I am thrilled to present the Mayor’s Office of Education and Youth Engagement’s groundbreaking “Youth Mental Health Guide.” This comprehensive resource is a testament to our commitment to the well-being of the young people in our community. As the Director, I am profoundly proud of the dedicated efforts that have gone into crafting a guide that addresses the critical need for mental health support among our youth.

In a world that is evolving at an unprecedented pace, our young citizens are facing unique challenges that can impact their mental health. Recognizing this, the Youth Mental Health Guide has been meticulously developed to serve as a beacon of support and empowerment for the youth in our community. It is a testament to our belief that every young person deserves access to the resources necessary to navigate the complexities of their wellness journey.

This guide is more than just a compilation of information; it is a lifeline for those seeking guidance and support. It offers a wealth of information on a range of topics, including identifying mental health concerns, seeking professional help, and accessing community resources. It is our hope that this guide will empower our youth to prioritize their mental well-being and encourage open conversations about mental health within our city.

To the youth who lent their voices to this project, thank you for your invaluable contribution. Your passion, creativity, and dedication to the well-being of your peers have made a lasting impact, and we are grateful for your involvement. It is through collaboration with young leaders that we can create resources that resonate with and genuinely support our community’s youth.
Mental health is for **EVERYONE**, and anyone can benefit from reading this guide. This guide can help you in your wellness journey by providing information on how to receive support and find the mental health resources you need.

The guide’s artwork is from the Center for School Behavioral Health’s annual Youth Art showcase at Mental Health America of Greater Houston. The ultimate aim of the showcase is to encourage open conversations between young people and adults about mental health, while promoting art as a means of healthy coping and expression and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health.

**DISCLAIMER:** THIS MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE IS A RESOURCE USED TO PROVIDE MORE AWARENESS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND IS NOT INTENDED AS A WAY TO DIAGNOSE OR GIVE MEDICAL ADVICE. THE INCLUSION OF ANY ORGANIZATION, AGENCY OR SERVICE IN THIS RESOURCE GUIDE DOES NOT IMPLY OR CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT OR RECOMMENDATION. THE CITY OF HOUSTON NEITHER GUARANTEES NOR MAKES ANY REPRESENTATIONS AS TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN ITS RESOURCE GUIDE. THE CITY OF HOUSTON DOES NOT CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ACTIONS TAKEN BY ANY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES INCLUDED IN THE RESOURCE GUIDE. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL THE CITY OF HOUSTON OR ITS EMPLOYEES BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, PUNITIVE OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES WHICH MAY RESULT IN ANY WAY FROM THE USE OF THE INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE GUIDE.
Balancing various responsibilities and problems can cause stress and affect your mental health negatively. Taking care of your mental health is as important as your physical health, as both will impact your well-being. Learn more about how to take care of your full self in this guide with MOEYE friends Mindy and Polly.

Meet the Authors!

Hi! I am Mindy, the Mayor’s Office friendly guide to navigating mental health and wellness. Look for Polly and me throughout the guide to find advice and important resources!

Hey there! I am Polly, Mindy’s bee friend. We are here to help you learn how to find balance and take care of your mental health.
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"Mental health is a continuous process of self-discovery and self-care. It can’t be fixed overnight, it's about taking small steps every day to prioritize your well-being.”
—Aysha, 16
Mental health is a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is important at every stage of life [1]. Mental health helps us process our feelings, maintain relationships with others, and navigate life’s challenges.

**Mental health is...**
- something everyone has
- closely linked to our physical health
- a sign of strength
- a lifelong journey
- essential for our overall well-being
- worth making time for
- important and real

**Mental health is NOT...**
- something you snap out of
- the absence of mental illness
- a sign of weakness
- always positive
- something to neglect
- based on fear
- fake news

Learn more about the facts and statistics on children’s mental health on [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](https://www.cdc.gov) [2].
DO I NEED SUPPORT?

I recently contacted a mental health counselor through my school’s wellness program. Initially, I was hesitant about seeking help, but the overwhelming stress and anxiety I was experiencing made me realize that I needed support. - Anonymous

If you answer “yes” to some of these questions, consider contacting a mental health professional.

- Are you finding it hard to keep up with your responsibilities?
- Have you been losing friends?
- Are you sleeping too little or too much?
- Is there something you used to do that no longer interests you?
- Have you been seeing your grades decrease?
- Are you feeling down most days?
- Are you worried you have a mental health illness?
- Have you experienced a traumatic event?
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA?

Mental health stigma is negative beliefs toward those with mental health conditions. It means someone is defined by their illness rather than who they are as an individual [3]. There are different types of stigma to be aware of, including:

SELF-STIGMA
When a person feels shame or blames themselves for their emotions or how they are doing mentally.

PUBLIC STIGMA
When people have negative attitudes toward those with mental health conditions.

CULTURAL STIGMA
When someone’s cultural background or community views mental health treatment as shameful and devaluing.

INSTITUTIONAL STIGMA
When public policies, purposely or accidentally, include actions that put people with mental health conditions at a disadvantage.

Learn more about mental health stigma on the American Psychiatric Association website [4].
have discussions with friends, family members, and those around you. Making change doesn’t always mean being in front of a big crowd speaking about these matters, it happens in the rooms you happen to be ... and creates a chain of change that blossoms into something bigger.

- Samiaht, 18

People feel reluctant to ask for help or commit to treatments due to shame and fear of being stigmatized.

A lack of understanding from family and friends can make people feel like there is nowhere to turn.

The government doesn’t allocate adequate funds toward psychiatric research or provide accessible public health services for those affected by mental health conditions.

According to a national analysis, Texas ranks last for mental health access [5], with residents having the least access to mental health care compared to the rest of the country.

