

# Mental Health and Wellness



A resource guide compiled to  
educate and assist students





Disclaimer: This document, and all information included, is intended for informational and educational purposes only. This document is not intended to provide or replace medical treatment and support. Individuals should always seek medical advice from a trained professional to discuss their individual concerns and specific situations. This document is only intended to be used in its entirety.

The following are free resources that provide mental health support.

Please save, share, and utilize them:

[The Crisis Text Line](#) - provides free, 24/7 support via text message. We're here for everything: anxiety, depression, suicide, school. **Text HOME to 741741.**

[The Suicide Prevention Hotline](#) - provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. **Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or chat online at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>.

[SAMSHA's National Helpline](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral and information service (in English/Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders. **Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357).**

[The Trevor Project: Get Help Now](#) - suicide prevention specializing in LGBTQ+ youth support. 24/7 **Call/Text** support at **1-866-488-7386.**

[Teen's Health: Mind](#) - find support for specific mental, emotional, or physical distress sources. Sort it all out at <https://teenshealth.org/en/teens/your-mind/>.

To find assistance services near you, please visit:

- <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/> - Find alcohol, drug, or mental health treatment facilities and programs around the country.
- <https://findtreatment.gov/> - helping millions of Americans with substance use disorders.

[OK2Talk](#) - It's time we talked about mental health. Share at <http://ok2talk.org>.

For assistance, talk to your guardian or a trusted teacher/counselor

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## What is Mental Health?

"Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health. It's important to remember that a person's mental health can change over time, depending on many factors. When the demands placed on a person exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health could be impacted."<sup>1</sup>

## What is Mental Illness?

"A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood. These conditions deeply impact day-to-day living and may also affect the ability to relate to others.

A mental health condition [or illness] isn't the result of one event. Research suggests multiple linking causes. Genetics, environment, and lifestyle influence whether someone develops a mental health condition. A stressful job or home life makes some people more susceptible, as do traumatic life events. Biochemical processes and circuits and basic brain structure may play a role, too.

None of this means that [a person] is broken [or at fault]. And for many people, recovery — including meaningful roles in social life, school, and work — is possible, especially when you start treatment early and play a strong role in [the] recovery process."<sup>2</sup>

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>

2. <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions>

# Types of Mental Illness

"People can experience different types of mental illnesses or disorders, and they can often occur at the same time. There are more than 200 classified external types of mental illness. Some of the main types are listed below; however, this list is not exhaustive.

Anxiety Disorders - People with anxiety disorders respond to certain objects or situations with fear and dread or terror. Anxiety disorders include generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety, panic disorders, and phobias.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder - (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood mental illnesses. People diagnosed with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors (may act without thinking about what the result will be), or be overly active.

Depression and Other Mood Disorders - While bad moods are common and usually pass in a short period, people suffering from mood disorders live with more constant and severe symptoms. People living with this mental illness find that their mood impacts mental and psychological well-being nearly every day and often for much of the day.

Eating Disorders - Eating disorders involve obsessive and sometimes distressing thoughts and behaviors, including reduction of food intake, overeating, feelings of depression or distress, concern about weight, body shape, poor self-image. Common types of eating disorders include anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating.

Personality Disorders - People with personality disorders have extreme and inflexible personality traits that cause problems in work, school, or social relationships. Personality disorders include antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorder.

Substance Use Disorders - Substance use disorders occur when frequent or repeated use of alcohol and/or drugs causes significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home. Substance use problems can be fatal to the user or others. Examples include drunk driving fatalities and drug overdoses."<sup>1</sup>

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>

"If you have — or think you might have — a mental illness, the first thing you must know is that:

# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Mental health conditions are far more common than you think, mainly because people don't like to, or are scared to, talk about them. However:

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24"<sup>2</sup>

"Each illness has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in can include [but are not limited to] the following:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior, or personality
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains")
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance"<sup>3</sup>

You can take a self-evaluation here (not a formal diagnosis):

<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/youth/?ref>

Contact 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org) for next steps

2. <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions>

3. <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms>



## Shame should never keep someone from seeking assistance. Here are TEN reasons to fight the stigma against mental illness.

- "1 Some of the most successful, impactful, and intelligent people of all time had mild to severe mental illnesses. For example, Martin Luther King Jr had depression, and Isaac Newton has recorded signs of bipolar episodes and potential autism.
- 2 According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 4 people will experience mental health problems at some point in their lives. That's one-quarter of the world's population.
- 3 We're not ashamed when our bodies get sick, so why should we be ashamed when our minds aren't in top form? We should be looking after our mental health in the same way we look after our physical health.
- 4 Because there is no normal – our minds are complex, and no single brain is the same. Avoid comparing yourself to others.
- 5 Clinical depression is not circumstantial. It is a neurological issue that does not take your material possessions, circumstances, or life situations into account – mental illness, unlike many things in life, does not discriminate: nobody is immune.
- 6 It's time to reframe the way we see mental illness. Getting help for your mental health is not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of strength.
- 7 Shame is pretty much guaranteed to make things worse. Feelings of shame are proven to have detrimental effects on our mental and physical health.
- 8 Because it's no one's fault. No one asks to be depressed, and it is definitely not a choice we make. Saying to your depressed friend... 'just snap out of it,' is one of the worst things you can say.
- 9 The more we talk about mental health, the more ok it becomes. By talking about your mental illness, you encourage others to care for their own. The stigma of mental health is having catastrophic effects on people's lives because we are too ashamed to talk about it and get help.
- 10 Your mental health doesn't define you. Don't let your mental illness become who you are. It is just one aspect of you but always remember that you are more than your depression, anxiety, or OCD."<sup>4</sup>

# COVID-19 Pandemic Effects on Mental Health

"Beyond getting sick, many adolescents' social, emotional, and mental well-being has been impacted by the pandemic. Trauma faced at this developmental stage may have long-term consequences across their lifespan. Adolescents can be particularly overwhelmed when stress is related to a traumatic event, expressed as excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, and difficulty with attention and concentration.

