

MENTAL HEALTH 101
FOR PARENTS AND
GUARDIANS



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?




TRUST ME... I'M NOT DOING WELL

Mental Health is a very individual experience

Outward behaviors don't always align with
internal thoughts and feelings

TRUST SOMEONE WHEN THEY SAY
THEY'RE STRUGGLING!



“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

Statistics

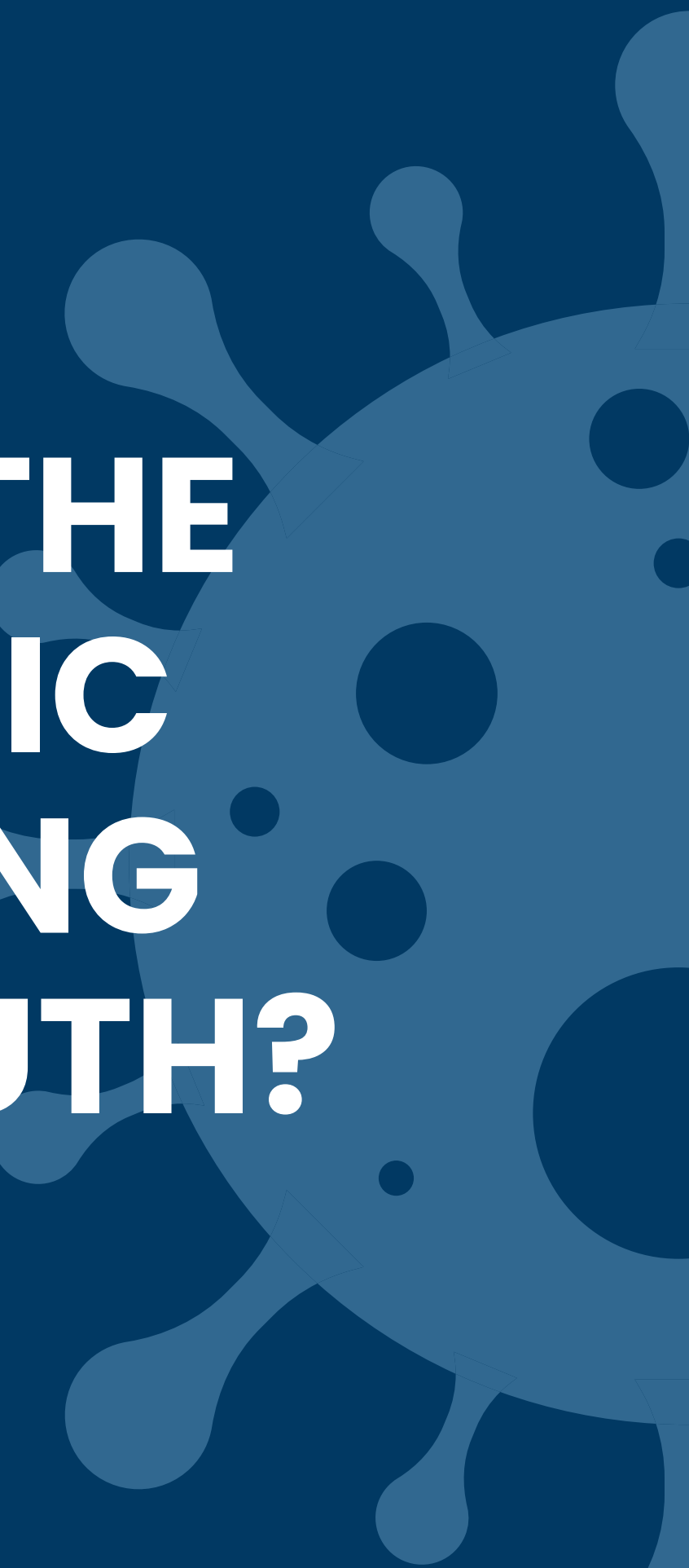
50% begin experiencing symptoms by 14
75% begin experiencing symptoms by 24

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

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (TN High Schools)

- 30% Depression
- 17–20% suicidal thoughts
- 13–17% planned suicide
 - 10% attempted suicide

A large, stylized graphic of a virus particle, rendered in a lighter shade of blue than the background. It features a central circular body with several protruding spikes or tentacles of varying lengths and thicknesses, giving it a three-dimensional, spherical appearance.