To learn more, read “The Impacts of Pressures and Stigma” on Mental Health America [6].
It’s important to be mindful of the language we use when discussing mental health. Words can either reinforce stigma or promote understanding, so it’s essential to choose them carefully and with sensitivity. - Aysha, 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of…</th>
<th>Use…</th>
<th>Because…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He is schizophrenic.</td>
<td>He has schizophrenia.</td>
<td>A person has a diagnosis, rather than is the diagnosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t think about it.</td>
<td>Your feelings are valid.</td>
<td>Positive thinking isn’t the only solution. Toxic positivity deters people from seeking social support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay positive! Good vibes only!</td>
<td>I’m here to listen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It could be worse.</td>
<td>I hear you. What you’re going through is difficult.</td>
<td>Silencing emotions doesn’t make them go away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just get over it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s so crazy/insane.</td>
<td>That’s so surprising/unpredictable.</td>
<td>Catchall words draw on stereotypes and perpetuate mental health stigma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was so OCD this weekend.</td>
<td>I spent all day cleaning my house.</td>
<td>Using a mental health condition as an adjective or quirk minimizes the severity of the disorder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learn more about how person-first language reduces stigma on Mental Health First Aid [7].
Let people know it’s okay not to be okay and that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Share your experiences because it helps humanize the topic and makes a big impact. — Inioluwa

**Parents**
- Encourage open, nonjudgemental communication.
- Help your child understand and accept their feelings.
- To learn more, read “How to Talk About Mental Health with Your Child” on [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)](https://www.samhsa.gov) [8].

**Youth**
- Speak up when you hear people make discriminatory comments or jokes about mental illness.
- Encourage peers to learn more about mental health.
- Build your knowledge of mental health resources in the community.

**Educators**
- Teach students simple self-care techniques such as mindful meditation and deep breathing exercises.
- Cultivate an inclusive environment where students feel safe to ask for help.
- Invite mental health experts to speak to students about stress management before important exams.

To learn more, read “9 Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma” on [National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)](https://www.nami.org) [9].
BUILDING A SUPPORT NETWORK

“Remember, you don’t have to face it alone. Reach out to those around you for support.”
—Ruqayyah, 16
WHAT IS A SUPPORT NETWORK?

A support network includes family, friends, trusted adults, and anyone who contributes greatly to our well-being and success in life. They can help us better understand our emotions and give us a shoulder to lean on during tough times [10].

A strong support system can help us...

- See our best qualities
- Build our confidence
- See a different perspective
- Brainstorm steps to receive help
- Listen to us during difficult times
- Encourage us to take good care of ourselves
- Connect to resources and professional help
- Identify opportunities for personal and professional growth

To learn more, read "Developmental Relationships Help Young People Thrive" on Search Institute [11].
When discussing mental health, friends and trusted adults can be great sources of support, with different knowledge and access to resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why are these connections important?</th>
<th>Friends/ Peers</th>
<th>Trusted Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What does a healthy relationship look like?</strong></td>
<td>Sometimes, it’s more comfortable to talk to friends. They can be a good first step in looking for help.</td>
<td>Adults have more experience and can help us expand our support system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends respect our feelings and differences. They value who we are and cheer us up when we are down.</td>
<td>We feel safe around them. They listen to us without making us feel ashamed or judged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of mental health care</td>
<td>Friends share similar experiences with us and help us look for resources in the community.</td>
<td>Adults can help us navigate the health system and connect us to mental health professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can they help?</td>
<td>They can help us feel less alone and encourage us to make healthy choices.</td>
<td>They can help us learn more about mental health and get accommodations in school if necessary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mental health professionals are licensed healthcare providers who are trained to improve our mental health. They can identify and treat mental health conditions [12].

- Peer Specialist
- Social Worker
- Mental Health Counselor
- Behavior Specialist
- Therapist
- Psychologist
- Psychiatrist

You are not alone and counselors or family members are here to help and support you if you need help. Asking for help is okay and the only way that progress can be made. —Hope, 14

AT SCHOOL
- Wraparound Specialist
- School Administrator
- Counselor
- Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Care Coordinator
- Teacher/Teaching Aid
- Librarian
- Sports Coach
- Extracurricular Staff
- Resident Advisor

COMMUNITY ALLIES
- Parents/Guardians
- Other Family Members
- Family Friends
- After-School Program Staff
- Community Organizations
- Pastors, Clergy, Youth Ministries
- Neighbors
- Mentors

FINDING A TRUSTED ADULT

Read the Guide’s Glossary for definitions of different mental health professionals.

Alexandra - 14 - The Light on the Other Side
Don’t be afraid to share your struggles – vulnerability fosters connection. Surround yourself with understanding people, whether friends, family, or professionals. – Mariana, 17

**FINDING A TRUSTED ADULT**

Ask school administrators or teachers if there is someone at school you can talk to about your emotional or mental health needs.

Ask your friends and family if they can recommend someone who has helped them get through difficult times.

**ASK FOR SUGGESTIONS**

Think of adults with whom you feel safe and comfortable.

List everyone you think could be a trusted adult. Then, narrow it down to a few people who seem good fits for you.

Not all adults are trusted adults. Say no when they act inappropriately or guilt trip you into doing something you’re uncomfortable with.

**IDENTIFY TRUSTED ADULTS**

Not everyone understands what you’re going through or knows how to provide the support you need.

Identifying a trusted adult can take time, but there’s always someone out there who is ready and more than willing to listen to you. Don’t give up!

**BE PATIENT**

To learn more, read “Navigating Trust: Identifying Safe Adults in Your Circle” on We Ride Together [13].

Tkya - 17 - Family
“Opening up to a friend or peer can be easier and is a great FIRST step. My friends and I support each other by always checking up on each other, and making sure we are mentally doing okay.” —Anonymous
I used a mental health resource at school, and it was one of the best decisions I’ve made. We would have a weekly meeting about how to combat struggles. ... My counselor would also give me daily affirmations to help me be positive throughout the day. - Anonymous

Ms. Sylvia
I’ve been feeling overwhelmed.

I’m not eating much and have trouble falling asleep at night.

I’m sorry to hear that. Thank you for sharing it with me.

Why don’t we talk today after school? I would love to share some resources with you!

Talking to a coach:
Hi, Coach. I know we mainly talk about sports stuff, but I haven’t been doing well mentally. Could I talk to you or someone at school about how I’ve been feeling?

