



The Bright Organization

Young Person Toolkit

Resources and Tools

Crisis Contacts

If you are in a mental health emergency we recommend that you
call 911 immediately!

- 800-273-8255 – Suicide Hotline
- 877-565-8860 – Trans Lifeline
- 866-488-7386 – Trevor Lifeline (ages 13-24)
- 888-843-4564 – LGBTQ+ National Hotline
- 888-234-7243 – SAGE Hotline for LGBTQ+ Elders
- (50+)800-300-1080 – Relationship Abuse & Domestic Violence
- 888-220-7575 – Parent Support Line
- 800-367-2437 – HIV/AIDS Hotline* (English & Spanish)
- 415-200-2920 – HIV/AIDS Textline
- 800-931-2237 – Eating Disorder Helpline
- 800-366-8388 – Self Harm Hotline
- 800-656-4673 – Rape and Sexual Assault Hotline
- 800-273-8255 – Veterans Crisis Line
- 800-786-2929 – Runaway Safeline
- Text “START” to 741741 – Crisis Text Line (free & confidential)



Coping Skills

There are ways to maintain your mental health, all around you. Remember that you do not have to be in crisis to work on your mental wellness, it is something you need to work on continuously. We encourage you to evaluate your own biases and become aware of the stigma surrounding mental health and wellness in today's society. We recognize that many forms of self-care are expensive and inaccessible to many, so we have developed a list of activities that are more widely available. Self-care/mental wellness activities include:

- Practicing mindfulness:
 - Mindfulness - being conscious/aware of yourself and your surroundings, acknowledging this, and finding peace
 - Mindfulness looks different for every person, some ideas include yoga, mindful stretching, meditation, etc.
- Journaling, and free-writing:
 - This does not need to be structured (you can use a piece of scrap paper). Writing down your experiences and emotions helps one identify and process those thought processes.
- Breathing exercises and muscle tension release:
 - Deep breathing, in through your nose and out through your mouth, pausing in between is grounding. Headaches and pain can occur from unintentional muscle tension. There are physical manifestations of stress and emotion, and consciously relaxing your muscles can help.
- Exercise:
 - Working out either inside or outside releases endorphins that help relieve stress. You do not need to do high-intensity training, even a short walk can help clear your head.
- Hygiene:
 - When the human body is under stress, the way that the brain prioritizes tasks is impacted. General hygiene, including but not limited to showering/bathing, brushing teeth, changing clothes, washing face, cleaning living space, and caring for hair.



How to Help a Friend

Signs of declining mental health and potential crisis can be difficult and scary to handle. This is a reminder that if there is an immediate crisis, please call emergency services. Otherwise, it is important to check in on your peers and help if you can.

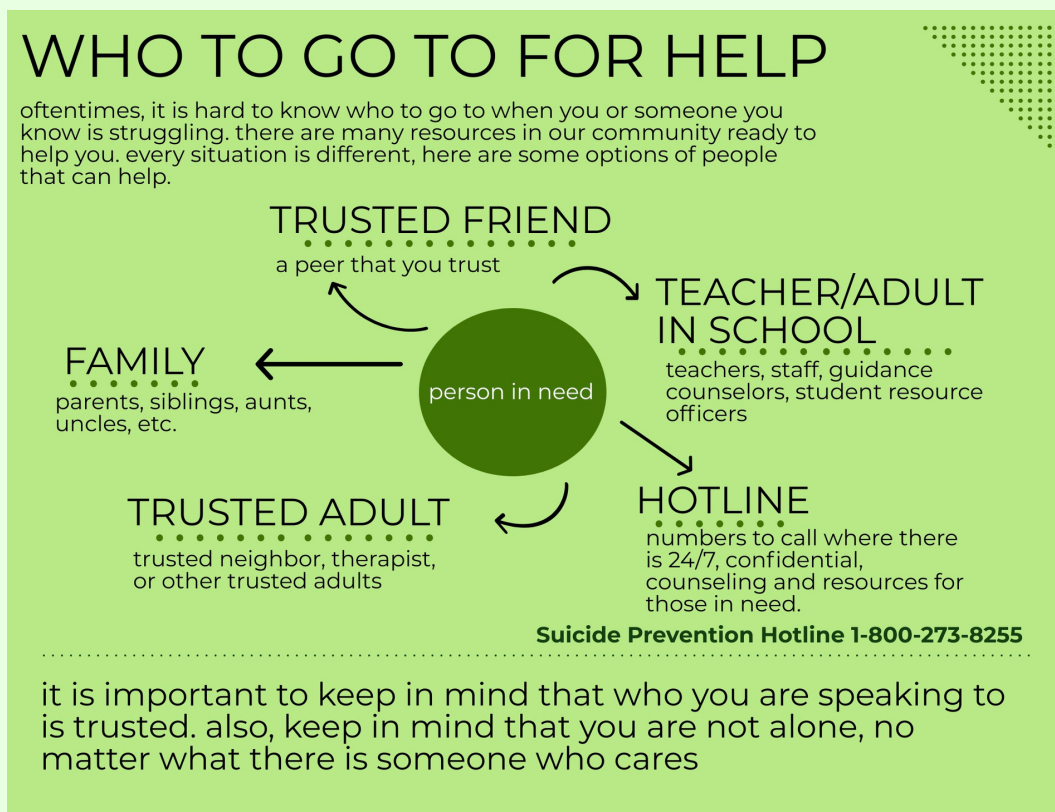
Here are some warning signs for deteriorating mental health:

