

GUIDE: Identity & Self-Love

Embracing Culture and Community as a Form of Self-Love

When young people are connected to their community, culture, and opportunities for collective action, they gain a strong sense of identity and belonging. These protective factors can serve as buffers against stress, isolation, and self-doubt.



Engaging in cultural practices and traditions fosters pride, resilience, and continuity, especially in the face of discrimination or marginalization. Community involvement and civic engagement provide young people with a sense of purpose, connection, and the belief that they can make a difference.

For young people, these experiences reinforce that they are not alone. They gain perspective to see that their challenges as well as their voice, values, and contributions matter. Together, culture, community, and collective action create a foundation of emotional support, identity, strength, and empowerment that protects mental health and promotes long-term well-being.

Four ways to embrace your culture and community

1. Explore culture

Support your young person to learn about their heritage through books, food, music, language, traditions, and community events. Use cultural traditions and practices as part of self-care routines and mental health habits.

What it looks like

- Cook traditional meals with family or attend cultural food festivals.
- Learn about ancestry, oral histories, or cultural heroes.
- Practice their language or dialect.
- Participate in celebrations, rituals, or community gatherings rooted in your heritage.
- Create art, playlists, or journals inspired by your cultural background.

Embracing Culture and Community as a Form of Self-Love



2. Get involved

Encourage your young person to join clubs, volunteer, or try leadership roles in spaces that reflect your interests and values. You can also do these activities together.

What it looks like

- Join a school or community group related to your identity.
- Volunteer with organizations that serve their community or reflect your values.
- Take on leadership roles in local cultural or youth organizations.
- Attend rallies, town halls, or neighborhood clean-up events.

3. Build a support circle

Help your young person connect with mentors, elders, or community leaders who affirm and understand your background.

What it looks like

- Connect with elders or relatives who share family stories or guidance.
- Reach out to trusted teachers, counselors, or coaches who support the growth of young people.
- Join mentoring programs or affinity groups that reflect your experiences.
- Create a group chat or regular check-in circle with friends who share values.



4. Speak up for change

Strengthen your young person's skills to advocate for inclusive changes at school, work, or in their community.

What it looks like

- Advocate for an inclusive curriculum or cultural representation at school.
- Participate in campaigns for mental health access or anti-bullying.
- Create social media content, or speak with peers, campus administration, and community leaders about issues that matter to them.
- Use their story to educate others and influence decision makers.

Learn More: [Identity & Self-Love Mini Workbook](#)

Cultivate self-worth and cultural pride as you empower young people. This workbook is part of **Built to Thrive**, an interactive workbook created by The Steve Fund.

[Explore Built to Thrive now!](#)

Visit [SteveFund.org/Family-Corner](https://www.stevelfund.org/family-corner) for resources and events designed to support you and your family.