SCENARIO 1

Talking to a counselor:
Hi, Mr. Johnson. I’ve been having a lot of anxiety, but my parents don’t think what I’m going through is real. Would you mind setting an appointment with my parents and helping them learn more about mental health?

SCENARIO 2
“We must create open and non-judgmental spaces where young people can discuss their mental health concerns. Encouraging dialogue, empathy, and integrating mental health education into every young person’s life is a vital message for parents, educators, and policymakers to internalize. —Aysha, 16”

SCENARIO 1

Requesting professional help:
Nana, I’ve been feeling depressed lately. I’m not sure if it’s just because I’m sad or if it’s something more serious. Can we talk about it with a mental health professional?

SCENARIO 2

When your caregivers are skeptical:
Grandma, I know you’ve told me depression isn’t real, but is there any chance we can read this article together and talk about it? It’s about youth depression by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [14].

SCENARIO 3

Dealing with Financial Issues:
Hey Mom, I found some free/low-cost mental health services near us. Here is a list on the Mental Health America (MHA) [15] website. Could go over it together and see which one works best for our family?

SCENARIO 4

How to Manage Religious Barriers:
Dad, I haven’t been feeling well emotionally for a while now, and I need more than spiritual support. Could we find a mental health professional to help me take care of myself?

To learn more, read “Time to Talk: Talking to Your Parents” on Mental Health America (MHA) [16].
It’s okay to talk about [mental health] because it’s only human. The more we talk the better we can understand and be there for each other. Talking about our struggles can make our relations more meaningful... and stronger.

— Shania, 17

What’s going on? Why do you think so?

I’ve been feeling down lately, and TikTok said it could be depression.

May I take a look at the videos you’ve watched?

I see. I’m sorry that you’ve been feeling this way. However, it’s not a good idea to diagnose ourselves.

If you want, we can always talk to a mental health professional. They can help us work through our feelings and develop strategies to better navigate our mental health.

Got it. Thanks, Dad!

Absolutely! I’m always here for you.

Jaagat - 17 - Talking to Parents
I have struggled in the past to find help because my parents didn’t believe in mental health. I was able to find an alternative through my school -- they assigned me a counselor to aid me through any struggles I was facing in and outside of school. —Anonymous

Find a trusted adult who can explain the situation from an adult’s perspective. They can also help you brainstorm the best ways to approach your parents/caregivers.

Be patient. Just because they don’t understand your situation now, it doesn’t mean they never will.

To learn more, read “I’m afraid to talk to anyone about my mental health” on Mental Health America (MHA) [17].

LIMITED PARENTAL SUPPORT

• Find a trusted adult who can explain the situation from an adult’s perspective. They can also help you brainstorm the best ways to approach your parents/caregivers.

• Be patient. Just because they don’t understand your situation now, it doesn’t mean they never will.

• To learn more, read “How can I get help without family knowing” on Mental Health America (MHA) [18].
Comparing ourselves to what see on social media can lead to feelings of insecurities, and dissatisfaction, or being constantly critical of our bodies. - Samiaht, 18

**Mental Health Impact.** What you eat impacts your physical health (your body and how you move), similarly, what you see and hear on social media impacts your mental health (your brain and think about yourself and the world).

**Followers are not the same as friends.** Not everyone that follows you on social media has your best interest in mind. Be careful and notify a trusted adult if someone or someone feels suspicious or strange.

**Avoid Negativity and Harm.** Do not engage with groups that encourage unhealthy behaviors (pages that promote bulimia and anorexia, self-harm, suicidal thinking, hate, etc.) You are never required to answer anyone’s comments, especially if it takes a toll on your mental health. Put your safety first, and disengage from conversations and harassment.

**Finding Balance Online.** Pay attention to both the quantity and quality of the time spent in online spaces. Follow pages or groups that support your wellness.

**Manage Screen Time.** Work to fill that time with meaningful and fun activities offline.

**Finding Support**

- [The Importance of Safe Language On Social Media](#) from The Trevor Project.
- [Online Safety for LGBTQ Youth](#) from The Trevor Project.
- [Meta Family Center](#) has resources, insights and expert guidance to you and support your family’s online experiences.
MENTAL HEALTH LAWS

We all have the right to mental health. Knowing mental health laws can help us and our support system better understand the treatment process and service providers' legal responsibilities.

PARENTAL CONSENT

- Under Texas state law, if you’re under 18, you need parental consent to receive mental health care [19].

- However, there are specific situations where minors can consent to treatment. To learn more, read the Adolescent Health Guide for Providers by Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) [20].

CONFIDENTIALITY

- A physician is legally required to maintain the confidentiality of care provided to a minor, except when the law requires parental notification, parental consent, or the provider to report health information [23], [24].

- Psychotherapy notes are different from medical records. While you have the right to access your medical record, disclosure of psychotherapy notes is at the discretion of the mental health provider [25], [26].

MANDATED REPORTERS

- A working professional who has direct contact with children and notices signs of child abuse or neglect (e.g., injuries, changes in behaviors) is required by Texas law to contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) immediately [21].

- To learn more, read “When and How to Report Child Abuse” on DFPS [22].
PART 3

CONNECTING TO CARE

“I feel that there is still some judgment regarding reaching out for help, but there are actually more people than you think who have support.”
- Julia
MENTAL HEALTH CARE

“Choose based on how urgent and how much you need that support.”
- Alishba, 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Therapy</strong></td>
<td>One-on-one therapy sessions with a licensed mental health professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Therapy</strong></td>
<td>Family members meet with a mental health professional to improve their relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Therapy</strong></td>
<td>Participants learn and practice coping skills under the guidance of a mental health professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medication Management</strong></td>
<td>The process of working with a psychiatrist to evaluate the need for medication and/or monitor the effectiveness of medication plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To learn more, read “Mental Health Treatments” on Mental Health America (MHA) [31].
TREATMENT SETTINGS

The length of mental health care can vary depending on the person's needs. Below are the different ways mental health professionals can help you.