HOW IS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTING OUR YOUTH?

Lack of Stability

Loneliness and
Isolation

Illness

Grief and Fear

RISK



PROTECTION

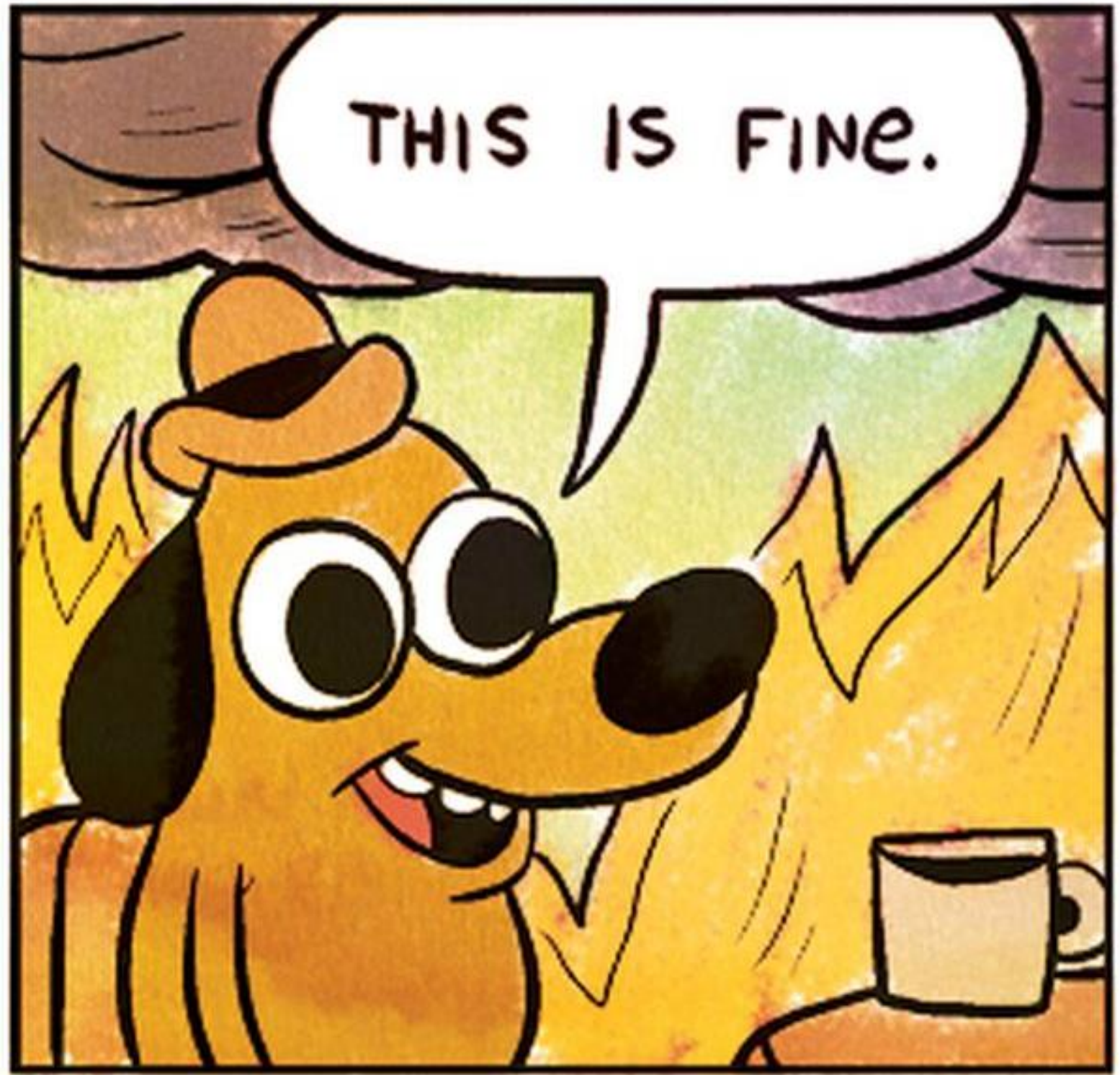


RISK FACTORS

- Genetic factors
- Environmental factors
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):
 - Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Household dysfunction
 - Other trauma

Trauma triggers the brain's stress response which can lead someone to form unhealthy, disruptive, or addictive behaviors to cope.





