Basic tips to support your (students') mental health[1]

The press regularly reports on young people's mental health problems.[2] Here are some standard "tips" to help a little: more serious problems need specialised support.

1/ **Stay Connected**: Talk to friends, family, or classmates regularly. Social contact, even brief, helps reduce stress and prevents isolation. Try to maintain a wide range of relationships, and create a support network. Join student clubs, study groups, or volunteer organisations.

2/ **Move Daily**: Regular physical activity (a walk, stretching, or any sport) boosts mood and focus. This doesn't have to be long: 10 minutes helps; 30 minutes is better. Exposure to sunlight is important.

3/ **Eat as well as possible**: Try to eat healthy food as much as possible: i.e. avoid too much sugar, fat, salt and too many processed foods. Try to eat fresh fruit and vegetables and have a varied diet. Stay hydrated.

4/ **Rest and Recharge**: Getting enough sleep and taking breaks between study sessions improves both mood and performance. Develop a regular bedtime routine. Nurture creative activities (drawing, writing, playing music, cooking, etc.) to release stress.

5/ **Try to establish healthy routines generally**: Have a manageable daily schedule. Set limits on screen time, especially in bed.

6/ **Practice mindfulness**: Taking time for mindfulness, meditation, or simply noticing the present moment helps manage stress and refocus attention. Simple breathing exercises or guided imagery can be incorporated into daily routines. Try apps like Petit Bambou (French-based) or Christophe André's YouTube 3-minute meditations. Take short breaks during study sessions (e.g., the Pomodoro technique: 25 minutes of work, 5 minutes of rest). Learn to recognise signs of burnout and take action early.

7/ **Practice Self-Kindness**: Be gentle with yourself when things go wrong. Reframing self-criticism ("I messed up" → "I can learn from this") builds resilience. Set realistic goals for yourself. Break tasks into smaller, manageable steps. Use planners or digital tools to organise your time. Learn to say "no" to additional commitments when your plate is full. Celebrate small achievements—progress is more important than perfection.

8/ **Ask for Help Early**: Seeking support from others is a strength, not a weakness. Reach out to teachers, counsellors, friends, other adults, your doctor, or you're the student health service. You can also contact **Nightline France**. Problems are easier to handle when shared.

Match the following words and definitions

1/ reframing	a/ State of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress
2/ resilience	b/ State of having enough water in your body for optimal function
3/ mindfulness	c/ The process of changing how you think about a situation to improve your perspective
4/ burnout	d/ Responsibilities or promises that require time and effort to fulfil
5/ Pomodoro	e/ Imagery or meditation led by a voice or instructions to help relaxation
6/ guided	f/ Ability to recover quickly from difficulties or setbacks
7/ isolation	g/ Person who offers time or skills for a cause without expecting payment
8/ hydrated	h/ Practice of focusing on the present moment without judgment
9/ commitments	i/ Time management technique involving short bursts of work and rest
10/ volunteer	j/ Feeling of being separated from others, often leading to loneliness

Answers: 1c; 2f; 3h; 4a; 5i; 6e; 7j; 8b; 9d; 10g

[1] The following is a "mashup" of AI queries with ChatGPT, Perplexity Pro and Le Chat (Mistral), 13 October 2025, about how to support students' mental health (plus a lot of personal experience).

[2] For example, Mattea Battaglia, « Santé mentale : un tiers des jeunes présentent des signes de troubles anxieux ou dépressifs », *Le Monde*, 10 octobre 2025.