OUTPATIENT

- **Traditional Outpatient**
  - ~30-60 minutes session, 1-2 times a week (depending on your needs)
  - frequency of appointments depends on your needs and personal schedule

- **Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)**
  - typically 3 hrs/day, 3 days a week
  - provides both individual and group therapy

- **Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP)**
  - typically 5 hrs/day, 5 days a week
  - provides medication management in addition to individual and group therapy

IN-PATIENT

- **Inpatient Acute Care**
  - short-term hospital stay (30 days or less) for those who are in a crisis or psychiatric emergency
  - typically provides group therapy, medication management, and discharge planning (treatment coordination for continuity of care after leaving the hospital).

- **Inpatient Residential**
  - long-term stay (90 days or more) for those who need less intensive care in a home-like environment

To learn more, watch Psych Hub’s “Inpatient Behavioral Health” video on YouTube [32].
OTHER FORMS OF CARE

We had a mental health period during our finals week at school where pets offered support and relief during times of stress. This certainly alleviated my stress personally, and I know others could say the same. - Rosie

These therapies are complementary and do not substitute psychiatric care.

ART THERAPY
- A type of psychotherapy that helps us to explore self-expression through visual art, such as card-making, collage, and watercolor painting.
- Art therapy shifts our focus from difficult situations to self-worth and identity, helping us feel more relaxed and grounded. It also encourages us to form healthy and creative coping skills [33].

MUSIC THERAPY
- A form of treatment that helps us manage our mental health conditions through music: singing, playing instruments, or simply listening and sharing how it makes you feel.
- Music therapy is a powerful tool for emotional release and self-reflection. It helps us take a step back and see how our thoughts and feelings affect our behaviors [34].

PET THERAPY
- A type of therapeutic intervention that incorporates animals into our treatment plan. Animals are nonjudgmental listeners. By directing our attention to another living being, we can feel less alone and anxious.
- Pet therapy can help us explore and understand our feelings. Animals live in the moment and accept us as we are. Some of us may even find it easier to talk about our emotions in the presence of an animal [35]!
I’ve learned that seeking support is not a sign of weakness but an act of courage. It’s okay not to have everything figured out... progress may be gradual, but every step counts. - Mariana, 17

**WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?**

- Learning how to take care of myself physically and mentally
- Identifying people who can be in my support system
- Reaching out to friends, parents, or teachers when we need help
- Asserting my needs to my parents
- Asking for accommodations in school
- Utilizing resources in my school and community
- Understanding my rights as a patient (if hospitalized for a crisis)

**PATIENT RIGHTS**

- We have the right to receive informed care and participate in treatment decisions. Below are some examples of Patient Rights:
  - **Patient Rights** - [American Medical Association (AMA) Code of Medical Ethics](#) [36]
  - **The Pediatric Bill of Rights** - [Society of Pediatric Nurses](#) [37]

- If you feel you have been unfairly treated or denied services or accommodation, contact the [Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Civil Rights Office](#) [38] and file a complaint.
When we look for mental health support, many of the words and phrases we run into can be very confusing. This is why we dedicated the next few pages to breaking down these terms so you can use the right words to describe your experience and get the help you need.

- in-network providers
- out-of-network benefits
- ROI
- sliding scale
- waitlist
- insurance
- HIPPA
The biggest thing I’ve run into is not wanting to tell other people about my weaknesses or imperfections. I’m still looking for a solution to that problem. - Scotia, 15

ACCESS TO CARE

- In Houston’s three-county area (Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery), there is only 1 mental health professional for every 800 residents, significantly less than the average provider availability in the nation [5].

- Due to limited providers and treatment facilities, those who live in rural, low-income areas have even less access to mental health care [5].

- Despite having insurance or financial assistance, many are discouraged from seeking help because of the high mental health service costs. Some have to choose between paying for daily necessities and mental health treatments [5].

RACE & CULTURE

- The fear of facing discrimination can create a barrier to seeking support. People may worry that if they disclose their mental health struggles, they might be treated differently at school, in the workplace, or at family gatherings.

- Mental health stigma is higher among racial and ethnic minorities, partly due to cultural differences, language barriers, and lack of representation in the mental health workforce [39].

Although mental health disparities can’t be solved overnight, we have the power to educate ourselves and raise awareness in our community. With time, we can remove barriers and make mental health care more accessible and equitable.
Some mental health providers offer reduced fees for those with limited income. To see which practices accept Medicaid or provide lower rates, read the “Mental Health Services” list compiled by the Texas Children’s Hospital.

“Mental health resources can be expensive if not covered by insurance. Luckily our insurance does cover virtual therapist resources.”
- Anonymous

HEALTH INSURANCE

- Health insurance can help us receive medical treatments without paying the full cost. Most health plans have mental health benefits, which cover expenses such as medication, visits to mental health providers, emergency care, and hospital stays.

- Start by asking your parents/guardians what type of health insurance you have and if your plan covers mental health care.

- If you have insurance, you can call the number on the back of your insurance card, find a list of in-network providers on the insurance company’s website, or call the healthcare provider’s office to confirm if they are part of your plan’s network.

- If you DO NOT have insurance, consider reaching out to your Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) [40], e.g., The Harris Center [41]. LMHAs provide a wide range of public outpatient mental health services for a small co-pay or a low sliding-scale fee.

SLIDING SCALE

- Some mental health providers offer reduced fees for those with limited income.

- To see which practices accept Medicaid or provide lower rates, read the “Mental Health Services” list compiled by the Texas Children’s Hospital [42].

STILL NOT SURE?

- If your parents can’t help or need more information, contact your LMHA (e.g., The Harris Center at 713-970-7000).

- They will help answer your questions and connect you to resources in your community.
My ethnicity impacted my mental health journey, as my culture doesn’t believe in mental health. Having a therapist helped me discover my identity and what I struggle with. -Anonymous

**CULTURAL HUMILITY**

- A framework that helps clinicians acknowledge their biases and recognize the complexity of identities [43].
- It involves respecting clients’ beliefs and empathizing with their lived experiences.

**CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

- An ongoing developmental process in which clinicians strive to learn more about different cultural values and practices [44].
- It is a necessary skill for clinicians to effectively work with culturally and ethically diverse populations.

**WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

Clinicians who practice cultural humility and cultural competence are:

- knowledgeable about your cultural background,
- genuinely interested in understanding your identity and engaging you in collaborative treatment planning,
- willing to adapt their counseling approach to your unique needs, and
- able to empower you to open up your feelings and difficult conversations [45].
FINDING A THERAPIST

“The counselor provided a safe space where I felt heard and not judged. We worked on developing coping strategies that for daily life, and connected me with additional resources. This experience has significantly improved my mental well-being, It’s reassuring to know there’s no shame in using them. - Anonymous

TIPS FOR YOUR SEARCH

- **Ask** family members, school counselors, primary care doctors, or trusted friends for recommendations.

- **Check** your therapist’s credentials and **verify** if they accept your insurance plan. If not, check with your insurance company to see if you have **out-of-network benefits** (i.e., paying the full amount upfront and then getting reimbursed by the insurance company).

- **Identify your preference.** Do you prefer someone who specializes in specific mental health conditions or someone who shares a similar cultural background as you?

- **Be open and honest.** Share your goals with your therapist and tell them about the values and beliefs that are important to you [46].

WAITLIST

If you get put on a waitlist, don’t worry! Here are some steps you can take in the meantime:

- Call **911, 988**, or your **local crisis hotline** if you’re in an emergency.
- Ask the provider if they could **refer** you to one of their colleagues or give you a list of low-cost agencies in your area.
- Find a **support group** (e.g., **Re:MIND**) [47].
- Remember to take care of yourself! Consider building a **self-care toolbox** to help alleviate any stress or anxiety. To learn more, read “My Coping Toolbox” from **Barnardo’s Education Community** [48].
SWITCHING THERAPISTS

The dynamic with our therapists can greatly impact our personal growth. If you feel like your therapist isn’t the right fit for you, it’s okay to make a switch.

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

- **Unhealthy boundaries**. Your therapist talks about their personal life excessively, gives unsolicited advice, pushes their values on you, or violates the codes of ethics.

- **Lack of progress**. You are not making positive changes or find it difficult to be vulnerable and open up to your therapist.

- **Lack of professionalism**. Your therapist frequently shows up late, reschedules appointments, or checks the phone during sessions.

- **Unfair judgments**. Your therapist is insensitive to your identity, religion, or cultural background. You feel judged and embarrassed.

NEXT STEPS

- **Communicate with your current therapist**. If you’re ready to switch therapists, let your current therapist know (in person or by email) and ask them to transfer records to your new provider.

- **Reflect on what didn’t work**. Identify what’s missing from your current therapeutic relationship, then make a list of qualities you want from your new therapist.

- **Prepare for your first session**. Write down a few things you want to discuss in your first session. Reiterating your life story might feel daunting, but it’s always helpful for your new therapist to learn more about your background.

Tips from Mindy:

Signing a Release of Information (ROI) form could be an option to catch your new therapist up to speed. Your health information is protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which prevents any sensitive health information from being disclosed without your consent. A signed ROI form allows your new therapist to contact your previous provider regarding your treatment there.
PART 4

RESOURCE GUIDE

“It's reassuring to know that resources are available and that there's no shame in using them.”
-Aysha, 16
IDENTIFYING AN EMERGENCY

This page contains resources to help you connect to mental health care. If you or someone you know is at risk of harming self or others, or in any imminent danger, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

COMMON WARNING SIGNS

- Isolating or withdrawing from school, family, or friends
- Displaying drastic changes in mood or personality
- Experiencing overwhelming emotional pain and feelings of extreme guilt, hopelessness, and worthlessness.
- Giving away personal possessions and saying goodbye
- Engaging in high-risk or self-destructive behavior
- Researching ways to die; making plans to harm self or others

To learn more, read the “Navigating a Mental Health Crisis” resource guide by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) [52].

WHAT TO DO WHEN...

I am in a crisis:

If you believe you are in a mental health crisis, please tell someone you trust. You’re not a burden. You deserve to be listened to and cared for.

- Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.
- Call or text 988 to connect with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline [53]. Support is free, available 24/7, and accessible via live chat [54].
- Para ayuda en español, llame al 988.

Someone I know is in a crisis:

If you notice any of the above warning signs, stay calm and assess the immediacy of the situation.

- Start the conversation by asking the person about the warning signs you’ve noticed. Listen and focus on being understanding and nonjudgmental.
- If the person needs emergency assistance, call 911. Don’t leave them alone unless you don’t feel safe around them [55].
Hotlines are for emergency services, whereas Helplines offer non-urgent assistance (e.g., confidential support and community resources). The resources listed below are all free and available 24/7.

**Hotlines**

- **988 Lifeline Chat and Text** [53]
  - For those who are in a crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts.
  - Call or Text 988.
- **Houston Area Women’s Center (HAWC)** [56]
  - For anyone who experienced domestic or sexual violence.
  - Domestic Violence: 713-528-2121
  - Sexual Assault: 713-528-7273
  - Teletype (TTY): 346-295-8994

**Helplines**

- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline** [57]
  - For those who are in emotional distress due to natural or human-caused disasters.
  - Call or text 800-985-5990.
- **Texas Youth Helpline** [58]
  - For those who are looking for counseling, shelter, legal resources, pregnancy information, free rides for runaway youth, or just someone to talk to.
  - Call or Text 800-989-6884.

---

**MCOT**

The Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) [59] is a 24/7 crisis intervention mobile team at The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD [60].

- MCOT includes Psychiatrists, Registered Nurses, Licensed Clinicians, Psychiatric Technicians, and Peer Specialists.
- It provides psychiatric assessment, brief therapy, and intensive case management.
- MCOT also offers referrals to primary healthcare, mental health and substance use treatments, legal services, vocational support, and rehabilitation programs.
- Call 713-970-7000 or Text 832-479-2135.