- Frequent and unprecedented changes in behavior (mood swings)
- Isolation (ignoring calls/texts, not wanting to spend time with friends/family)
- Calling themselves “a burden”
- Extreme lack of sleep or oversleeping
- Dietary changes and habits (loss of appetite/binging)

These are general signs and things to look out for with your peers and yourself. There are more specific symptoms exhibited with specific illnesses.

If reporting a friend:

- Keep their privacy in mind (don't share on social media/tell those not involved)
- Ask the right questions to the professionals (now that I have told you this what should I do? How can I continue to help my friend?)
- Your friend might initially lash out at you.



Resources

Information is super important as you enter this new journey. Understanding mental health beyond the stigma is something everyone should do.

Books:

- The Teenage Brain
 - Renowned neurologist Dr. Frances E. Jensen offers a revolutionary look at the brains of teenagers, dispelling myths and offering practical advice for parents and teens.
- Understanding Teenage Depression
 - This book provides the latest scientific findings on this serious condition, and the most up to date information on its treatment. The book includes numerous vignettes drawn from Dr. Empfield's clinical practice as well as first person accounts from teenagers who have themselves suffered from depression.
- Permission to Feel
 - Marc Brackett is a professor in Yale University's Child Study Center and founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. His prescription for healthy children is a system called RULER, a high-impact and fast-effect approach to understanding and mastering emotions that has already transformed the thousands of schools that have adopted it. RULER has been proven to reduce stress, depression, and burnout and enhance to encourage higher academic achievement.

Apps:

- Woebot
 - Free app
 - Meet Woebot! Your friendly self-care expert. Woebot can help you:
 - Think through situations with step-by-step guidance from Woebot using tools from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
 - Learn about yourself with intelligent mood tracking
 - Master skills to reduce stress and live happier through over 100+ evidence-based stories from our clinical team
- Stoic
 - Free daily journal, asks you questions about your day/how you are feeling, will help you analyze them Includes guided breathing exercises, meditation, stories, quotes, etc
 - You can review trends in your behaviors



Frequently Asked Questions

There are so many questions that come along with this experience and while these might not be all of them we hope that we can get some of the basic and frequently asked questions out of the way.

Q: What Are The Different Types Of Mental Health Professionals?

A: There are many types of mental health professionals. Some of the more basic ones are:

- Therapists a licensed mental health professional who helps clients improve their lives, develop better cognitive and emotional skills, reduce symptoms of mental illness and cope with various challenges.
- Psychologists a person who specializes in the study of mind and behavior or in the treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders
- Psychiatrists a medical doctor (an M.D. or D.O.) who specializes in mental health, including substance use disorders.

Q: What Causes Mental Illness?

A: Although the exact source of mental illness is not known, research points to a mix of genetic, biological, psychosocial, and environmental factors

Q: What Are Some of the Warning Signs of Mental Illness?

A: Everyone will experience different symptoms based on their specific issues but there are some very broad signs that you can be on the lookout for. In teens and young adults mental illness can look like:

- Confused thinking
- Long-lasting sadness or irritability
- Extreme highs and lows in mood
- Excessive fear, worrying, or anxiety
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Strong feelings of anger
- Delusions or hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not really there)
- Increasing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Thoughts of suicide
- Denial of obvious problems
- Many unexplained physical problems Abuse of drugs and/or alcohol



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Q: What are some of the most common types of mental illnesses or disorders?

A: There are so many different types of mental illnesses and disorders and again they can affect people differently but some of the most common ones are:

- Anxiety and panic disorders
 - Anxiety is an emotion that we all experience but it becomes an issue/disorder when it is a constant and consistent experience
- Depression
 - Depression is more than just feeling sad, it comes along with loss of interest in things this person once found enjoyable, and feelings of hopelessness
- Eating disorders
 - An eating disorder is a diagnosis given to someone who has unhealthy thoughts, feelings and behavior about food and their body shape
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - This is a diagnosis given to people who develop a certain set of symptoms following a traumatic event. Symptoms can include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, and uncontrollable thoughts about the event.
- Bipolar disordersThis is when someone experiences extreme mood swings with clear periods of depression and mania.
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
 - This is when someone has recurring thoughts and behaviors that they feel the need to carry out, they can be very intrusive and uncomfortable thoughts