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PROTECTION/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

Most days for 2+ weeks

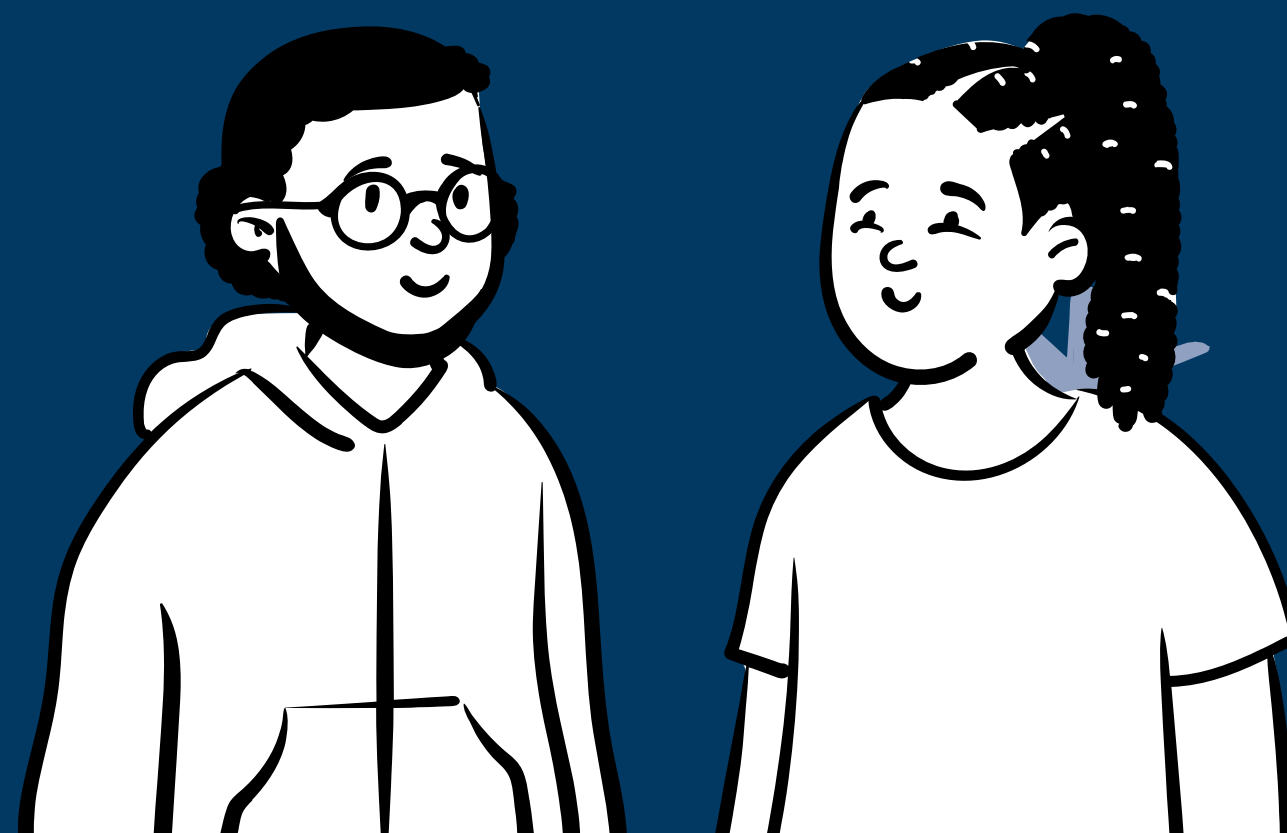
Physical Warning Signs

- Changes in eating
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in energy levels
- Vague aches and pains
- Weight loss or gain

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
- Talking about death

**Is it growing pains
or a mental health
condition?**





1

Intensity



2

Duration



3

Domains

HOW TO INTERVENE





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.



