Tips for Teen Mental Health

Things to Look Out For: Could it be Mental Illness?

Have you ever seen any of these warning signs in a friend or yourself? If you have, talk to a adult you trust about what's going on!

● Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks ● Sleeping too much or too little ● Not enjoying activities that you used to love ● Having a hard time concentrating or making decisions ● Always feeling guilty or angry with yourself, feeling like you can't do anything right	● Feeling scared or nervous for no reason ● Withdrawing from friends and family ● Always feeling very lonely, even when you know you are not ● Severe risk-taking behaviors ● Your friend is skipping meals or hiding food to look like he or she ate ● Thinking about hurting or killing oneself or making plans to do so.

Who can I talk to if I think I might have a mental illness?

● Teacher ● School nurse ● Faith leader ● Youth Group leader ● Coach ● School Counselor ● Doctor	● Parent ● Aunt or uncle ● Friend ● Theatre director ● Mentor ● Tutor ● Or Others!

Anyone you feel comfortable talking to that is going to listen!

How do I talk to a school counselor?

Every school is different, so there are different ways to set up an appointment in each school. Here are some ideas for how to set up your first visit with your counselor:

- Stop by the counseling office before or after school. Say, "I want someone to talk to. Can we schedule a time to meet?"
- Tell a teacher or your parents that you want to meet with a school counselor. They can talk to your counselor and get something set up!
- Find the counselor's email on the school website and send them an email saying you want to meet.
- Ask a friend that has talked to the counselor how they got an appointment. Have them come with you to get you set up.

- Tell your parents that you would like meet with a counselor

Where else can I get help?

Places to talk:

- Crisis Textline: 24/7, Text “MN” to 741741
- Teen Line: open 9 p.m. – 1 a.m. ET ; text “TEEN” to 839863
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 24/7, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ youth): 24/7, www.TheTrevorProject.org or 1-866-488-7386

Free Mental health apps:

- **HappiMe for Young People** -Teens can make playlists, play games, and do activities to learn how to keep a positive mindset.
- **Wysa** – chat with an AI penguin about what you are feeling and get helpful advice (13+ years)
- **Stop, Breathe, Think** - helps you check in with how you’re feeling and try short activities to get in tune with your emotions.
- **Habitica** turns your real-life into a game in order to make good positive habits to support your mental and physical well-being

- **My3 or NotOK** - lets you stay connected and reach out when you’re having thoughts of suicide.

Online Resources:

- teenmentalheath.org – A great website for understanding different mental illnesses, support for if your parent lives with mental illness, and guides/tools for how to manage difficult times.
- changetochill.org - a website dedicated to mindfullness and stress relief for students
- suicideispreventable.org – For more information on how to talk to a friend about suicide

How can I help a friend?

- Talk to them about what you have been noticing:
    - Say things like, “I’ve noticed you [have seemed very sad for very long, never want to hang out, no longer seem to like soccer, haven’t been sleeping much]. What’s going on?
- Listen non-judgmentally:
    - Let them speak without interruption
    - Tell them you are sorry things have been so hard
    - Don’t tell them to “just get over it”
    - Don’t tell them that other people have it much worse
    - Tell them that mental illnesses are common and that they are still the same friend they have always been

- Help them get help:
    - Think of a trusted adult they may feel comfortable talking to
    - Say, “Will you come visit_____with me?” or “Do you want to talk to _____ with me?”
    - Don’t swear to secrecy. Tell them “I care about you too much to keep this a secret”
- Be a good friend:
    - Invite them to hang out
    - Text to check in
    - Support them in their treatment
    - Tell them you will be there for them