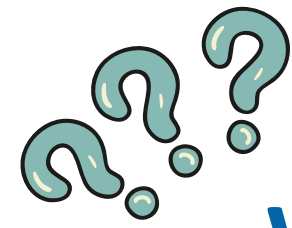




Mental Health 101: Everything Parents Need to Know to Support Youth at Home

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Why am I talking to you?



Youth Mental Health is in Crisis

You are NOT alone.



1 in 6 children aged 2-8 years
has a mental, behavioral, or
developmental disorder.

CDC Report: Adolescents aged 12-17 years in 2018-2019 reporting on the past year:

- 15.1% had a major depressive episode.
- 36.7% had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.
- 4.1% had a substance use disorder.
- 1.6% had an alcohol use disorder.
- 3.2% had an illicit drug use disorder.
- 18.8% seriously considered attempting suicide.
- 15.7% made a suicide plan.
- 8.9% attempted suicide.
- 2.5% made a suicide attempt requiring medical treatment.



Caveat: All children and families are individual, and the suggestions and advice I provide today may not be a fit for your family and that's ok! My goal is not to be directive, but to provide you with some ideas and tools.

While some of these suggestions may work for neurodivergent children, for example, those with autism, this presentation is not geared to this population.

1. What can you do for yourself that can help your child?
2. What can you do in your home environment?
3. What can you do at school or other programs?
4. What can you do with your child to help them?

What can you do for yourself that can help your child?

Check Your Beliefs About Mental Health

- ▷ What are your beliefs about mental illness? Your family beliefs?
- ▷ Do you agree with the diagnosis?
- ▷ What do you think caused it? Are you carrying guilt?
- ▷ Times are different than when we were children
- ▷ Pressures are higher
- ▷ Role of technology

Educate Yourself

- ▷ Everyone will give you advice – tell you what helped their cousin, recommend a supplement
- ▷ Know how to access evidence-based information
- ▷ Ask the professional involved (I get asked all the time about CBD for example)
- ▷ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- ▷ Child Mind

Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask

- ▷ Time away
- ▷ Look at your own professional support
- ▷ Practice skills with your child – you all benefit
- ▷ Reach out to friends and family – many parents feel shame if their child is struggling
- ▷ Parent support groups
- ▷ Watch your own guilt – you didn't cause this



Consider Formal Parenting Support

- ▷ Parenting programs – Triple P (has a teen version too)
- ▷ Parent Child Interactional Therapy (PCIT)
- ▷ Parent Coaches



What can you do in your home environment to support
a child with mental health concerns?

What to Do at Home

- ▷ Home Safety
 - Remove any guns
 - Lock up all medications
 - Remove sharps
- ▷ Consider a home security system (consider privacy and age)
- ▷ Supervision
- ▷ Tools to have at home:
 - Sensory Tools
 - Coping Tool Kit
 - Safety Plan

Medication Management

- ▷ Parents are responsible for managing medications
- ▷ Utilizing timers and cell phone apps
- ▷ Blister packs
- ▷ Tracking symptoms and side effects can be helpful



How to Talk to Family and Friends

- ▷ Make sure your child knows what you have told other people
- ▷ Discuss with them and be respectful of not needing to share all the details



What can you do at school or other programs to support a child with mental health concerns?

How to Navigate School

- ▷ Age dependent
- ▷ Remember: a healthy child is always the most important
- ▷ School is important, but you may need to look at alternatives, especially if your child identifies school or bullying as the main stressor

How to Navigate Professional Support

- ▷ You are your child's advocate
- ▷ Ask questions and make sure you understand the plan
- ▷ Therapy – while session content is confidential, you should receive updates on progress and understand the type of therapy being done
- ▷ You can always send updates over message/email or provide a written letter with concerns if it's too difficult to get all the information out in a visit

What can you do with your child to support
them with mental health concerns?

