LIFE IS A JUGGLING ACT

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.
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.
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INTRODUCTION

Learn the basics of mental health, stigma, and how to confront stigma
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is the way we think and feel about ourselves and the world around us. It also determines how we deal with life’s challenges, relate to and interact with others, and the choices we make.

**Mental health is ...**
- Something everyone has
- A way to live a fulfilling life
- A sign of strength
- A lifelong journey
- Emotionally complex
- Worth making time for
- Important and real

**Mental health is NOT...**
- Something you should snap out of
- Something to neglect
- A sign of weakness
- Always involving positive experiences
- The same as mental illness
- A life based on fear
- Fake news

To learn more about children’s mental health and see facts and statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **click here**.
DO I NEED SUPPORT?

Life’s ups and downs are natural and essential to our growth. If your thoughts or feelings are negatively affecting your daily life, however, it might be time to reach out for support.

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 have a mental health illness?
- Have you experienced a traumatic event?
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA?

Mental health stigma is when someone judges or sees themselves or others in a negative way because of their mental health struggles. 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 others have negative attitudes towards people with mental health conditions.

**CULTURAL STIGMA**

When there is a belief that an individual’s behavior is affected by the culture of the society to which they belong.

**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 at the American Psychiatric Association website.
Individuals with mental health conditions might hesitate to seek help or commit to their treatments, which may make them feel more excluded from their family, friends, or peers.

When someone’s support structures (parents, educators, friends) don’t believe that someone should seek help, it can feel like there is nowhere to turn for it.

The government may not allot adequate funds towards researching mental illness or providing accessible public health services for individuals affected by mental health conditions.

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

To learn more see this Mental Health America blog post, “The impacts of pressures and stigma.”
REDDUCING STIGMA

Stigma surrounding mental health is a real problem, and it can make mental health issues worse or prevent individuals from seeking help. Below are some ways to address and reduce mental health stigma.

Be cautious about the jokes and sayings you make because they reduce the seriousness of the condition (example: I’m so OCD).

Speak up when you hear people around you make negative or incorrect comments about mental illness.

No one should be criticized or made fun of for seeking medical help, whether it’s for a physical ailment or a mental health condition. Let’s make sure that seeking therapy or treatment for mental health is treated with the same level of respect and empathy as physical health.

Look up "9 Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma" from the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) or click here.
REDUCING STIGMA

Your friends, family, and school community can be great allies in the fight against stigma. See below for ways they can help.

Parents can talk with their kids about understanding and accepting their emotions. To learn more go to SAMHSA: How to talk about mental health.

Students can speak out against stigma and encourage peers to understand the importance of mental health while seeking support for themselves and others.

Educators can develop class or lesson plans that teach students about the importance of mental health.

Aliah - 11 - Happy In Green

Roxia - 18 - Family First

Keerthana - 17 - Education Empowers
PART 2
BUILDING A SUPPORT NETWORK
Learn how to identify and connect with allies who can support your mental health journey

Angel - 15- Familia
WHAT IS A SUPPORT NETWORK?

A support network of family, friends, and adult allies can contribute greatly to your well-being and success in life. They can also help you feel better by taking your concerns seriously and learning about your needs.

Here are other ways a strong support network can help you overcome life challenges or barriers:

- See your best qualities
- Build your confidence
- See a different perspective
- Brainstorm steps to receive help
- Listen to you during difficult times
- Encourage you to make healthy choices
- Connect to resources and professional help
- Identify opportunities for personal and professional growth

To learn more about the benefits of having an adult ally, go to “Developmental Relationships Help Young People Thrive.”
FINDING SUPPORT

There are always people in your family or in your community happy to help and waiting for you to reach out. The key is not to give up and keep connecting with people you feel safe with and can be your champions.

