

Teenager and Young Adult Mental Health Awareness

Objectives

1. Describe mental health versus mental illness.
2. Discuss common challenges with teens and young adults.
3. List ways parents and loved ones can help.

What is Mental Health?

- Is a state of emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.
- Affects how we think, feel, and act, and it plays a role in every stage of life, especially adolescence.
- Reflects our ability to:
 - Cope
 - Learn
 - Work
 - Relate

What is Mental Illness?

- Refers to specific *diagnosable* conditions that significantly disrupt functioning and require professional intervention.
 - *Diagnosis requires:*
 - A trained and licensed mental health professional
 - That symptoms meet specific criteria based on a threshold of age, duration and severity
 - That symptoms are affecting the individual's ability to function in life and key relationships
- Is a broad term encompassing mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders.
- Is not a personal failure.
- Can be effectively managed with treatment.

Social and Emotional Hurdles

The complexities of growing up:

- Identity formation
- Peer pressure
- Academic stress
- Romantic relationships

Unique emotional landscape of teens and young adults:

- Heightened sensitivity
- Mood swings
- Self-consciousness

Recognizing the Warning Signs

- Academic difficulties
- Substance use
- Excessive worry or fear
- Extreme mood swings
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in personality
- Social withdrawal
- Anhedonia (apathy, loss of interest)
- Self-harm
- Suicidal thoughts or behaviors

*These are general signs, and **not every child who exhibits some of them will have a mental illness.***

Creating a Safe Space

- Emphasize the importance of open and honest communication about mental health and wellbeing.
- Highlight the importance of establishing trust and creating a safe space for vulnerable conversations.
- Parents are encouraged to:
 - Actively listen without judgment
 - Validate their children's emotions
 - Avoid lecturing
 - Avoid minimizing their concerns
 - Offer support and encouragement

Know When to Seek Help

- If you notice warning signs or are concerned about your child's wellbeing, take it seriously and seek professional help if needed.
- Early intervention and professional guidance are valuable in managing mental health challenges.
 - Talk to your child's doctor about your concerns.
- Seek support for yourself as well.
 - Taking care of your own mental health is essential, as it allows you to better care for your child.

Additional Resources and Support

- The National Parent Helpline: 1-855-4A PARENT (1-855-427-2736)
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or nami.org
- The Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 or 1-800-273-8255
- The Jed Foundation: jedfoundation.org
- The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386 or thetrevorproject.org
- Child Mind Institute: childmind.org
- Your Program

Your Program

Call toll-free or visit us on the web

24 hours a day/7 days a week

Thank you!

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