---

Tips from Mindy:

If you’re not sure what to say when calling for help, here’s an example:

*Hello, this is (name). I’m (age) years old. I’ve been struggling with my mental health lately, but my parents don’t want to listen to me. I don’t know what to do. Can you help me?*
# USING ONLINE RESOURCES

> Use reliable sources...Stick to reputable websites, such as government health agencies, academic institutions, or well-known mental health organizations. - Max, 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to read and process new information at your own pace.</td>
<td>Information could be inaccurate or confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility to access information from anywhere at anytime.</td>
<td>Not everyone has reliable internet or access to compatible devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to learn about others' lived experience.</td>
<td>Difficult to capture the nuances surrounding mental illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient links to browse a vast sea of information.</td>
<td>Identifying trustworthy sources could be overwhelming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of mental health terminologies.</td>
<td>Potential to fall into the trap of self-diagnosing mental illness.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**RESOURCE CREDIBILITY**

*Make sure that they seek advice from credible websites to get the best information and help you need.* -Ruqayyah, 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credible Resources</th>
<th>Non-Credible Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publisher</strong></td>
<td>Personal blogs, commercial websites, social media posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>URL ends in .gov (government), .edu (universities), or .org (organizations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeliness</strong></td>
<td>Copyright date in the website’s footer is several years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website is actively maintained and has current information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>Website is poorly edited and proofread. Information is biased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spelling or grammatical errors. Information is neutral and objective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>Information is not reviewed by qualified professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors have expertise in the subject matter at hand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>TikTok, Reddit, Depression Tests Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Center for Disease Control (CDC) [60]; National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) [61]]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tips from Mindy:**
Try NOT to use online screening tools. They are not clinical diagnoses and often oversimplify situations. To learn more about the dangers of self-diagnosing, read "Social Media and Self-diagnosis" on [Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital] [62].
**SERVICE DIRECTORY**

- **211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE** [63]- Free and available 24/7. Information and Referral staff can help you find resources in your area.
- **Mental Health America (MHA) of Greater Houston** [64] - MHA’s *Youth Resource Guide* is a comprehensive list of behavioral health services for youth in the Greater Houston area.
- **Psychology Today** [65] - An extensive directory of mental health providers, support groups, and treatment centers.
- **Therapy for Black Girls** [66] - A therapist database designed to address the mental health needs of Black women and girls.
- **LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory** [67] - A free database of healthcare professionals who are knowledgeable and sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ+ patients.

**FREE/LOW-COST**

- **Baylor College of Medicine** [68] - The *Teen Health Clinic* offers free or low-cost services to those aged 13-23.
- **Family Services of Greater Houston** [69] - Multilingual counselors offer services on a sliding scale. All major insurance plans and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) are accepted.
- **University of Houston** [70] - The *Lone Star Circle of Care* is a clinic that provides low-cost/sliding-scale services.
- **re:MIND** [71] - Free, confidential support groups facilitated by trained and supervised mental health professionals. It also has a Youth Program that supports schools in Houston.
- **Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)** [72] - HHSC’s *Medical Transportation Program* allows families with Medicaid to request non-emergency rides to pharmacies and doctor’s appointments.
Hey queen/king/non-binary royalty equivalent, your feelings are valid and life can definitely be super hard... It’s totally okay to feel alone and not to have everything figured out now. Take each day as it comes, and don’t hesitate to reach out. -Rehman

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

- **You matter.** Being LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) is **NOT** a mental health disorder. You deserve to be your authentic self and be treated with respect.

- **Gather support.** Identify allies and find resources in your community (e.g., Hatch Youth at The Montrose Center) [73].

- **Advocate for yourself.** If you’re bullied at school because of your sexual orientation or gender identity (SO/GI), document everything and speak to a trusted adult.

Tips for Loved Ones:

- **Be a visible advocate.** Stand up for those who are harassed or discriminated against because of their SO/GI.

- **Use inclusive language.** Refer to people using their gender-affirming names and pronouns. Respect their evolving identity and celebrate who they are.

- **Be mindful.** Outing (i.e., disclosing) someone’s SO/GI can have a major impact on their safety. Don’t out anyone without their permission. Let them take the lead.

RESOURCES

- **Resources for Transgender Youth in Texas** [74] - *Free to Be Me: A Toolkit to Protect LGBTQIA+ Students’ Rights* is a guide on how to practice, defend, and advocate for students’ rights.

- **The Trevor Project** [75] - The *Coming Out Handbook* helps youth explore their identities and figure out what being out means to them.

- **Equality Texas** [76] - The *Mental Health Toolkit* helps caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth recognize risk factors and signs of mental health struggles.

- **Human Rights Campaign (HRC)** [77] - The *Welcoming Schools* program includes resources for educators to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ students.

Abigail - 18 - A Little Ball of Hope
Everyone is human, and everyone is different. Whether you’re different through your hair color, skin color, or the way you think. At then end of the day. We’re all still human. -Scotia

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

- **Share your feelings.** If you are stressed out or can’t focus in class because of your immigration status, consider reaching out to a trusted school teacher or counselor. They can provide emotional support and help you look for mental health resources in the community.
- **Take care of your mental wellbeing.** Create a coping toolbox with relaxation exercises and self-care activities (e.g., Mental Health Toolbox from United We Dream) [78].
- **Empower yourself.** Volunteer at local immigrant advocacy groups or legal aid organizations. Know your rights [79] if you encounter law enforcement.

Tips for Loved Ones:

- **Create a supportive environment.** Encourage open and honest conversations about their feelings, fears, and concerns.
- **Be resourceful.** Make a list of health clinics that offer free/low-cost services to undocumented families.
- **Build a support network.** Connect with other newcomers. Participate in cultural events to help them feel connected to their heritage and community.

