



# Mental Health Guide for Teens



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA  
**Behavioral Health Services**

Supporting Wellness and Recovery

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**The Mental Health Guide for Teens is meant to help teens learn basic mental health and wellness concepts. With interactive exercises, this guide can help start impactful conversations among peers. This guide is best used in a school setting or with a parent but can also be used individually by teens.**

# What is mental health?

**Mental health is made up of our thinking, emotions, behaviors, factors within our surroundings, personal characteristics, and our cultural background.**

**Mental health relates to the ability to cope with life's daily stresses. So when our mental health is balanced, we're able to handle everyday stress.**

## WHAT DOES MENTAL HEALTH MEAN TO YOU?



# What is mental illness?

➤ **Mental illnesses are brain-based conditions that affect thinking, emotions, and behaviors.**

➤ **The brain is an organ. Just like any other organ in our body, it can experience changes based on life experiences like stress, trauma, lack of sleep, and nutrition.**

➤ **Generally, when someone has a mental illness, something has changed their brain and the way it works has also changed.**

1. [screening.mhanational.org/content/what-mental-illness/?layout=actions\\_neutral](https://screening.mhanational.org/content/what-mental-illness/?layout=actions_neutral)

2. Chu J.P., Goldblum P., Floyd R., Bongar B.: *The cultural theory and model of suicide. Applied and Preventive Psychology*, 2010.

# Warning signs of mental illness



When mental illness goes untreated it can lead to thoughts of suicide. It is important to know the warning signs so you can recognize when you or a friend needs help.

## PHYSICAL

- Increased discomfort, pains, headaches, stomach aches
- Feeling tired, fatigue
- Hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting things that others do not

## THOUGHTS

- Having more negative thoughts
- Thinking about the same things over and over
- Having unusual thoughts that others don't have

## FEELINGS

- Long-lasting irritability, anger, or sadness
- Extremely high and low moods
- Excessive fear, worry, or anxiety
- Excessive feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Increased feelings of shame
- Losing pleasure or interest in activities

## BEHAVIORAL

- Noticeable changes in eating or sleeping
- Increased drug, alcohol use, or other ways to numb pain
- Doing reckless things
- Withdrawing and spending most of your time alone
- Not caring for personal hygiene or health needs
- Letting obligations slide
- Self-harm/self-injury

## SITUATIONAL

- Conflict with or rejection from your family, culture, support system, or community
- Exposure to trauma, violence, or abuse
- Experience of loss or grief
- Employment or financial stress
- Chronic or terminal illness
- Discrimination or bullying
- Trouble adjusting to a new culture

# What is stigma?

**Stigma refers to negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition.**

**Harmful effects of stigma can include:**

- **lack of understanding from family, friends, or others**
- **bullying, physical violence, or harassment**
- **reluctance to seek help or treatment**

**One way you can help reduce stigma is by wearing a **lime green ribbon**, the awareness color for mental illness. This shows you would encourage talking about mental health.**

## **LIST 3 WAYS YOU CAN HELP REDUCE STIGMA:**



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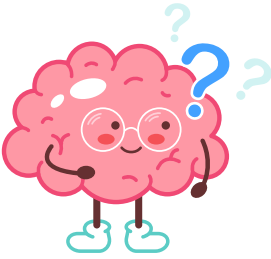
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2. Chu J.P., Goldblum P., Floyd R., Bongar B.: *The cultural theory and model of suicide. Applied and Preventive Psychology*, 2010.

3. *Mental health: Overcoming the stigma of mental illness - Mayo Clinic*

# Can stress be good?



Our stress response system gets our brain and body ready to solve problems and tackle challenges. And when we overcome the problem, our brain “feels good” and remembers our successes. You can experience both **good and bad stress** when faced with challenges.