Having to physically distance from someone you love – like friends, [significant others], family, or your worship community – can be hard. Some may also experience fatigue from online video conferencing—commonly referred to as 'zoom fatigue.' The immediate need for virtual learning environments brought to light inequity in resources, access, and connectivity across families and communities. Economic insecurity is consistently linked to adverse development, academic achievement, and health outcomes.

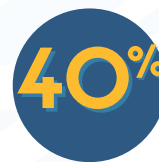
Physical distancing can feel as if one is placing life on hold. The truth is that the clock keeps ticking. Birthdays, graduations, proms, homecoming, vacation plans, births, and funerals are just a sample of the many significant life events that adolescents may have missed experiencing during COVID-19. Grief is a normal response to losing someone or something important to you."<sup>5</sup>

## Emerging Data

According to recent poll by UNICEF measuring COVID-19 mental health impacts:



Of adolescents have felt they needed help regarding their mental and physical health<sup>6</sup>



Of those young adults actually sought assistance<sup>6</sup>

According to a June 2020 survey conducted by the CDC:



Of adolescents reported starting/increasing substance use during pandemic<sup>7</sup>



Of adolescents reported serious thoughts of suicide<sup>7</sup>

These options are never the answer. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) instead.

5. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/parental-resource-kit/adolescence.html>

6. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/impact-covid-19-mental-health-adolescents-and-youth>

7. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6932a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s_cid=mm6932a1_w)



# Assessing Health During Pandemic

Please refer to this comprehensive guide to navigating mental illnesses and mental health during the coronavirus pandemic:

National Alliance of Mental Illness - Covid-19 Resource and Information Guide

<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/NAMI-HelpLine/COVID-19-Information-and-Resources/COVID-19-Guide.pdf>

## My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



### Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



### If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.



### Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm



### Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)—virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Medications
- Brain stimulation therapies

For help finding treatment, visit [www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you are in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).

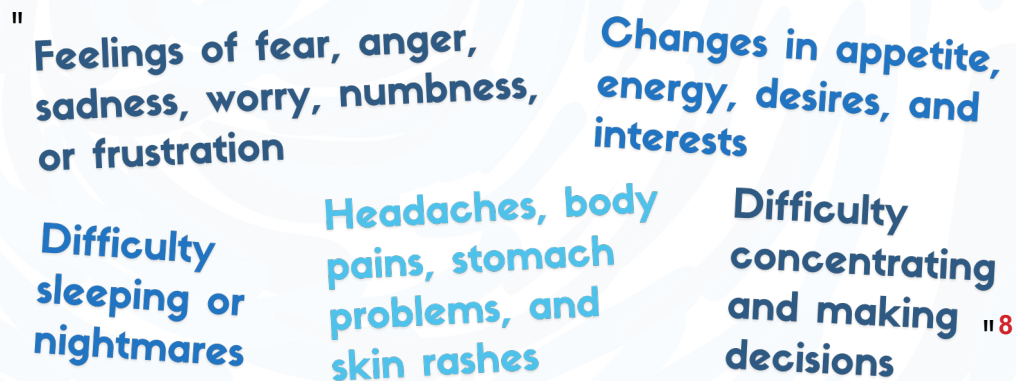


[www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp)

# Coping Techniques for Covid Stress

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful [and] overwhelming. Public health actions, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety."<sup>8</sup>

Everyone manages stress differently. Below are some symptoms of stress as outlined by the CDC. You are not alone or broken for feeling:



Managing stress can improve quality of life and mental health. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) recommends the following practices:

- " • **Accept your needs.** Recognize what your triggers are. What situations make you feel physically and mentally agitated?
- **Manage your time.** Making a day-to-day schedule helps ensure you don't feel overwhelmed by everyday tasks and deadlines.
- **Practice relaxation.** Deep breathing, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation are good ways to calm yourself.
- **Exercise daily.** Daily exercise naturally produces stress-relieving hormones in your body and improves your overall physical health.
- **Eat well.** Eating unprocessed foods, like whole grains, vegetables, and fresh fruit is the foundation for a healthy mind [and] help stabilize your mood.
- **Get enough sleep.** Symptoms of some mental health conditions, like mania in bipolar disorder, can be triggered by getting too little sleep.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** They don't actually reduce stress: in fact, they often worsen it. If you're struggling with substance abuse, get help.
- **Talk to someone.** Whether to friends, family, a counselor or a support group, airing out and talking can help "<sup>9</sup>

8. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

9. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Individuals-with-Mental-Illness/Taking-Care-of-Your-Body/Managing-Stress>

# Tips for Helping Others

"One of the most important ways to be a good friend is to help your friends when you notice something is wrong. It's normal to get upset or sad during upsetting times, but if you feel that your friend isn't responding normally, it might mean that there's something more serious going on.

## What can I do?

### Share



Share your observations with your friend. Focus on being nonjudgmental, compassionate, and understanding. Use these 'I' comments to get the conversation started:

- 'I've noticed that you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is everything okay?'
- 'I've noticed you're [sleeping more, eating less, etc.]'