PREVENTION



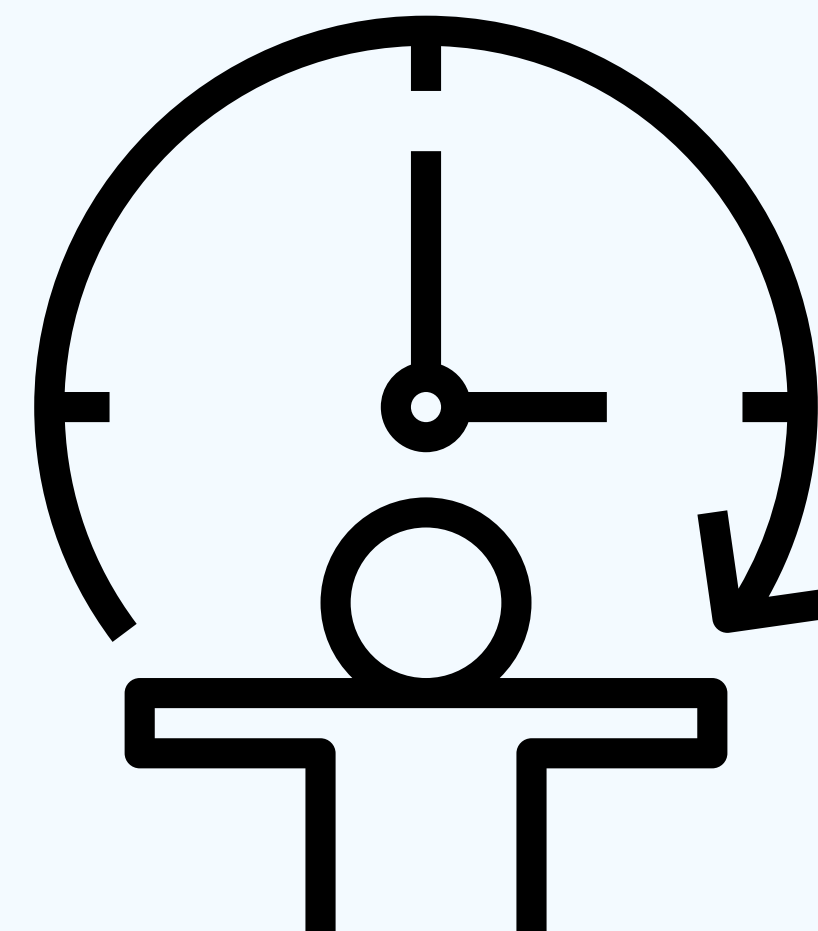
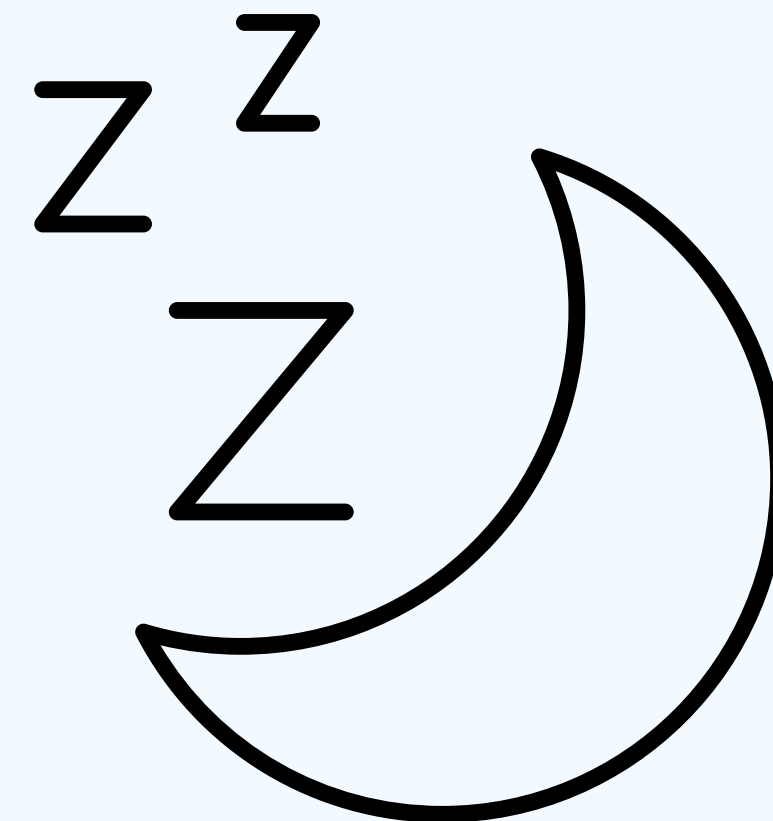
Ask questions even when nothing is wrong. Use open-ended and specific questions.