RESOURCES

- **Texas Children’s Hospital** [80] - The Greater Houston Low-Cost Clinic List, created by the Program for Immigrant and Refugee Child Health (PIRCH), contains clinics’ phone numbers, addresses, and specialties.
- **Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative (HILSC)** [81] - The Immigrant Resource Hotline (1-833-468-4664) provides updates on immigration laws, referrals to free/low-cost legal and social services, and resources on disaster recovery. It's available Tue.-Fri., 9am-5pm (except holidays).
- **Informed Immigrant** [82] - The Resource Library has information on education, legal help, and healthcare services for undocumented immigrants.
- **UndocuWisdom** [83] - The website contains stories, advice, and life lessons from undocumented youth.
Youth with disabilities often face unique challenges that can impact their mental health. Understanding and addressing these challenges is essential for promoting well-being and fostering a supportive environment.

**FINDING SUPPORT**

**Tips for Youth:**
- **Embrace your strengths:** Focus on what you do well. Everyone has unique talents and abilities.
- **Connect with peers:** Join groups or clubs that share your interests. Finding friends with similar experiences can be empowering.
- **Practice self-advocacy:** Communicate your needs and preferences to teachers, caregivers, and peers. To learn more, read “10 Self-Advocacy Tips” on Disability Rights Texas [84].

**Tips for Loved Ones:**
- **Educate yourself:** Understand the specific needs and challenges associated with the youth’s disability.
- **Offer emotional support:** Provide a safe space for the youth to express their feelings and concerns.
- **Foster self-confidence:** Encourage the youth to try new things and celebrate their achievements.

**RESOURCES**

- **Nexus Health** [85] - Treats medically complex children and adults.
- **Disability Rights Texas** [86] - Assists those with disabilities in Texas with accessibility, community living, education, employment, health care, housing, protection and civil rights, transportation, and civil rights.
- **Texas Health & Human Services (HHS)** [87] - The Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECI) is a statewide program for families with children with disabilities and developmental delays.
- **Family to Family Network** [88] - Education and training, referrals, and support for families with children with disabilities.
YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Foster care is not easy for anyone. Learning how to take care of our mental health can help us recover from difficult experiences and become more resilient.

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

• Be kind to yourself. Feeling scared or frustrated is part of being human. Don’t let your circumstances define who you are. Learn what triggers you and when to hit pause.

• Find a trusted mentor. They can help you navigate life challenges and offer insights on how to build your own support system after foster care.

• Know your rights. You have the right to live in a safe and healthy home. Report to your foster care coordinator if you feel violated, abused, or neglected. To learn more, read the Texas Foster Care Handbook for Youth by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) [89].

Tips for Loved Ones:

• Show up and connect. Be open and understanding. Do regular emotional wellness check-ins with them and listen to what they have to say.

• Seek ongoing education and training. Create a nurturing environment and learn about trauma-informed foster care.

• Make time for self-care. Being a caregiver can be both rewarding and overwhelming. You are enough. Don’t forget to take a break and breathe.

RESOURCES

• The HAY Center [90] - A program that offers services to current and former foster youth, including life skills training, peer advocacy, and transition coaching.

• The Riverside Project [91] - A nonprofit that provides resources for foster families as well as training for Foster Care Babysitter Certification and Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)® for Caregivers [92].

• Sunrise Lofts [93] - Housing for those who are transitioning out of foster care. It also has counseling, education support, and vocational training.

• DePelchin Children’s Center [94] - It provides support for foster care placement, trauma-informed training, and in-home case management.

Cameron - 13 - Strength Within
“...The absence of pain is not enough to stop the suffering, youth need opportunities to step away from the rush of life so they can fill their moments with joyous experiences.

- Shania, 17
Meet Mindy and Polly

Life can sometimes be a bumpy ride, but I’ve learned a few tricks to stay happy and strong. I listen to my feelings, take breaks for fun activities like coloring, and always remember to be patient with myself and surround myself with supportive friends like Polly. I can help you navigate life’s twists and turns by sharing resources and buzzworthy mental health tips!
Gratitude is one of our most powerful emotions. Keeping a gratitude journal can help us focus on what we have, not what we lack. It helps us take a moment to reflect on simple things that bring us joy, and invite more happiness and positivity into our lives.

What am I grateful for at this moment?

- 
- 
- 

What do I appreciate about myself?

- 
- 
- 

Today’s Affirmation

An affirmation is a statement to help reprogram our mind to think positive! Positive affirmations help us to improve ourselves, accept ourselves, and achieve our dreams.
Did you know confidence can be a superpower? Use this Confidence Journal to reflect on your past, value your present self, and appreciate what you have gained along the way!

Our confidence can grow when we appreciate how far we’ve come.

3 difficulties I have overcome:

3 things that make me feel safe:

3 things I have learned about life:

3 things I value the most:

3 things I am good at:

3 compliments I’ve received:
Our mental health is like a car engine—it needs regular check-ups and maintenance to keep it running properly. Self-care is all about how to take care of our mind and body. It means taking time to do things that help keep us functioning at our best.

Below is a checklist of activities that can help you recharge your mental health battery!

- Take a walk outside
- Doodle in your journal
- Stretch all your muscles
- Eat a healthy snack
- Watch something funny
- Make a vision board
- Practice meditation
- Bake Cookies
- Tidy up your bedroom
- Take photos of nature
- Drink a cup of warm tea
- Water your plants
- Stay offline for a day
- Listen to calming music
- Visit the school library
- Take a power nap
- Eat a healthy snack
- Make a vision board
- Water your plants
- Listen to calming music
- Cuddle with your pet

Name:

Date:
Mood Trackers can be simple yet powerful tools that help us process our feelings mindfully. By monitoring our emotions consistently, we can identify what affects our moods and make changes to feel better! Record your moods and be your own mental health guardian!

Today I feel...

Emotions can be difficult to explain in words. If your feelings had colors, shapes, or textures, what would they look like? Go with your intuition and draw them below!

I feel this way because...

To take care of myself, I will...

Hint: Check out the Feelings Wheel on the next page!
Have you ever found it difficult to find the right word to describe your feelings? The Feelings Wheel can help! Dr. Gloria Willcox [96] created the Feelings Wheel to help people recognize their emotions more accurately, serving as a starting point for getting the support we need.

