YOUR EVERYDAY GESTURES CAN HELP A CHILD HEAL.

Research continues to show that witnessing or experiencing traumatic events in childhood can impact the physical development of a child’s brain. You can help reverse the effects. In fact, as a caring adult, you could be the most important factor in helping children heal. Here’s what you can do:

**CELEBRATE**
Use “put-ups,” not “put-downs.”

**COMFORT**
Stay calm and patient.

**LISTEN**
Show an interest in their passions.

**COLLABORATE**
Ask for their opinions.

**INSPIRE**
Expose them to new ideas.

Find more information and helpful tips at ChangingMindsNOW.org

www.WashtenawSuccessBy6.org
CELEBRATE

• Engage them in conversation about successes and challenges, and praise the process, not just the final achievement.
• Engage them in activities they enjoy and that you can do together, like video games, art projects, shooting hoops, etc.
• Encourage them to explore cultural traditions and identify sources of cultural pride.
• Their ideas of who they are may be constantly changing as they grow. Be supportive of this by helping them build a sense of personal identity around their likes, dislikes, hopes and values.

COMFORT

• Be present and pay attention. Look for changes in behaviors and check in with them about what you’re noticing.
• Offer validating and reflecting statements to help them label their own emotions when in distress.
• Practice relaxation techniques when they are not under stress – like counting to ten, deep breathing, meditation, or positive self-talk. Repetition will make them more likely to utilize these techniques when they’re upset.
• Help teens identify their strategies to manage stress and control their impulses.
• Help them identify friends that make them feel happy and confident.

LISTEN

• Ask open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
• Be open. Show interest in what they’re saying.
• Reflect their emotions with your body language.
• Be alert for moments of honesty and vulnerability. Teens will, on occasion, break down and open up to you. Give them time to express themselves before offering advice or assistance.
• Restate, in your own words, what you heard them say (to make sure you heard it right).
• Pick a safe place to talk during an activity, while playing video games, or while driving in a car. Sometimes teens will be more encouraged to express themselves when you are not looking directly at each other.
• If a teen wants to talk about a difficult topic, supportive listening helps them express their thoughts and make sense of their experience. If a teen wants to share his or her story, allow them to share without interruptions.

COLLABORATE

• Engage them in the problem-solving process step by step, until you reach a solution.
• Help them to identify and understand what the obstacle is and how they are feeling. Encourage them to describe the problems they encounter in their own words.
• Once you identify the issue, encourage the teen to generate possible solutions and try them out. Help them think through the pros and cons of different ideas.
• Collaborate on when and how the teen can try out the solution, and help them consider what support they may need.
• Check in and reflect on how it went – provide support and encouragement if the solution didn’t work out. What did they learn in trying that particular solution? Sometimes we have the right solution, but need to practice it a few times. Collaborate on possible next steps they could take.
• When teens are struggling, be their sounding board and help them to reach their own conclusions.
• Encourage them to rely on you in times of struggle, and assist them in identifying other sources of support at home, at school, and in their community.
• Engage teens in conversations about how their peers and friends might be feeling during conflicts. Help them to label others’ emotions and to identify potential conflict resolution strategies.

INSPIRE

• Nurture voice and choice within a framework of risks and rewards.
• Encourage healthy risk-taking and trying new things.
• Encourage teens to participate in activities that allow them to practice skills and feel good about themselves.
• Engage them in short- and long-term goal setting – help them establish realistic, achievable goals. Anticipate success.
• Provide opportunities for increasingly challenging tasks.
• Explore their future goals by creating opportunities for them to meet or work with adults in areas that interest them.
• Ask teens who their role models are and why. Help teens focus on what qualities they admire. And serve as a positive role model yourself.