TIPS ON FINDING ALLIES

- Ask school administrators or teachers if there is someone at school you can talk to about your emotional or mental health needs
- Think about which people you feel safe and comfortable being around
- Ask your friends and family if they recommend someone who has helped them get through difficult times
- Think of adults who are respectful, non-judgmental, helpful and trustworthy
- Be patient, identifying a trusted adult can take time.

Not every adult is going to be sensitive to your needs or be the right fit. To learn more about qualities to look for in a trusted adult, see “The Search Institute Developmental Relationships.”
FINDING SUPPORT

SCHOOL ALLIES

- Wraparound Specialists
- School Administrators
- Counselors
- Social Workers
- School nurses
- Care Coordinators
- Teachers/Teaching Aids
- Librarians
- Coaches/Dance Instructors
- Extracurricular Adult Staff
- Resident Advisors

COMMUNITY ALLIES

- Parents/Guardians
- Other family members
- Family friends
- After-School Program Staff
- Community organizations
- Pastors, clergy, youth ministries
- Neighbors
- Mentors

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- Peer Specialists
- Social Workers/LSW
- Mental Health Counselors
- Behavior Specialists
- Therapists
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists

See the glossary for definitions of mental health professionals

Alexandra - 14 - The Light on the Other Side

You Aren't Alone

(There is always someone who won't make you feel alone.)
When discussing mental health, friends and adult allies can be great sources of support, with different knowledge and access to resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Why are these connections important?</strong></th>
<th><strong>FRIENDS/PEERS</strong></th>
<th><strong>ADULT ALLIES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are comfortable talking to friends and they can be a good first step in looking for help.</td>
<td><strong>What does a healthy relationship look like?</strong></td>
<td>Adults have more experience and can help you expand your support systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults who listen and provide support without making you feel shame or judgment.</td>
<td><strong>Knowledge of mental health care</strong></td>
<td>Adults can help navigate barriers and identify and connect to mental health professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend may share their own experiences and brainstorm what might be helpful for you.</td>
<td><strong>How can they help?</strong></td>
<td>Adults can help you find trusted resources and provide hope as you seek the support you deserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend can be a support system while you are figuring out what will work best for you.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Xelenie - 6 - Surround Yourself w/ Friends
Parents and caregivers can be a source of support in your mental health journey and help you connect to the care you need. Below is an example of how to begin talking about mental health with them.

Hi dad, I think I'm depressed.

What's going on? Why do you think so?

I see, the creators are speaking from their own experience but not everyone experiences depression the same.

Here. I watched these videos earlier today.

I watched TikToks on depression and they describe how I've been feeling lately.

I'm curious about the Tiktoks. Let's take a look together.

Thanks for sharing your feelings, this is not easy to do.

Thanks for helping me understand.

It's tricky to find reliable information on social media, it's better to use verified online sources.

What can I do to learn more about mental health?

That makes sense.

Let's start with finding information on teen depression on the National Institute of Mental Health or the CDC website.

That sounds like a good idea. Thanks dad.

Absolutely. I'm always here for you.
REACHING OUT

It can be difficult to talk to your parents and caregivers about mental health. Below are a few examples of how to discuss challenges or potential barriers.

SCENARIO 1

**Requesting professional help:**
Nana, I have been feeling depressed lately, but I'm not sure if it is just that I am 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, if you don’t think depression is a real thing young people deal with, could we read this article about youth depression together and talk about it?

SCENARIO 3

**Dealing with Financial Issues**
Hey mom, there are different ways to access mental health care, and some services are free or low cost. I found a list in the MHA website. Can we look more into it and see which one works best for our family?

SCENARIO 4

**How to Manage Religious Barriers**
Dad, I have not been feeling emotionally well for a long time and I need more than spiritual support at this time. Could we find a mental health professional who can help me take care of myself?

If you want to learn more, go to: "Time to Talk: Talking to your Parents" on the Mental Health America website or click here.
REACHING OUT

If you are encountering challenges talking to your parents, you can reach out to an adult in your school or community who can help you connect to the resources you need.