### Reach Out



If a friend is in need, you don't need to go at it alone. Involve others who can provide added support. Try to find someone who might be understanding of your friend's situation or be able to help. Here are some people you may consider reaching out to:

- Teacher, Counselors, or Coaches
- Family or Faith-Based Leaders

### Support



Keep in mind that your friend might not be ready to talk about what they're going through or simply may not want your help right now. You can [still] play an important role in helping a friend build a positive, social support network. Here are ways to do that:

- Check-in regularly, include friend in plans
- Avoid using judgmental or dismissive language, such as 'you'll get over it,' [or] 'toughen up.'

**If it's an emergency, you should call 911 and get an authority figure. <sup>10</sup>**

# Practicing Mental Wellness

The following are some activities that can improve mental health and wellness, but are not a substitute for professional treatment:

## " Creative Expression

- Coloring: <https://www.justcolor.net/>
- Arts and Crafts like origami: <https://origami.me/diagrams/>
- Puzzles: <https://www.dailyjigsawpuzzles.net/>
- Journaling: <http://bit.ly/8-journaling-techniques>

## Meditation and Relaxation

- View exercises: <https://www.healthline.com/health/anxiety-exercises>
- Calm, Headspace, or Buddhify apps
- Tension release: inhale while lifting shoulders and exhale when relaxing.
- 4-7-8 Breathing: Place one hand on belly and other hand on chest. Take a deep breath from belly and silently count to 4 as you breathe in. Hold breathe and silently count for 7 seconds. Breathe out all air by the time you silently count to 8 seconds. Repeat until you feel calm.

## Self-Care and Positivity

- Drink plenty of water
- [Expressing] gratitude: [https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude\\_journal](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal)
- Spread positivity and kindness - volunteer or check in with people you care and love
- Improve sleep quality: [https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about\\_sleep/sleep\\_hygiene.html](https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/sleep_hygiene.html)
- Do what makes you happy, feel good or something that you're passionate about.
- Promote positive thinking: <https://positivepsychology.com/daily-affirmations/> "11

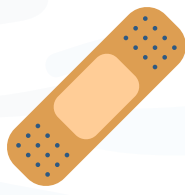
The following coping behaviors can worsen your mental health and wellness. If you find yourself resorting to these, you should ask for help from an adult.



**Substance Abuse**



**Bullying**



**Self-Harm**



**Withdrawal**



**Denial**

11. <https://namibouldercounty.org/resources/activities-to-improve-your-mental-health/>

12. <https://www.mhanational.org/helpful-vs-harmful-ways-manage-emotions>



# Mental Health and Traffic Safety

It is important to acknowledge that traffic safety can be impacted by mental health, just like any other daily activity. While there are limited studies, global research has "found that suicidal ideation, anxiety, and depression are significant risk factors for [a] motor vehicle crash."<sup>13</sup>

Identifying and addressing these risk factors can improve one's traffic safety and mental wellness, but it is critical not to discriminate against those with mental illnesses.

## How is Driving Impacted by Mental Illness?

In multiple studies, depression has been linked to risky driving behaviors.<sup>14,15</sup> "Depressed drivers [can] encounter difficult[ies] with reaction time, divided attention, reaction to changing speeds when following another vehicle, and weaving within lane[s]."<sup>14</sup> A 2009 Canadian study found "a significantly increased risk of motor vehicle crash among newly licensed drivers who had [previously] engaged in self-harm."<sup>13</sup> Substance abuse and lack of sleep also negatively impact driving performance and can be, but not always, linked to mental illness.<sup>14</sup>

## Improving Mental Health for Drivers

In addition to treating mental illness, studies also recommend incorporating mental health programs into the driver training process. Addressing mental health during not only the formation of driving habits but a critical time in brain development can reduce dangerous driving behaviors.<sup>15</sup>

- Click this article to see how commutes can become a designated time for practicing mindfulness to improve mental wellness and driver safety: <https://hbr.org/2014/11/your-car-commute-is-a-chance-to-practice-mindfulness>
- Podcasts can help improve moods while driving safely. Here are some about mental health: <https://beachsideteen.com/teens-podcasts-mental-health/>

13. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2780486/pdf/1810807.pdf>

14. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/75718/1/The%20impact%20of%20depression%20on%20driver%20performance.pdf>

15. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4225190/#R42>

# Mental Health Pledge



Though our name is "SADD," we want you to be happy and healthy! Please join our organization and implement the following steps to promote safety and wellness for yourself and your community!

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **pledge to support the mental health and wellness of myself and others by:**

- 1** Acknowledging the importance of physical and mental safety and wellness
- 2** Practicing healthy lifestyle habits to support and maintain physical and mental wellness
- 3** Supporting others by being available to listen and empathize
- 4** Notifying an adult if I observe extreme or harmful behavior in others, or consider extreme or harmful behaviors myself
- 5** Assessing and recognizing my own mental health needs and asking for help when I need it
- 6** Never engaging in harmful substances or self-harm
- 7** Agreeing to speak out against mental health stigma
- 8** Recognizing the state of my mental health, physical health, and awareness before driving

[The Crisis Text Line](#) - provides free, 24/7 support via text message. We're here for everything: anxiety, depression, suicide, school. **Text HOME to 741741.**

[The Suicide Prevention Hotline](#) - provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. **Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or you can chat online at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>.

