



We're  
Stronger  
Together

## Encouraging Positive Mindsets for Middle School Students

It's everyone's job to help support resilience, strength and emotional awareness in our students. To help reinforce these messages, your middle schooler has received special items sponsored by SD Behavioral Health, a division of the SD Department of Social Services.

Middle school is a formative time for students as they navigate relationships, peer pressure and changes going into their teenage years. These free items are designed to help promote a positive approach and strengthen students' sense of self.

### Students may bring home items like:

- Grading stickers and textured sensory stickers
- Bookmarks and magnets
- Lanyards and keychains
- Post-it pads and pencils
- Pop-it balls

## Tips for Talking about Mental Wellbeing

### Know Your Student

Check in early and often with your middle schooler. Encourage open conversations and ask them about what they're experiencing. Car rides can be good times to talk because they're private and controlled.

You can start the conversation with questions like these:

- "What were three good things that happened today?"
- "What happened today that was hard or tough?"
- "What helps you feel better when you're sad or mad?"
- "I'm here to listen if you ever want to talk."

**Need Help?** Call, text or chat 988 for you or your child. Local experts can provide support for mental health concerns, emotional distress or just to talk.

For more information, visit [SDBehavioralHealth.gov](https://SDBehavioralHealth.gov) or contact [dssbh@state.sd.us](mailto:dssbh@state.sd.us).

### Know The Signs

Mental health is part of overall wellness. As students navigate new relationships and phases of their growth, some emotional changes may happen. But if you see a prolonged change in behavior or these warning signs, it may mean your child needs help.

- Steady decline in school performance
- Changes in eating habits or weight loss
- Constant worry or anxiety
- Persistent sadness, outbursts, or extreme irritability
- Avoiding social interactions
- Frequent absences
- Talking about death, suicide, or self-harm
- Changes to a child's home life or support system