## Good stress examples:

- Going on a first date
- Approaching a due date for homework
- Starting a new school
- Anticipating an upcoming test or exam
- Preparing for an important speech

## Bad stress examples:

- Ending a relationship
- Death of a loved one
- Abuse or neglect
- Unknown mental or physical health issues
- Financial difficulty
- Illness or hospitalization

**WRITE DOWN WHAT CAUSES YOU STRESS.  
BE SURE TO LIST GOOD AND BAD STRESSORS.**



**In the next section, you'll learn ways to help manage stress.**

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2. Chu J.P., Goldblum P., Floyd R., Bongar B.: *The cultural theory and model of suicide. Applied and Preventive Psychology*, 2010.

# Dimensions of wellness



**Emotional wellness** involves developing an awareness of your feelings and your response to those feelings.



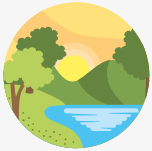
**Think about the way you respond when you feel angry or stressed. Is it different from when you are calm?**



**Intellectual wellness** encourages us to engage in creative and exciting activities, and it requires lifelong learning and curiosity.



**What are some activities you enjoy that help promote creativity and critical thinking?**



**Environmental wellness** refers to valuing the relationship between ourselves, our community and the environment.



**How can you respect the environment? Remembering to recycle and not wasting water are some examples.**



**Social wellness** focuses on building and nurturing meaningful and supportive relationships with individuals and communities.



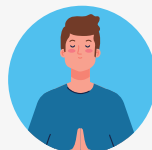
**What are some examples of good communication and conflict management ?**



**Physical wellness** is the ability to maintain your health. Our daily habits have an impact on our overall quality of life.



**What daily habit can you begin practicing to help you stay physically healthy?**



**Spiritual wellness** can stem from beliefs, faith, values, ethics or moral principles that provide purpose and direction in our lives.



**Some people go to church or temple, others meditate. How can you practice spiritual wellness?**

# Mental health recipe

You can think of mental health care as a big pot of ingredients that come together to create a recipe of wellness. The recipe is specific to each person, usually based on how they've learned to cope in their family and culture. Take a look at a great example below.



- **3 cups of fun with friends**
- **1/2 cup of physical activity**
- **A teaspoon of self compassion**
- **1 cup of time with pets**
- **A splash of screen time**
- **A pinch of family time**

**CREATE YOUR OWN RECIPE FOR GOOD MENTAL HEALTH HERE:**

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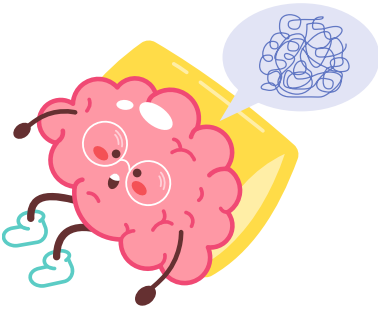
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# How to get help

- If you feel like you're struggling with mental health, get help right away. Do not wait.
- Treatment plans look different for each person and can be made with a mental health provider.
- It gets better. Recovery and living a fulfilling life is possible.

**Mental illness is treatable.**



**IF YOU RECOGNIZE THE WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS, GET HELP RIGHT AWAY. BELOW ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF WHERE YOU CAN GET HELP.**

**Talk to a trusted adult like a parent, grandparent, teacher, coach, school counselor, faith leader or doctor.**

**To access services, ask a parent or guardian to call the County's Behavioral Health Call Center at (800) 704-0900.**

**LIST 2 PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE YOU CAN ASK FOR HELP.**

# Talk to someone right away

These resources can help you or a friend get through a crisis.



Save a hotline or text line number to your phone.

**TEEN LINE**   
A program of DIDI HIRSCH

**Call (800) 852-8336 (6pm-10pm)  
or text TEEN to 839863 (6pm-9pm)**

When you call or text Teen Line, another teen will be there to listen, understand, and answer your questions.



**Crisis & Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
**Call or text 988 (for local area codes)**  
**All others call (800) 704-0900 & press 1**

988 provides direct connection to free, confidential, and compassionate support for anyone experiencing mental health distress, thoughts of suicide, substance use crisis or just need to talk.



**Trevor Project Hotline**  
**(866) 488-7386**

You'll be connected to a trained counselor who understands the challenges LGBTQ young people face and won't judge you.