Find alcohol, drug, or mental health treatment facilities and programs around the country. visit: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

For assistance, talk to your guardian or a trusted teacher/counselor



# References and Additional Resources

This resource guide was compiled for educational purposes only. To ensure safety and accuracy, content has been taken directly from the following sources and sighted for reference. Please visit the following sources to learn more about the content included in this guide:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>
2. <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions>
3. <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms>
4. <http://www.ditchthelabel.org/10-reasons-never-ashamed-mental-illness/>
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/parental-resource-kit/adolescence.html>
6. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/impact-covid-19-mental-health-adolescents-and-youth>
7. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6932a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s_cid=mm6932a1_w)
8. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
9. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Individuals-with-Mental-Illness/Taking-Care-of-Your-Body/Managing-Stress>
10. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Teens-Young-Adults/How-to-Help-a-Friend>
11. <https://namibouldercounty.org/resources/activities-to-improve-your-mental-health/>
12. <https://www.mhanational.org/helpful-vs-harmful-ways-manage-emotions>
13. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2780486/pdf/1810807.pdf>
14. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/75718/1/The%20impact%20of%20depression%20on%20driver%20performance.pdf>
15. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4225190/#R42>

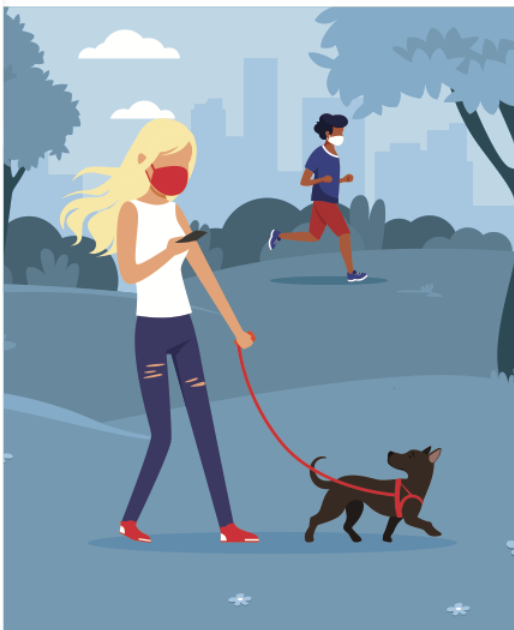
**The following pages are additional educational resources and activities that promote positive mental health and wellness. Check them out!**

# Students: Care for yourself one small way each day



**Find creative ways to spend time safely with friends, like virtual movie parties**

**Do something you enjoy outside, like going to the park or for a run**



**Treat yourself to healthy snacks and get enough sleep**



**Make time to relax by reading, listening to music, or exploring a new hobby**

**Remember, you're not alone**



**Talk to someone you trust if you or a friend feels bad**



320352-C

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Disaster Distress Hotline: call or text 1-800-985-5990**

**[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)**

## YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF

# Emotional Wellness Checklist

Emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life's stresses and adapt to change and difficult times. Here are tips for improving your emotional health:



## BRIGHTEN YOUR OUTLOOK

People who are emotionally well, experts say, have fewer negative emotions and are able to bounce back from difficulties faster. This quality is called resilience. Another sign of emotional wellness is being able to hold onto positive emotions longer and appreciate the good times.

### To develop a more positive mindset:

- ☐ Remember your good deeds.
- ☐ Forgive yourself.
- ☐ Spend more time with your friends.
- ☐ Explore your beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life.
- ☐ Develop healthy physical habits.



## REDUCE STRESS

Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress can give you a rush of energy when it's needed most. But if stress lasts a long time—a condition known as chronic stress—those “high alert” changes become harmful rather than helpful. Learning healthy ways to cope with stress can also boost your resilience.

### To help manage your stress:

- ☐ Get enough sleep.
- ☐ Exercise regularly.
- ☐ Build a social support network.
- ☐ Set priorities.
- ☐ Think positive.
- ☐ Try relaxation methods.
- ☐ Seek help.



## GET QUALITY SLEEP

To fit in everything we want to do in our day, we often sacrifice sleep. But sleep affects both mental and physical health. It's vital to your well-being. When you're tired, you can't function at your best. Sleep helps you think more clearly, have quicker reflexes and focus better. Take steps to make sure you regularly get a good night's sleep.

### To get better quality sleep:

- ☐ Go to bed and get up each day at the same time.
- ☐ Sleep in a dark, quiet place.
- ☐ Exercise daily.
- ☐ Limit the use of electronics.
- ☐ Relax before bedtime.
- ☐ Avoid alcohol, nicotine, & stimulants late in the day.
- ☐ Consult a health care professional if you have ongoing sleep problems.

For other wellness topics, please visit [www.nih.gov/wellnesstoolkits](http://www.nih.gov/wellnesstoolkits)



continued on next page

## YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF | EMOTIONAL WELLNESS CHECKLIST

continued

**BE MINDFUL**

The concept of mindfulness is simple. This ancient practice is about being completely aware of what's happening in the present—of all that's going on inside and all that's happening around you. It means not living your life on "autopilot." Becoming a more mindful person requires commitment and practice. Here are some tips to help you get started.

**To be more mindful:**

- ☐ Take some deep breaths in through your nose to a count of 4, hold for 1 second and then exhale through the mouth to a count of 5. Repeat often.
- ☐ Enjoy a stroll and notice the sights around you.
- ☐ Practice mindful eating. Be aware of each bite and when you're full.
- ☐ Find mindfulness resources in your local community, including classes, programs, or books.