Help them set healthy boundaries that support and prioritize mental health.

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.



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.



PROMOTE RESILIENCE

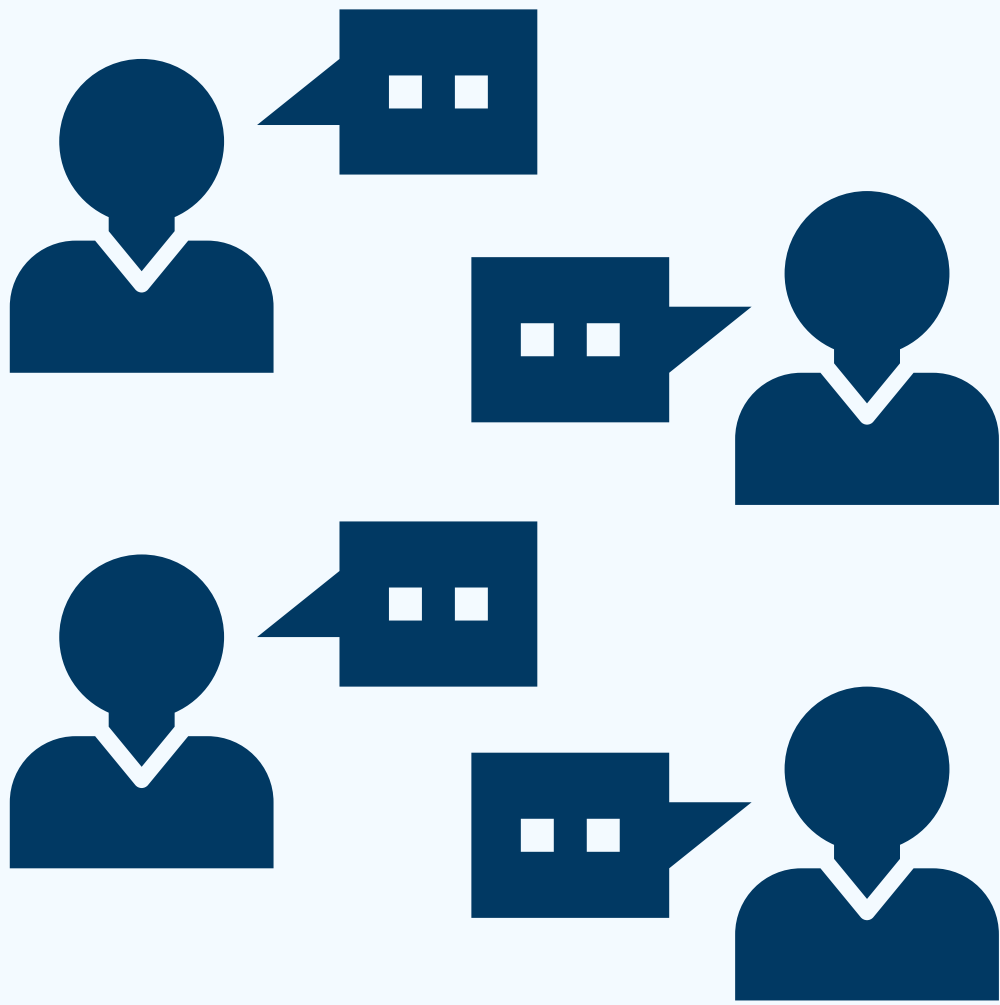


Challenges and adversity are a natural and normal part of life. Be open about your own frustration. Normalize your child's frustration. Promote a healthier ways of addressing those feelings.

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.





