



Dear York Prep Families,

As we move through a busy part of the school year, many students, families, and educators are feeling the weight of full schedules, high expectations, and constant stimulation. Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or “burned out” does not mean something is always wrong; it means we are human.

One powerful and often overlooked way to support mental well-being is to **be creative**, one of our four **York Prep Learning Framework** skills.



Creativity as Mindfulness

Mindfulness doesn't always mean sitting still or meditating quietly. In fact, research on mindfulness-based interventions highlights that many people reach a mindful state through active, hands-on experiences.

When students are deeply engaged in creative activities, they often experience:

- A natural slowing of breathing and heart rate
- Improved attention and present-moment awareness
- A decrease in rumination and overthinking
- A sense of autonomy and emotional safety

This state of full engagement has been linked to increased well-being and decreased stress.

Simple Ways Families Can Encourage Creative Calm at Home

Research on child development emphasizes the value of unstructured, low-pressure creative time. Families can support this by:

- Setting aside short periods of screen-free, open-ended time
- Providing accessible materials (paper, markers, clay, journals, recycled materials)
- Encouraging process-focused creativity ("Tell me about what you made" rather than "That's perfect!")
- Modeling creativity as adults. Children can benefit from seeing caregivers use art, music, writing, or movement as coping tools

A Gentle Reminder

Burnout in children and teens often shows up as irritability, low motivation, withdrawal, fatigue, or physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches, etc.). Protective factors include strong relationships, emotional expression, and opportunities for autonomy, all of which are supported through creative outlets.

Creativity is not a cure-all, but it is a meaningful, accessible way to build resilience and support nervous system regulation.

If your child is feeling overwhelmed or you have concerns about stress, anxiety, or burnout, please don't hesitate to reach out to York Prep's Wellness Team. We are here to help.

Warmly,
The York Prep Wellness Team