**COPE WITH LOSS**

When someone you love dies, your world changes. There is no right or wrong way to mourn. Although the death of a loved one can feel overwhelming, most people can make it through the grieving process with the support of family and friends. Learn healthy ways to help you through difficult times.

**To help cope with loss:**

- ☐ Take care of yourself.
- ☐ Talk to a caring friend.
- ☐ Try not to make any major changes right away.
- ☐ Join a grief support group.
- ☐ Consider professional support.
- ☐ Talk to your doctor if you're having trouble with everyday activities.
- ☐ Be patient. Mourning takes time.

**STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

Social connections might help protect health and lengthen life. Scientists are finding that our links to others can have powerful effects on our health—both emotionally and physically. Whether with romantic partners, family, friends, neighbors, or others, social connections can influence our biology and well-being.

**To build healthy support systems:**

- ☐ Build strong relationships with your kids.
- ☐ Get active and share good habits with family and friends.
- ☐ If you're a family caregiver, ask for help from others.
- ☐ Join a group focused on a favorite hobby, such as reading, hiking, or painting.
- ☐ Take a class to learn something new.
- ☐ Volunteer for things you care about in your community, like a community garden, school, library, or place of worship.
- ☐ Travel to different places and meet new people.

For other wellness topics, please visit [www.nih.gov/wellnesstoolkits](http://www.nih.gov/wellnesstoolkits)





# Mindfulness Meditation

**Use this activity to regulate stress, find an inner peace and center yourself throughout the day.**

This is a perfect tool to use whenever you are feeling overwhelmed by all of life's responsibilities and struggles. Whether you have a big test coming up, your parents are arguing, you are having trouble balancing school and work or you have been fighting with a close friend, taking the time to quiet the mind is one of the most important forms of self-care. Quieting the mind can be done any time of day. After learning this in a group setting, this activity can be photocopied to continue practicing at home.

We are going to go over two different types of mindfulness, a **progressive relaxation** and a **meditation**.

## Progressive Relaxation

This technique works by tensing your muscles for five seconds with inhalation and then completely relaxing those same muscles after exhalation.

### Instructions:

- Get in a comfortable position. Relax your arms by your side, relax your jaw. Start with the top of your head, tense all the muscles in the top of your head for five seconds breathing in continuously and then breathe out deeply and completely relax those same muscles.
- Move to the muscles behind your eyes, tense for five seconds breathing in and then slowly breathe out and completely relax your eye muscles.
- Tense the muscles in the rest of your face including your jaw while breathing in for five seconds and then breathe out slowly and relax.
- Continue to move down each section of your body. Go slowly remembering to breathe in as you tense tightly for five seconds and then big exhales as you relax that part of your body. Move through your neck, shoulders, chest, arms, hands, back, stomach, thighs, calves and feet.
- After you finish moving down your whole body, take a deep breath in through your nose and let out a big exhale through your mouth and repeat five times.
- Now examine how you feel physically and mentally. How does your body feel? How does your mind feel? This can be used whenever you are feeling anxious or if you are having trouble falling asleep at night.

### Instructional Video:

Make sure to check out the instructional video created by Tom Speare at 10th Gate Yoga to help advisors or educators feel comfortable walking students through the different techniques.  
<https://youtu.be/60ebKcF8Cy4>

### Resources and References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4280725/>  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19432513>



Herren Project Clubs | [herrenproject.org](https://herrenproject.org)



# Breathing Through Stress

**Use this activity to learn new ways to regulate anxiety and calm your mind.**

Using our breath to regulate stress is a great tool that we can use at anytime because all we need is ourselves! After learning this in a group setting, this activity can be photocopied to continue practicing at home. We are going to go over two different types of breathing, **Alternate Nostril Breathing** and **Deep Breathing**.

## Alternate Nostril Breathing

### Instructions:

Get in a comfortable position. Put down whatever you are holding and relax. Feel your sit bones on the ground and elongate your spine. Feel like your head is floating up. Remember throughout this exercise to breathe slowly and deeply. The picture below illustrates the placement of your fingers.

- Place your left hand on your left knee and bring your right thumb to your right nostril.
- Place your index and middle finger on your third eye (between your eyebrows).
- Close your right nostril with your right thumb and inhale deeply through your left nostril.
- Then take your right ring finger and close your left nostril so both nostrils are closed. Take a second to pause.
- Next, let go of your thumb on the right nostril and exhale deeply and slowly through the right nostril you just opened.
- Pause.
- With your right nostril now open, repeat this pattern. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your right nostril with your left nostril closed by your ring finger.
- Close your right nostril you just breathed through with your thumb so both nostrils are closed and pause.
- Take off your ring finger to open your left nostril and exhale slowly and deeply through that left nostril.
- Pause.
- The pattern should be: with the right nostril closed, breathe in deeply through the left nostril, gently close both nostrils, let go of the right nostril and exhale deeply through the right nostril. Pause. Breathe in deeply through the right nostril, close both nostrils, pause, then breathe out deeply through the left nostril. Repeat this pattern slowly 10 times.

