS OUT IN HEALTHY WAYS

Letting your emotions out in a healthy way is key to feeling good about yourself and having strong relationships with others. It's okay to feel a range of emotions like happiness, sadness, frustration, or excitement. The important thing is to express them in ways that don't hurt you or those around you. Healthy emotional expression might include talking to someone you trust, journaling your feelings, or engaging in activities like sports, art, or music to release what you're feeling.

When you're feeling upset or overwhelmed, it's natural to want to hold it all in, but bottling up emotions can lead to stress and make things harder over time. It's helpful to take a moment to pause, breathe, and recognize what you're feeling. Once you know how you feel, try to find a positive outlet for those emotions. For example, if you're angry, instead of lashing out, you could try taking a walk or doing a breathing exercise to calm down. If you're sad, sometimes sharing your feelings with a friend can be comforting and helpful.

As you grow, learning to express your emotions in a healthy way becomes even more important. It helps you manage difficult situations and make better decisions. Being honest with yourself about your feelings and finding appropriate ways to show them can strengthen your emotional health. By practicing healthy emotional expression, you'll be able to handle tough situations with confidence and create a supportive environment for yourself and others.



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EXPRESS YOURSELF!

Happy

talk to a friend or two!



Anger

take a deep breath!



Sadness

Draw your feelings!



Excitement

take a break and play!



remember, it's okay to feel, and it's okay to share your feelings!



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Expressing Your Feelings: Healthy Ways to Share What You Feel

Create a Support System of People You Trust

Surround yourself with friends or family who are there to listen and support you.



Get Active—Engage in Physical Activity

Moving your body through sports, running, or dancing can help release pent-up emotions.



Write a Letter (Even if You Don't Send It)

Writing can be a great way to release your feelings. Whether or not you send it, get your thoughts out on paper.



LESSON 04: MASTERING EMOTIONAL STRENGTH

Mastering emotional strength is about learning how to handle your feelings in a positive way, especially during difficult situations. It means staying calm and composed even when you're upset, frustrated, or stressed. Emotional strength doesn't mean ignoring your emotions; it means acknowledging them, understanding why you're feeling the way you do, and choosing how to react in a healthy manner. This skill is important because life will always present challenges, and how you handle your emotions can determine how well you overcome them.

One way to build emotional strength is by practicing self-control. When something makes you angry or anxious, try to take a step back before reacting. Count to ten, take deep breaths, or walk away to cool down. This pause gives you a chance to think clearly and choose how to respond, rather than acting impulsively. Learning how to manage your reactions helps you feel more in control and reduces the impact of strong emotions on your actions.

Another key part of emotional strength is resilience—the ability to bounce back after setbacks. Life isn't always easy, and there will be times when things don't go your way. However, when you're emotionally strong, you can face challenges with a positive mindset. Instead of giving up, you learn from the experience, adapt, and keep moving forward. This mindset helps you grow stronger and more confident each time you face adversity.

Lastly, building emotional strength requires support from others. It's okay to ask for help or talk about your feelings when you need to. Surrounding yourself with supportive friends, family, and mentors can provide encouragement and guidance. By practicing emotional strength, you can become more self-aware, confident, and capable of handling anything life throws your way.



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Building Strength Becoming Emotionally Resilient

Tip #1

Keep trying, even when things are tough!



Tip #2

You are strong and capable!



Tip #3

Talk to someone you trust.



Tip #4

Take care of your body and mind





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Building Your Mind Mastering Emotional Strength

Tip #1 : Recognize Your Emotions

Identifying how you feel is the first step to handling your emotions.



Tip #2 : Break Down Challenges into Manageable Steps

When life feels overwhelming, tackle it one step at a time.



Tip #3 : Make Time for Your Mental Health

Self-care isn't selfish—taking care of yourself is necessary for growth.



Tip #4 : Find Strength in Your Support Network

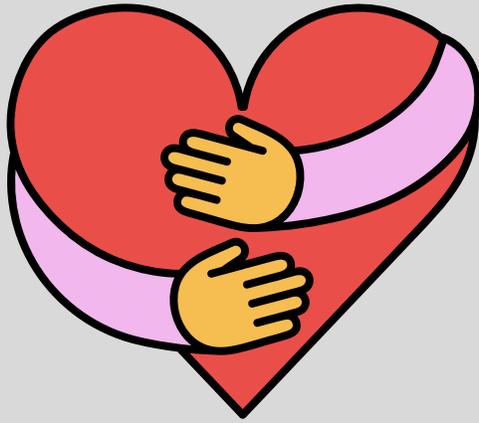
Don't be afraid to ask for help—talking things through can make a big difference.



Tip 5: Learn from Setbacks and Keep Pushing Forward

Mistakes happen, but they're opportunities to learn and grow stronger.





It's okay not to be okay.

Mental health is just as important as physical health, but sometimes, we don't feel like ourselves. If you're struggling, you are not alone. Mental health challenges affect everyone—no matter your age, background, or experience.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or down, it's important to talk about it. Reach out to someone you trust, whether it's a friend, family member, or professional. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

You deserve support, understanding, and the opportunity to feel better.

Don't wait. Take that first step toward healing today.

Remember, it's okay to not have everything figured out right now. There is always hope, and there's always help.