Helping Your Children Have Self-Love

One way to combat the stress and mental health struggles that have been brought on by the difficult past year is to practice self-love. Helping your children have self-love can decrease their risk of having mental health issues and make them better able to handle stress and other challenges.

Tips for Teaching Self-Love

- **Teach and model positive self-talk.** Positive self-talk can help your children feel better about themselves, especially during hard times. Encourage them to use language such as “I can do this,” and “Even though this is hard, I love myself and believe in myself.” Repetition of positive self-talk will help your children believe them. Let them hear your positive self-talk sometimes too.
- **Praise effort, progress, and attitude instead of results of specific qualities.** For example, “You’re working so hard on your school project” and “You’re getting better and better at playing the flute.” This shows them that they can love themselves no matter what instead of only if they have the best grades or if they are the best at a sport (or whatever they perceive they “need” to be to earn their own love). Give your praise sincerely and not in an over-the-top way.
- **Show unconditional love.** If you show your children you love them no matter what mistakes they may make, they learn that they can do likewise.
- **Show them that they matter.** Some ways to do this include being empathetic, listening when they talk, and letting them contribute by helping with chores and inputing their opinions on family matters. Your children will have an easier time loving themselves if they feel like they matter and are important.
- **Encourage them to practice self-care.** Your children will be better able to have self-love when they eat healthy food, get enough exercise, get enough sleep, etc.

*Note - The information in this newsletter is for general educational purposes only. It does not constitute and should not substitute for individual professional advice, psychotherapy, or the provision of psychological services. This newsletter is produced by Hope4Utah, a nonprofit organization providing trainings, resources, and supports to prevent, intervene, and respond to suicides and to improve mental health.