

Soundbite script – Read a book, improve your health

Ashley Pratt, psychotherapist, OSF HealthCare

"It's one of the best things we can do for our mental health and our physical health," says Ashley Pratt, a psychotherapist for OSF HealthCare. "It's been shown to greatly reduce our stress levels, lower our blood pressure, improve our memory and cognition, and it improves our sleep quality." (:13)

Ashley Pratt, psychotherapist, OSF HealthCare

"Starting those skills and cultivating that love of reading and stories can be a great tool as they get older. Especially in childhood and adolescence, having this skill can be a nice way for kids to find a place where they maybe can understand someone else's perspective or cope with maybe similar things that they're having to go through in life, like bullying and substance use." (:25)

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"It allows us time to be away from the things that are causing us stress, the things we ruminate on, or things that cause us to be stuck in a depressive or anxious mind and the ability to go somewhere else for a while in a healthy way. And then we can come back." (:16)

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"It allows us to have social connections, because we can go to our libraries, bookstores, we can have book clubs, online forums. I think it's an awesome place to have connections and social situations that we may not have had before books and reading." (:15)

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"I would suggest starting with something they're really interested in and doing small increments, or maybe even incorporating it throughout their daily routine. Maybe it's an audiobook while they're doing chores or driving or whatever they can fit in in a day. But ultimately, trying to find something that they're interested in, and want to hear and be present for." (:25)