

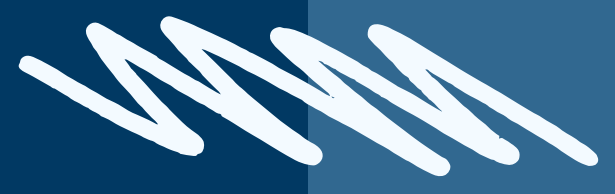
MENTAL HEALTH 101 FOR PARENTS

Caitlin Ensley, MSSW
Mental Health Association of East Tennessee



**“““In any given moment,
we have two options: to
step forward into growth
or to step back into
safety.””**

– Abraham Maslow



WHAT WE'LL BE TALKING ABOUT TODAY

Mental Health Basics

- What is Mental Health
- Mental Health Statistics
- The mental health impacts of the Pandemic
- Risk Factors
- Protective Factors
- Symptoms
 - Physical Signs
 - Emotional Signs
- Intervention
 - Prevention
 - Changes to make at home
 - Accessing other support
- Resources



Mental Health Is...

What we think

What we feel

What we do

When things are going well

When we're struggling


When we cope with stress

When we grieve



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH ANYWAY?

We all have it but what is it?



“A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”

- World Health Organization



**AT SOME POINT WE ALL
STRUGGLE WITH OUR
MENTAL HEALTH**





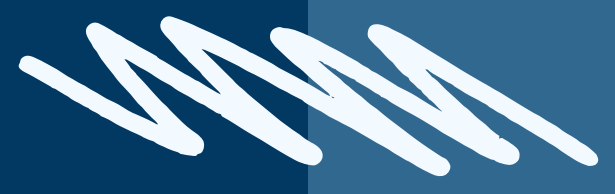
1 IN 2 LIFETIME

1 IN 5 YEARLY

1 IN 20 SMI

**HOW
COMMON ARE
MENTAL
HEALTH
ISSUES?**





YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

As common for kids as adults

Youth Risk Behavior Survey

In every classroom there are...

- 10–11 students who meet the clinical symptoms of a mental health condition
- 5–6 who have contemplated suicide
- 4–5 who have planned a suicide
- 3–4 who attempted suicide



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

As common for kids as adults

50% begin experiencing symptoms by 14
75% begin experiencing symptoms by 24

Anxiety Disorders (32%): 6 years old
Behavior Disorders (19%): 11 years old
Mood Disorders (14%): 13 years old
Substance Use Disorders (11%): 15 years old

40% have more than one diagnosis in their
lifetime

HOW IS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTING OUR YOUTH?

Lack of Stability

Loneliness and Isolation

Illness

Grief and Fear

Knox County: 16 weeks where youth coming into Emergency Departments for suicide-behaviors higher than last year

+1500 Mobile Crisis Calls

No evidence to date of an increase in suicide deaths

RISK



PROTECTION



ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



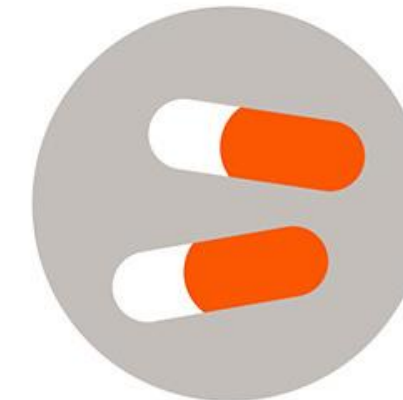
Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce

RESILIENCE



- Healthy social relationships
- Positive view of self
- The ability to manage strong feelings and impulses
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication skills
- Feeling in control
- The ability to find positive meaning in life despite traumatic events