How to Talk to Your Child About Mental Health

- ▷ Openness
- ▷ Reserve judgement
- ▷ It's ok to not have the answers and to just listen
- ▷ Express how much you love your child/children
- ▷ Express your commitment to standing by them “we are in this together”
- ▷ Teens especially often feel very alone (even if that's not the reality) and need lots of reminders that you are there for them

How to Talk to Your Child About Mental Health

- ▷ Setting and timing
- ▷ Don't give lectures
- ▷ Open-ended questions
- ▷ Consider a journal to communicate back and forth
- ▷ If direct communication is hard - code word or number scale



How to Talk to Your Child About Their Diagnosis

- ▷ Don't hide a diagnosis
- ▷ Find an age-appropriate way to introduce the diagnosis
- ▷ Be open about the treatment plan and what is being done to help
- ▷ Own your own mistakes! If you haven't handled a situation well, please acknowledge it to your child
- ▷ Don't be afraid to talk about the hard things – many children feel like they can't talk about certain things for fear of upsetting their parents

Go Back to The Basics

- ▷ Involve the family, don't single out the one child
- ▷ Sleep
- ▷ Exercise
- ▷ Limiting processed foods - fruit
- ▷ Screen time
- ▷ Having fun as a family!



Don't Make It All About The Illness

- ▷ It's the small things
- ▷ Their favorite breakfast
- ▷ Sitting and watching a show together
- ▷ Listening to their favorite music
- ▷ Going for a walk together



Common Questions

“I’m taking their phone away!”

- ▷ Remember mental illness is not something to be punished for and a lot of children feel that they have been punished by their family for things like self-harm
- ▷ Balance and cooperative approach
 - What are your concerns? Is it the content? Is it the time spent?
 - Remember the majority of social support is coming through phones, so be careful not to cut your child off

“NO MORE videogames!”

- ▷ Not all games are created equal
- ▷ Look at age restrictions
- ▷ Is it a cooperative social game?
- ▷ Who has access to your child via the game?
- ▷ Balance and look at concerns



“Don’t be their therapist”

- ▷ Remember that #1 you have to be their parent and be that source of love and understanding
- ▷ Ensure you have outside support and get to keep your role as the parent
- ▷ Difficult decisions can be shared among your child’s team

Don't Say...

- ▷ “You have to go away”
- ▷ “If this keeps up, I’m sending you away”

If you have made mistakes, apologize and own your errors. Teens can be very forgiving.

Thank you!
Any questions?

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San Diego County Resources

- Rady Children's Hospital Emergency Department
- 3020 Children's Way, 1st floor, San Diego, CA 92123
- Phone: 858-966-8005
- Rady Children's Behavioral Health Urgent Care
- 4305 University Avenue, Suite 150, San Diego, CA 92105
- Phone: 858-966-5484
- Walk-in Clinic: Monday-Friday: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- By Appointment Only: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Access and Crisis Line – 888-724-7240
- Crisis text line – 741-741
- [https:// www.crisistextline.org](https://www.crisistextline.org)
- Text HOME to 741741
- Smart Care / Behavioral Health Consultative Service
- Parent Line: 858-956-5901
- 2-1-1 San Diego
- www.211sandiego.org
- San Diego Food Bank
- [https:// sandiegofoodbank.org/](https://sandiegofoodbank.org/)
- Phone (Local): 1-858-527-1419
- Phone (Toll Free): 1-866-350-3663
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- [https:// suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- 800-237-8255 (TALK)
- It's Up to Us
- [https:// up2sd.org](https://up2sd.org)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- [https:// www.nami.org/ Home](https://www.nami.org/Home)
- Healthy Children.org by American Academy of Pediatrics
- www.healthychildren.org
- American Psychiatric Association
- www.psychiatry.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- www.cdc.gov
- San Diego County Department of Public Health
- [www.sandiegocounty.gov/ content/ sdc/ hhsa/ programs/ phs.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs.html)
- Riverside County Department of Public Health
- www.countyofriverside.org
- Children's Primary Care Medical Group www.cpcmg.net
- Rady Children's Hospital San Diego www.rchsd.org
- Children's Physicians Medical Group www.cpmgsandiego.com