SAYING THE RIGHT WORDS

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

Approach the conversation with the right mindset:

Non –
Judgmental

No
Assumptions

Remain
Hopeful



"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

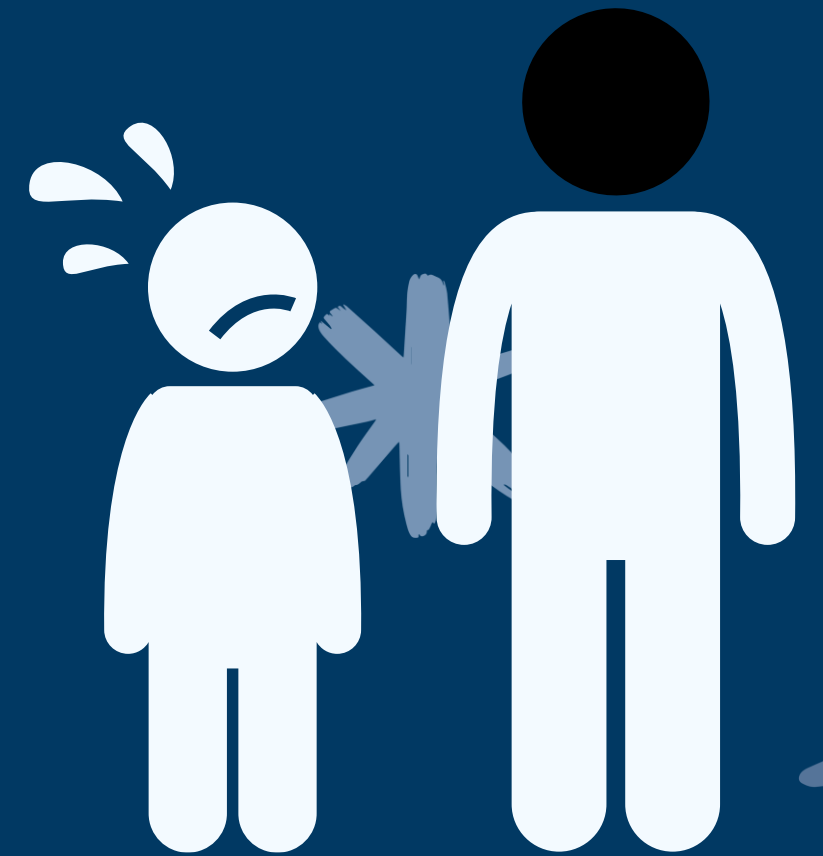
Do not label the process



BEING UNCOMFORTABLE IS OKAY!

Vulnerability is hard for everyone.

Recognize that your child may not
want to talk to you about these
issues.



THINGS TO AVOID

Patronizing or Punishing Language:

"What did you do?"

"You're being dramatic"

"You're doing it for attention"

"You shouldn't feel that way"

"Things aren't that bad"

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**

PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT

Do research

Involve your child in the process

Remember confidentiality

Get to know your child's therapist

Advocate for yourself and your child



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
865-247-6189
- 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/>





Healthy Mind Counseling
Compassion and Support + Expertise and Training



*The Middle Path, Inc.*TM



Cherokee
HEALTH SYSTEMS



**McNabb
Center**
WELL MIND, WELL BEING

Bearden Behavioral Health 

OUTPATIENT TREATMENT



Mobile Crisis
865-539-2409

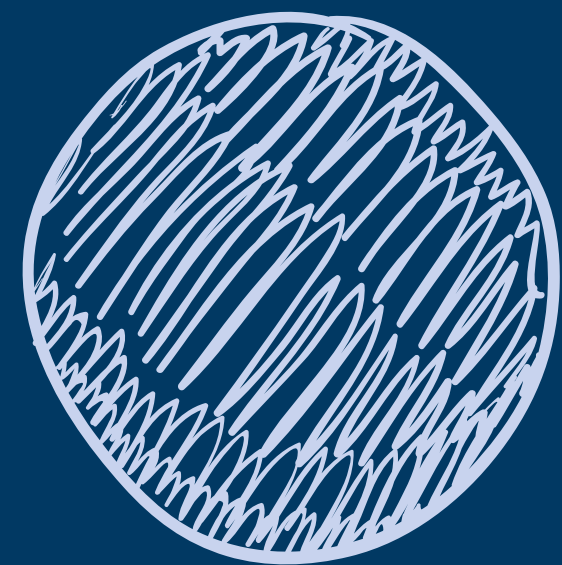
911

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

865-215-1179
KPD Non-Emergency

TN Crisis Line
855-274-7471

**CRISIS
SERVICES**



**ANY
QUESTIONS?**