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Physical Warning Signs

Changes in eating

Changes in sleep

Changes in energy levels

Vague aches and pains

Emotional and Behavioral Signs

New or increasing anger

Change in grades

Loss of interest in activities

Withdrawal

Difficulty concentrating

Changes in appearance

New or increasing substance use

Risk-taking behaviors

Isolation

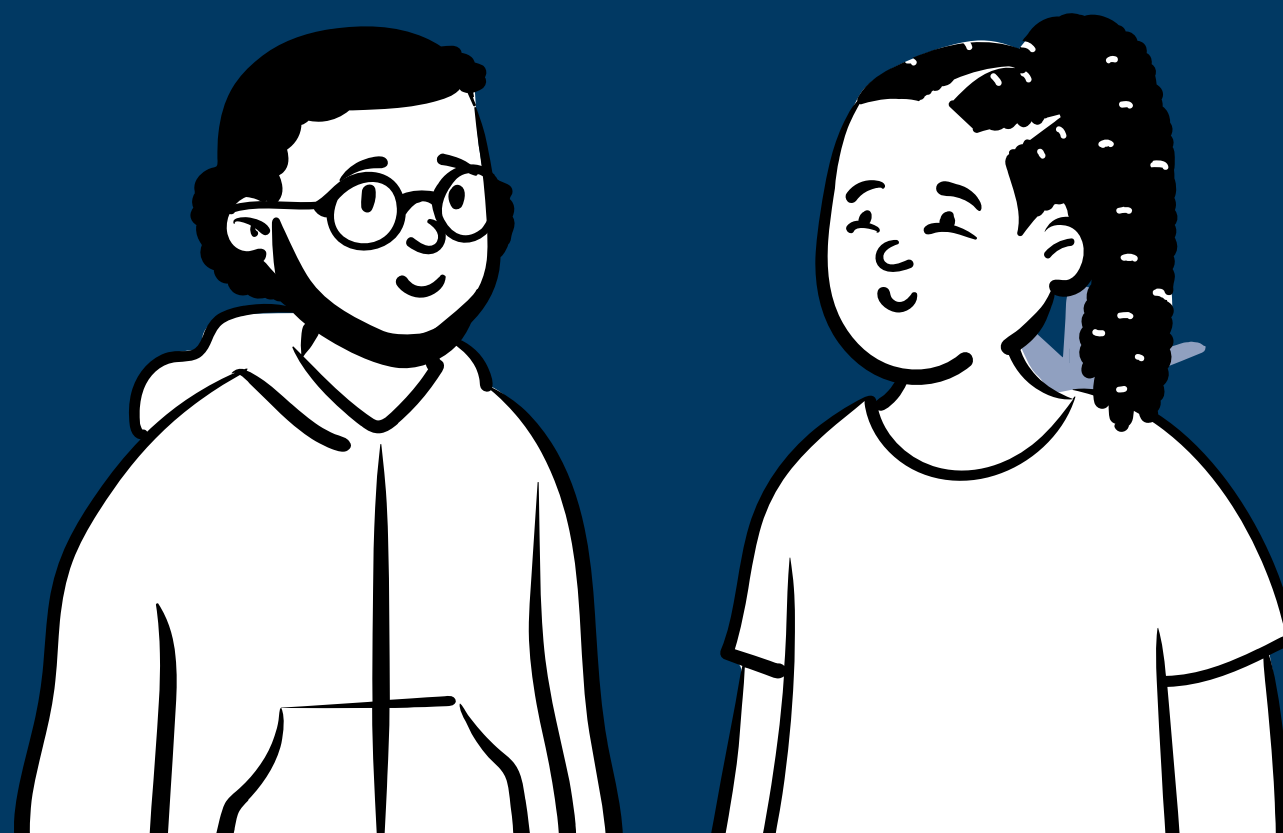
New or recurrent fears

Persistent sadness

Frequent crying

Self-harm

**Is it teen angst or a
mental health
condition?**



- **Intensity**
- **Duration**
- **Domains**

HOW TO INTERVENE





01

PREVENTION

Model positive sharing of emotions and the challenges in your own life.

If you have a mental health condition or take medication for it – disclose it to your child.



01

PREVENTION

Ask questions even when nothing is wrong. Use open-ended and specific questions.

Be open and honest with your own emotions, even if it means being vulnerable, self-deprecating, or prideful.

02

INTEGRATE MENTAL HEALTH INTO DAILY LIFE

Make sleep a priority and don't underestimate the importance of a healthy diet and exercise.

Have a consistent routine whenever possible.



02

INTEGRATE MENTAL HEALTH INTO DAILY LIFE

Create a sense of belonging. Remind your child that they are important and valued. Give them compliments!

Plan intentional time together. This is an opportunity to build trust and be able to notice if your child is struggling.





03

PROMOTE RESILIENCE

Challenges and adversity are a natural and normal part of life. Be open with your own frustration. Normalize your child's frustration. Promote healthier ways of addressing those feelings.



04

ADDRESS LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

Loneliness is a personal experience. Just because someone has people around them does not mean they are having meaningful social interaction.

- Peer interaction without adult supervision
- Change it up! Try writing letters or making a phone call
- Give back to your community

05

START THE CONVERSATION

Don't assume your child is going to come to you when they're struggling. Mental health conditions play tricks on the mind that make us believe lies about the people that love us.