### Instructional Video:

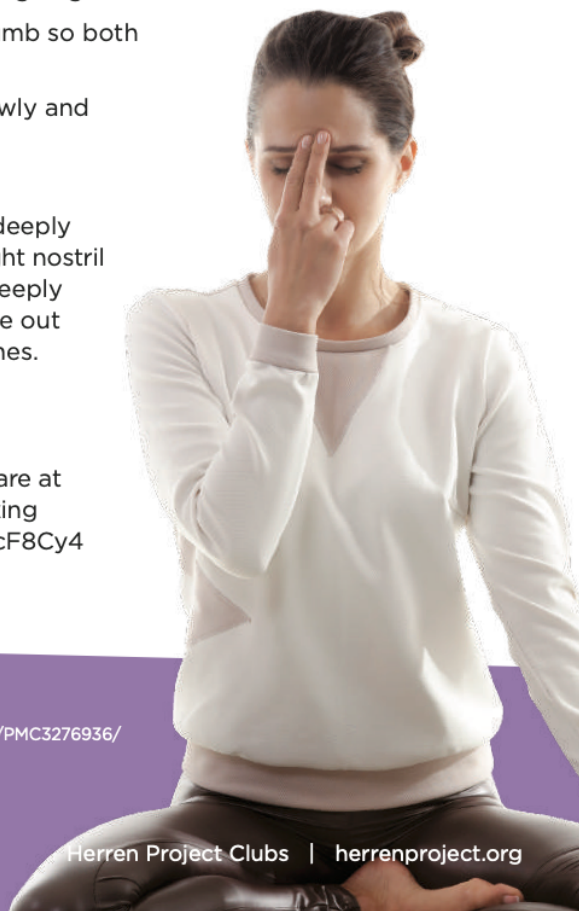
Make sure to check out the instructional video created by Tom Speare at 10th Gate Yoga to help advisors or educators feel comfortable walking students through the different techniques. <https://youtu.be/60ebKcF8Cy4>

### Resources and References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28316704> | <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3276936/>



Herren Project Clubs | [herrenproject.org](https://herrenproject.org)





# You are NOT ALONE

Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year. Across the country, many people just like you work, perform, create, compete, laugh, love and inspire every day.



1 in 5 U.S. adults  
experience  
mental illness

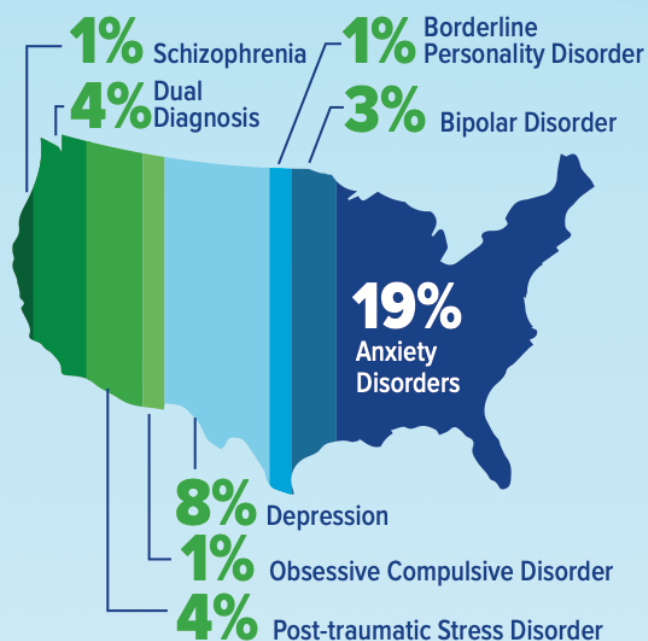
## 1 in 20

1 in 20 U.S. adults  
experience serious  
mental illness

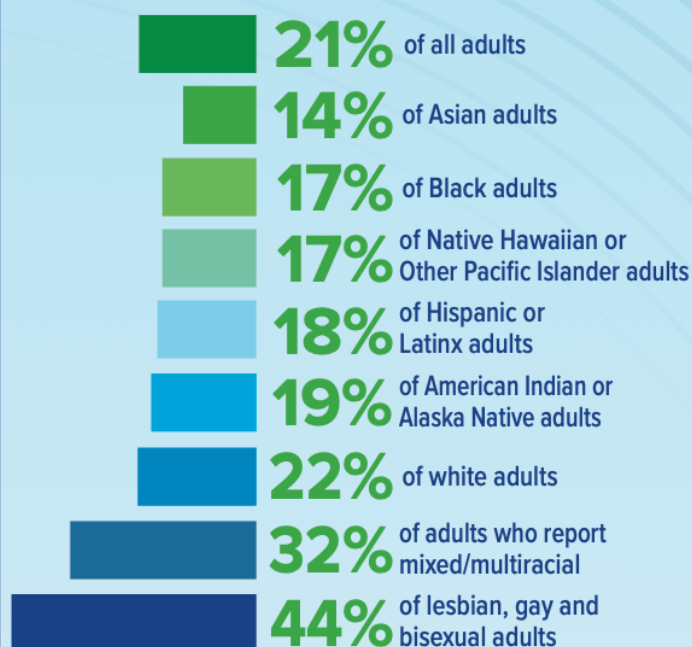
## 17%

of youth (6-17 years)  
experience a mental  
health disorder

### 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF COMMON MENTAL ILLNESSES (ALL U.S. ADULTS)



### 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF ANY MENTAL ILLNESS (ALL U.S. ADULTS)



### WAYS TO REACH OUT AND GET HELP



Talk with a health  
care professional



Call the NAMI  
HelpLine at  
800-950-NAMI (6264)



Connect with  
friends and family



Join a support group

Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at [nami.org/mhstats](http://nami.org/mhstats)

NAMI HelpLine  
800-950-NAMI (6264)

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Twitter NAMICommunicate

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www.nami.org

**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Common **WARNING SIGNS** of Mental Illness

Diagnosing mental illness isn't a straightforward science. We can't test for it the same way we can test blood sugar levels for diabetes. Each condition has its own set of unique symptoms, though symptoms often overlap. Common signs and/or symptoms can include:

- 
- ! **Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks**
  - ! **Trying to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so**
  - ! **Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behavior that causes harm to self or others**
  - ! **Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or difficulty breathing**
  - ! **Significant weight loss or gain**
  - ! **Seeing, hearing or believing things that aren't real\***
  - ! **Excessive use of alcohol or drugs**
  - ! **Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits**
  - ! **Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still**
  - ! **Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities**

\*Various communities and backgrounds might view this sign differently based on their beliefs and experiences. Some people within these communities and cultures may not interpret hearing voices as unusual.

## WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF OR SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT?



If you notice any of these symptoms, it's important to ask questions



Try to understand what they're experiencing and how their daily life is impacted



Making this connection is often the first step to getting treatment

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER



Talk with a health care professional



Learn more about mental illness



Take a mental health education class



Call the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI (6264)

**50%**  
of all lifetime  
mental illness  
begins by age  
**14**

**75%**  
by age  
**24**

Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at [nami.org/mhstats](http://nami.org/mhstats)

NAMI HelpLine  
800-950-NAMI (6264)



NAMI



NAMICommunicate



NAMICommunicate



[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)



**nami**

National Alliance on Mental Illness



# I'M SO STRESSED OUT!

From the **NATIONAL INSTITUTE of MENTAL HEALTH**

**Feeling overwhelmed? Read this fact sheet to learn whether it's stress or anxiety, and what you can do to cope.**

## Is it stress or anxiety?

Life can be stressful—you may feel stressed about performance at school, traumatic events (such as a pandemic, natural disaster, or act of violence), or a life change. Everyone feels stress from time to time.

What is stress? Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause, such as having a lot of homework or having an illness. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time.

What is anxiety? Anxiety is your body's reaction to stress and can occur even if there is no current threat.

If that anxiety doesn't go away and begins to interfere with your life, it could affect your health. You could experience problems with sleeping, or with your immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems. You also may be at higher risk for developing a mental illness such as an anxiety disorder or depression. More information about anxiety disorders is available at [www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders).

## So, how do you know when to seek help?

## Stress vs. Anxiety

### Stress

- Generally is a response to an *external* cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend.
- Goes away once the situation is resolved.
- Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep.

### Both Stress and Anxiety

Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body. You may experience symptoms such as:

- Excessive worry
- Uneasiness
- Tension
- Headaches or body pain
- High blood pressure
- Loss of sleep

### Anxiety

- Generally is *internal*, meaning it's your reaction to stress.
- Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life.
- Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.





## It's important to manage your stress.

Everyone experiences stress, and sometimes that stress can feel overwhelming. You may be at risk for an anxiety disorder if it feels like you can't manage the stress and if the symptoms of your stress:

- Interfere with your everyday life.
- Cause you to avoid doing things.
- Seem to be always present.



## Coping With Stress and Anxiety

Learning what causes or triggers your stress and what coping techniques work for you can help reduce your anxiety and improve your daily life. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you. Here are some activities you can try when you start to feel overwhelmed:

- Keep a journal.
- Download an app that provides relaxation exercises (such as deep breathing or visualization) or tips for practicing mindfulness, which is a psychological process of actively paying attention to the present moment.
- Exercise, and make sure you are eating healthy, regular meals.
- Stick to a sleep routine, and make sure you are getting enough sleep.
- Avoid drinking excess caffeine such as soft drinks or coffee.
- Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- Reach out to your friends or family members who help you cope in a positive way.

For more information about stress, visit [www.nimh.nih.gov/stress](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/stress).

## Recognize When You Need More Help

If you are struggling to cope, or the symptoms of your stress or anxiety won't go away, it may be time to talk to a professional. Psychotherapy (also called "talk therapy") and medication are the two main treatments for anxiety, and many people benefit from a combination of the two.

If you or someone you know has a mental illness, is struggling emotionally, or has concerns about their mental health, there are ways to get help. Find more information on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website at [www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** toll-free at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the toll-free TTY number at 1-800-799-4TTY (4889). You also can text the **Crisis Text Line** (HELLO to 741741) or go to the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** website at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

## More Resources

- NIMH: Child and Adolescent Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov/children](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/children))
- NIMH: Anxiety Disorders ([www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders))
- NIMH: Taking Control of Your Mental Health: Tips for Talking With Your Health Care Provider ([www.nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips))
- NIMH: 5 Things You Should Know About Stress ([www.nimh.nih.gov/stress](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/stress))
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Anxiety and Depression in Children ([www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html](http://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html))



National Institute  
of Mental Health

NIH Publication No. 20-MH-8125

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

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# Taking Charge of Your Mental Health

## FIND THE RIGHT SPECIALIST

- ✓ Ask your doctor or nurse to help you find a specialist and make your first appointment
- ✓ There may be a long wait for your first visit, so speak up if you need to see someone right away
- ✓ If the first mental health specialist you see isn't a good fit, keep looking for one who works for you

### DON'T FORGET!

- > Surround yourself with family and friends
- > Talk to a counselor, social worker, nurse or trusted adult
- > Continue doing what you love: reading, sports, writing, nature walks, creating art

## MAKE YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT COUNT

Be ready to talk about your health history and what you're experiencing

You may be asked to fill out a questionnaire describing your mental health experience

Be clear about what you want and need to get better

Ask the mental health specialist to explain treatment options so you understand the plan and what you need to do

### NAVIGATING YOUR INSURANCE

- Involve someone with experience to help you
- Call your insurance company to ask what mental health benefits are covered
- To find a provider, visit your insurer's website or call the number on your insurance card

## ASK QUESTIONS

If I have thoughts that scare me what should I do?