**Bill Wilson Center Teen Line**  
**(888) 247-7717**

Teen-specific hotline providing 24-hour supportive listening for any reason, including health, relationships, crisis, and information and referrals.

# Local resources

There are youth centers in Santa Clara County that can help you get services or just be a calm place to hang out and relax.



**allcove**

[allcove.org/centers/palo-alto](https://allcove.org/centers/palo-alto) (650) 798-6330

2741 Middlefield Road, Suite 102, Palo Alto, CA 94306

allcove is a space for youth to find community, support, advice or even just a moment of pause.

**Downtown Youth Wellness Center**

[alumrockcc.org/programs](https://alumrockcc.org/programs) (408) 294-0500

725 E. Santa Clara St, San Jose, CA 95112

A safe and welcoming center that serves "all" youth ages 12-25, helping them navigate and access services across systems. The DYWC provides space for activities and learning, and a place to socialize and just "be".

**Bill Wilson Center**

[billwilsoncenter.org](https://billwilsoncenter.org) (408) 243-0222

3490 The Alameda, Santa Clara, CA 95050

Bill Wilson Center supports the community by serving youth and families through counseling, housing, education, and advocacy.

**LGBTQ Youth Space**

(408) 343-7940

452 S First St, San Jose, CA 95113

A community drop-in center and mental health program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and ally youth and young adults ages 13-25 who live in Santa Clara County.

**Morgan Hill Centennial Recreation Teen Center**

[bit.ly/mhteencenter](https://bit.ly/mhteencenter) (408) 310-4273

171 West Edmundson, Morgan Hill, CA 95037

The Centennial Recreation Teen Center is designed to be a safe place for teenagers to hang out and have fun. Membership to the Teen Center is free to all youth in grades 6th-12th.

# Digital resources

## WEBSITES

### Teenz Talk

[teenztalk.org](https://teenztalk.org)

Focused on mental health and wellness, harnessing peer connections as a source of strength. The online content lies in video responses and blog posts by youth, for youth.

### Reach out

[au.reachout.com](https://au.reachout.com)

The ReachOut Community is a supportive, safe and anonymous space. Hear from others about what has helped them and share what you're going through.

### Safe Space Stories

[safespacestories.org](https://safespacestories.org)

From SafeSpace, a youth-led mental health-focused organization working to change the conversation around mental health.

## APPS

### Calm Harm

Provides some immediate techniques to help break the cycle of self-harm behaviors and explore underlying trigger factors; build a 'safety net' of helpful thoughts, behaviors and access to supportive people.

### Soluna

Soluna supports your mental health by being your space to destress, bounce back, and reset. Completely free and anonymous for Californians ages 13 to 25. Always.

### BeMe

Teen mental health made with teens in mind. Access free live coaching, curated content, self-care activities, mood tracking and more.

# SANTA CLARA COUNTY

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Services are available for all ages and in other languages unless noted.

### **Crisis & Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Call or text **988** (for local area codes)

All others call 800-704-0900 & press 1

Free, 24/7 support for anyone experiencing mental health distress, including:

- thoughts of suicide
- mental health or substance use crisis
- just need to talk

Trained counselors will provide compassionate support to individuals in crisis. Speak to a clinician who can screen and assess crisis situations over the phone and intervene wherever the crisis is occurring. The lifeline is anonymous and confidential: information will not be shared unless in-person services are needed. Services may or may not involve law enforcement in emergencies.

### **Mental Health & Substance Use Services Call Center**

*(800) 704-0900*

Free, 24/7 access to County services, including:

- specialty mental health
- substance use treatment or prevention
- support for survivors of suicide
- general information, grievances, and appeals

Trained and licensed mental health and substance use treatment services professionals will provide support. Referrals for Assisted Outpatient Treatment are also available.

### **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Officer**

*911*

In emergency situations, ask for a C.I.T. officer trained in mental health issues.

**Follow us on Facebook:** @cscbehavioralhealth

**Follow us on Instagram:** @cscbehavioralhealth

**Follow us on Youtube:** @behavioralhealth

**Email:** [PreventionServices@hhs.sccgov.org](mailto:PreventionServices@hhs.sccgov.org)



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