06

SAYING THE RIGHT WORDS

The words you choose are very important when discussing mental health. The wrong words can leave someone feeling shut down or stigmatized.

Approach the conversation with the right mindset:

- Non-judgmental
- No assumptions
- Remain hopeful



06

"I'VE NOTICED... WHAT'S GOING ON?"

Do not multitask – give your child your full attention

Pay attention to eye contact

Really listen to what they're saying

Do not label the process



07

BEING UNCOMFORTABLE IS OKAY!



Vulnerability is hard
Recognize that your child may not want to
talk to you about these issues





08

THINGS TO AVOID

Patronizing or punishing language
You're being dramatic
You're doing it for attention
You shouldn't feel that way
Things aren't that bad



09

WHEN TO GET OUTSIDE HELP FROM A PROFESSIONAL

Don't expect to "fix" or help your child on your own. It takes a village!



**Self-Care
and
Coping**



**Check in
with
Primary
Care
Doctor**



**Therapy
and/or
Medication**

10

USE ALL YOUR RESOURCES

Mental Health Recovery is not easy or straightforward. Use all the tools you have at your disposal for your child.



Mental Health Association of East Tennessee

- Caitlin Ensley
- MH101@mhaet.com
- 901-871-5867
- Call 865-584-9125 for general mental health information and referrals

Your School's counseling team!

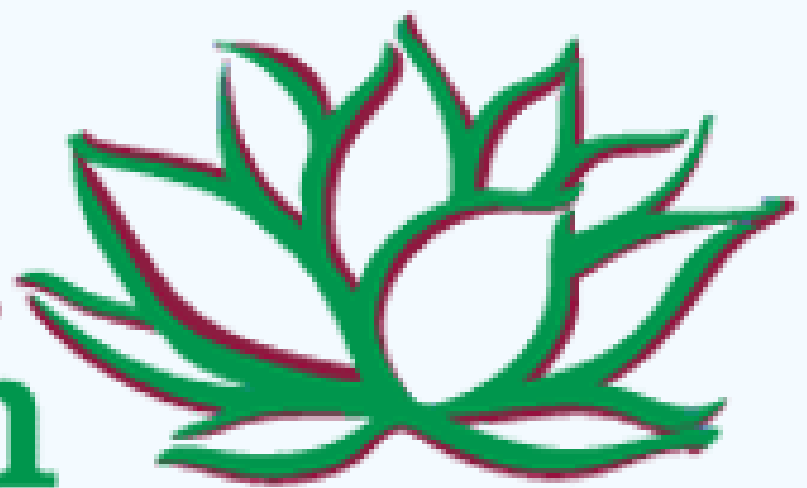
Mental Health Information:

- Mental Health America <https://mhanational.org/>
- Kids Health <https://kidshealth.org/>
- Teen Mental Health <https://teenmentalhealth.org/>
- Child Mind Institute <https://childmind.org/>
- DBSA Alliance <https://www.dbsalliance.org/>





Bearden
Behavioral
Health



Healthy Mind Counseling
Compassion and Support + Expertise and Training

**INPATIENT
TREATMENT**

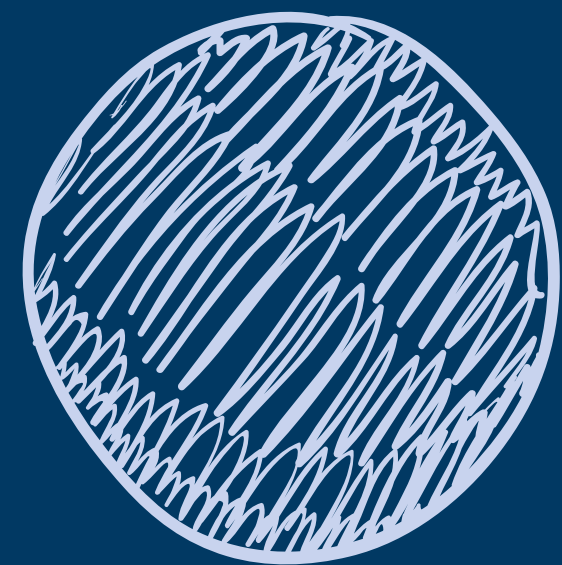


Mobile Crisis: 865-539-2409
Crisis Assessment by clinician
to find the least-restrictive
mental health placement for
your child

911:
If your child needs immediate
medical attention (self-harm,
substance use, or other
medical issues)

865-215-1179
Knox County Non-Emergency
Number

**CRISIS
SERVICES**



**ANY
QUESTIONS?**