

May is Mental Health
Awareness Month
For Your Wellbeing



Shabbos Table Talks | Week One: Healthy Living for Families

Introduction

Welcome to **Shabbos Table Talks - Mental Health Edition!** Let's focus on some of the ideas that create the foundation for your family's mental health. Get ready for an interactive discussion with your family! We've set up a step-by-step guide to make it easy to talk to your family about mental health. Stay tuned each week throughout May for another Shabbos Table Talks to help build this healthy foundation.

Activity

Step 1 - Let's Collect Some Points!

- At the Shabbos table, ask your family "What does it mean to live a 'healthy' life?" Each person should give one idea before going around the second time.
- Award 1 point to each family member who answers with one of the following answers (or similar): getting enough sleep, eating right, exercising. Award 2 points if someone mentions mental health!

If your family has three or more points, you're already rooted in emotional health and awareness. A family with less than three points can be tested again after this discussion is over!

Step 2 - Let's Learn a Fundamental Idea!

- **Idea:** We as human beings have 3 overlapping parts: physical, emotional, and spiritual. This week, we will focus on our emotional needs. To be emotionally healthy, you have to have some important life skills, social skills and emotional learning skills. These skills and tools- just like food for our body - allow us to be healthy - both on our own and when interacting with other people. One critical skill is to learn to take a break and spend time in a healthy way. This skill helps to fill up our emotional "gas tank" by doing things that are healthy for us. When we do, it helps us manage stress, anger, fear, difficult relationships and more. This is a BIG part of being truly healthy.
- **Example:** Look around you. We are all sitting around the Shabbos table. This is something we do every week to help us unwind and take a much-needed break from the frantic pace of our week. Hashem has given us a true gift that allows us to fill up our emotional "gas tank" - no different than how food gives us the fuel we need to be productive.

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Step 3 - Let's Learn from Each Other

1. **(For children of all ages)** Can you share something that was emotionally difficult for you this past week? Maybe a fight with a friend, a disappointment in school, something stressful or nerve-wracking? How did you get through that challenge?
2. **(For middle school aged children)**
 1. How can you help a friend who seems to be struggling with his or her emotions? [If your child needs a hint, recommend: listening and being a good friend; telling your friend to get help]
 2. What can you do to make your week healthier? Is there anything that you might need to stop doing to make your week healthier?
3. **(For high school aged children)**
 1. Have you found emotional struggles to be harder or easier as you've gotten older? Can you share an example?
 2. Who would you talk to for help with something difficult? Maybe a parent, Rebbe, Morah, teacher, school guidance counselor, social worker or a trusted friend?
 3. As you transition into adulthood, what are some of the life skills you think you might need to change to be even healthier? What are some of the coping tools and skills that you've learned to help you navigate big challenges?

Conclusion

The discussions we are having now - together - around this table, are an example of a great way to both learn and practice these important emotional skills. This week, when you are at school and with your friends and with your siblings, look for ways to make your day better by doing something we discussed today. Next week we will continue our discussion. Prepare something to share next Shabbos!

"Shabbos Table Talks - Mental Health Edition" has been designed by the team of Our Path SEL, a fully developed, research based, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum designed specifically for the Orthodox Jewish Schools, in partnership with the OU (www.ou.org/mental-health). For more information, and to encourage your school to sign up, visit www.OurPathSEL.org. Our Path SEL is a project of Amudim (www.amudim.org).