How are you feeling today? What are your emotions trying to tell you?

Source: Adapted from Mindful Coaching Tools [97]
Sometimes we feel like we have to face the world alone. Having a support network can give us more strength and resilience when we go through difficult times. They are trusted people who respect us and make us feel seen and understood.

Fill out this page and keep it handy in case you need extra support!

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________
This person is important to me because...

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________
This person is important to me because...

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________
This person is important to me because...

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________
This person is important to me because...

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________
This person is important to me because...

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________
This person is important to me because...
Breathe in slowly and breathe out while making a bee humming sound. Cover your ears with your hands to feel the soothing and calming vibration [100].

---

**Box Breathing**

- Start at the bottom left of the square.
- Trace your finger up the side, while you take a deep breath in.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds as you trace the second side.
- Breathe out as you slide down the other side.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds, as you trace the bottom of the square [98].

---

**Cupcake Breathing**

Imagine you are holding a cupcake. Take a deep breath in and smell the frosting, then blow out the candle [99]!

---

**Bumble Bee Breathing**

Breathe in slowly and breathe out while making a bee humming sound. Cover your ears with your hands to feel the soothing and calming vibration [100].
Hi friend! As a bee, one thing I know is that nature is always changing. Finding a noticing window where we can pay attention to nature, allows us to pause, appreciate nature, and practice mindfulness. This can help you feel more grounded and understand your emotions better. And you might see me smelling flowers and filling my belly with delicious nectar!

Observe nature and use the space below to write about what you see...
Mindful Drawing Exercises

Contour Line Drawing
- Study the object and draw without lifting your pencil!
- Go back over lines to emphasize or move across the page.
- No erasing, coloring, or shading.

Blind Contour Line Drawing
- Contour Line Drawing with a twist!
- Follow the same rules, except this time, you aren’t allowed to look down at your paper while drawing!

Gesture Drawing
- Study your object and draw as much as you can in 2 minutes!
- Forget about mistakes. Make your drawing bold!

Non-Dominant Hand
- Draw with your “bad” hand.
- You may look at the object and your paper, but your focus should be primarily on the object!

Draw the Negative Space
- Study the area around and behind the object.
- Draw the space around the object, but don’t draw the actual object!

Tip: Try doodling absentmindedly. Don’t overthink. Just draw!
Postcards

Send this postcard to a friend, family member, or other person in your life! Tell them you value them and care about their mental health!

ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU ARE...

- UNIQUE AND SPECIAL
- VALUED AND LOVED
- HEARD AND SUPPORTED
- STRONG AND COURAGEOUS
- WORTHY AND TALENTED

Scan here to learn more about taking care of yourself with the City of Houston Youth Mental Health Guide!
Thank you for being who you are ...

If you or someone you know is in a crisis or needs emotional support call 988. There are people ready to help.

Address:

If you or someone you know is in a crisis or needs emotional support call 988. There are people ready to help.

Address:
Mental Health Terms

**Mental Health**: a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity

**Mental Illness**: a wide range of health conditions that impact one's thinking, mood, behavior, and emotions

**Anxiety**: a mental condition characterized by feelings of tension, apprehension, or worry, and may lead to avoidant behavior or physical signs like increased blood pressure or muscle tension

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**: a condition linked to attention difficulty, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness, possibly causing low self-esteem, trouble in relationships, and issues in school or work

**Bipolar Disorder**: a mental illness characterized by alternating periods of strong excitement and happiness and periods of sadness and depression

**Depression**: a mental disorder marked by persistent sadness and loss of interest in activities, causing significant problems in daily life

**Eating Disorder**: a range of conditions related to persistent eating behaviors that negatively impact health, emotions, and ability to function in daily life

**Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**: a disorder linked to unreasonable thoughts or fears causing compulsive or repetitive behaviors

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**: a disorder following a traumatic event that may cause intense emotional or physical reactions

**Substance Use Disorder**: the excessive use of psychoactive substances, such as alcohol or illicit drugs, that may lead to physical, social, or emotional harm

**Suicidal Ideation**: a term used to describe contemplations, wishes, and preoccupations with death and suicide
Mental Health Professionals

**Behavioral Specialist**: a psychological counselor who specializes in treating individuals with behavioral issues that impair social functions

**Health Care Provider**: Under federal regulations, a "health care provider" is defined as a doctor of medicine or osteopathy, podiatrist, dentist, chiropractor, clinical psychologist, optometrist, nurse practitioner, nurse-midwife, or clinical social worker who is authorized to practice by the State and performs within the scope of their practice as defined by State law.

**Peer Specialist**: an individual with lived experience who has been trained to help others with mental health, trauma, and substance issues

**Psychiatrist**: a medical practitioner (an M.D. or D.O) who specializes in mental health and is able to diagnose and treat mental illnesses

**Psychologist**: an expert in psychology who studies mental states, emotions, and behavior; often, their work focuses on experimentation and observation focused on individuals and how they relate to one another

**Social Worker**: a professional who helps people with social disadvantages or personal issues within a community

**Telehealth**: virtual visit with a healthcare provider

**Therapist**: a person who has been trained in and practices one or more types of therapy to treat mental or physical disorders

**Wraparound Service**: holistic care systems that focus on goals highlighted by the child, their family, and a care team
REFERENCES


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Tips from Mindy:
Scan the QR code on the right to access the digital City of Houston Youth Mental Health Guide!
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Youth Contributors
Ashley Scott  Lauren Williams
Ebony Jones  Nicole Kwan
Jared Lewis  Samiaht Busari
Jaagat Prashar  Scotia Linn
Kendall Pierce  City of Houston Youth Ambassadors
Rebecca Mejia

The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
Mayor’s Office of Education & Youth Engagement
The City of Houston
Education & Youth Engagement
901 Bagby St., 4th Floor,
Houston, TX 77002

What do you think about the guide? Scan the QR code or email us your feedback!

Find the guide at www.houstontx.gov/education.
moedu@houstontx.gov