How often should we meet? What can I do between appointments if I need help?

Do I have to take medication? What does it help with? What are the side effects?

How long will it take for me to feel better, a few days, weeks or months?

## STAY INVOLVED



Keep a wellness log and monitor your progress



Ask for changes if your treatment plan is not working for you



Stick with it; most therapies and medications take time to work



Your treatment plan may change, so be an active partner in this process

## LIVE WELL

- ☀ Remember that you have control over living well
- ☀ Find a routine that works for you that includes a healthy diet, exercise and regular sleep patterns
- ☀ Stay close to your support network. Engage family, friends, teammates and your faith community. Think about joining an online community
- ☀ Be realistic and mindful of your needs and know your limits

### GETTING THROUGH IT

- > Try staying away from drugs and alcohol. This is not always easy, so find strategies that work. Using drugs or alcohol to feel better is harmful to you.
- > If you use alcohol or drugs, be honest and tell your therapist or doctor because it affects your care plan.
- > Stay positive. Surround yourself with positive messages, people and activities. This will help you to feel better.

# Want to Know How to Help a Friend?

## STUDENT GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH

### KNOW THE 10 COMMON WARNING SIGNS

- 1 Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- 2 Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
- 3 Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors
- 4 Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
- 5 Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
- 6 Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real
- 7 Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol
- 8 Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- 9 Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still
- 10 Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities



## START THE CONVERSATION

"It worries me to hear you talking like this. Let's talk to someone about it."

"I've noticed that you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is something going on?"

"I've noticed you're [sleeping more, eating less, etc.], is everything ok today?"

## OFFER SUPPORT

I really want to help, what can I do to help you right now?

Would you like me to go with you to a support group or a meeting? Do you need a ride to any of your appointments?

Let's sit down together and look for places to get help. I can go with you too.

BE PATIENT, UNDERSTANDING AND PROVIDE HOPE.

## BE A FRIEND



Your friend may feel alone; check in regularly and include your friend in your plans



Learn more about mental health conditions



Avoid saying things like "you'll get over it," "toughen up" or "you're fine"



Tell your friend that having a mental health condition does not change the way you feel about them



Tell your friend it gets better; help and support are out there

## GET ADVICE

You may want to reach out to someone to talk to about how you're feeling or to get advice on how to help your friend. Consider talking to a:

FAMILY MEMBER

TRUSTED FRIEND

SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR ADVISOR

TEACHER OR COACH

FAITH LEADER

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## Further Reading

- **Mental Health in High School Students at the Time of COVID-19**  
[https://jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567\(20\)31356-3/fulltext#secsectitle0010](https://jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(20)31356-3/fulltext#secsectitle0010)
- **The State of the Nation: A 50-State Covid-19 Survey**  
<http://www.kateto.net/covid19/COVID19%20CONSORTIUM%20REPORT%2023%20MENTAL%20HEALTH%20NOV%202020.pdf>
- **Coronavirus in African Americans and Other People of Color**  
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-racial-disparities>
- **Covid-19 Stimulant Use and Harm Reduction**  
<https://harmreduction.org/hrc/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-Stimulant-Use-and-Harm-Reduction.pdf>
- **Coping During a Pandemic**  
<https://www.studenthealth.cuimc.columbia.edu/resources-and-support/covid-19-resources/coping-during-pandemic>
- **Teen Depression**  
[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/teen-depression/teendepression\\_20-mh-8089\\_150205.pdf](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/teen-depression/teendepression_20-mh-8089_150205.pdf)
- **The Implications of Covid-19 on Mental Health and Substance Use**  
<https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>
- **Why Self-Esteem is Important for Mental Health**  
<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/July-2016/Why-Self-Esteem-Is-Important-for-Mental-Health>
- **When Looking for Happiness, Find Gratitude**  
<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2016/When-Looking-for-Happiness-Find-Gratitude>
- **The State of Mental Health in America**  
<https://www.mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america#Key>





Disclaimer: This document, and all information included, is intended for informational and educational purposes only. This document is not intended to provide or replace medical treatment and support. Individuals should always seek medical advice from a trained professional to discuss their individual concerns and specific situations. This document is only intended to be used in its entirety.

The following are free resources that provide mental health support.

Please save, share, and utilize them:

[The Crisis Text Line](#) - provides free, 24/7 support via text message. We're here for everything: anxiety, depression, suicide, school. **Text HOME to 741741.**

[The Suicide Prevention Hotline](#) - provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. **Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or chat online at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>.

[SAMSHA's National Helpline](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral and information service (in English/Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders. **Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357).**

[The Trevor Project: Get Help Now](#) - suicide prevention specializing in LGBTQ+ youth support. 24/7 **Call/Text support at 1-866-488-7386.**

[Teen's Health: Mind](#) - find support for specific sources of mental, emotional, or physical distress. Sort it all out at <https://teenshealth.org/en/teens/your-mind/>.

To find assistance services near you, please visit:

- <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/> - Find alcohol, drug, or mental health treatment facilities and programs around the country.
- <https://findtreatment.gov/> - helping millions of Americans with substance use disorders.

[OK2Talk](#) - It's time we talked about mental health. Share at <http://ok2talk.org>.

For assistance, talk to your guardian or a trusted teacher/counselor