SCENARIO 1
Talking to a coach:
Hi, Coach. I know we mainly talk about sports stuff but you work well with kids and I have not been feeling well mentally. Could I talk to you or someone at school about how I have been feeling?

Talking to a counselor:
Hi, Mr. Johnson. I have been having a lot of anxiety and my parents aren't being supportive of me during this time. Would you mind setting an appointment so we can talk with them?

Being Resourceful!

I have been feeling overwhelmed. I am getting little sleep, and I'm not eating much.

I'm happy you reached out and would love to help. Why don't we talk today after school? We can find the resources you need.

SCENARIO 2

Being Resourceful!

Hi Ms. Sylvia
Hi Sunny! How are you?

Jaagat - 17 - Talking to Teachers
Hey Angel, how are you?

To be honest, I don’t know.

Is something going on? Let’s go for a walk and talk.

Sure, that’s so nice of you!

So, what’s been going on?

I’ve been feeling anxious. I think it’s because school has become really stressful.

I’m sorry to hear that. Is there an adult who can help? They might know about supports we don’t know of.

I’m too nervous to tell anyone. Maybe I should just toughen up and push through it.

Be kind to yourself. School can be hard.

Would you like me to help you find a trusted adult to talk to?

Yes, I need help with that and thank you for listening.

Of course! I’m here for you. Want to get some ice cream?

Yes! You’re the best. Hot fudge sundae my treat!

Be kind to yourself. School can be hard.
FACING POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Reaching out for mental health help can be scary or intimidating. There is still a lot of stigma and misinformation and it is normal to not feel comfortable asking for mental health care. Below are some things to consider when reaching out to parents and adult allies.

PARENTAL CONSENT

Under Texas state law, if you are under 18, you need parental consent to receive long term mental health care. However, there are specific situations where minors can consent to treatment. Learn more at: "Texas Health Steps Adolescent Health Guide for Providers"

LIMITED PARENTAL SUPPORT

- Call a hotline, they might provide advice on how to reach out to your parents
- Find an adult or another family member or school counselor that can help by:
  - Brainstorming best ways to approach your parents/caregivers
  - Requesting a meeting with them
  - Explaining the situation from an adult's perspective
- Be patient with your parents, just because they don’t understand your situation now does not mean they never will.
- Learn more at MHA website: "How can I get help without family knowing"
FACING POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

FEAR OF SPEAKING UP

- You do not have to share anything until you feel safe to speak up.
- Knowing what you are afraid of can help you identify next steps or persons to talk to.
  - Do you think people will not believe you?
  - Are you afraid of your parents finding out?
  - Are you fearful of the consequences of what will happen?
- Sharing what you are going thru, can help you not feel alone.
- **Learn more at MHA website:** "I'm afraid to talk to anyone about my mental health"

MANDATED REPORTERS

- Mandated reporters are professionals who work with children on a regular basis and are in a good position to notice injuries, changes in behaviors, and other indicators that may be early signs of child abuse or neglect.
- Texas law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report.
- **Learn more at:** Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Except as permitted by law, a doctor is legally required to maintain the confidentiality of care provided to a minor.
- Exceptions: Confidential care cannot be provided when the law requires parental notification or consent or when the law requires the provider to report health information. A licensed physician, dentist, or psychologist may, with or without the consent of a child who is a patient, advise the parents, managing
- Neither you nor your parent/guardian has the right to access your psychotherapy notes. Disclosure of this information is at the discretion of the health provider.
- **Learn more at:** "Texas Health Steps Adolescent Health Guide for Providers"
PART 3

CONNECTING TO CARE

Learn about different types of mental health care and find tips to access it.
There are many ways to receive mental health care from individual therapy to group sessions. Below, read more about the different options you have for mental health care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHEN IS IT THE BEST FIT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUAL THERAPY</td>
<td>Recommends lifestyle changes, processes challenging emotions, and calls attention to self-destructive habits.</td>
<td>If you are dealing with personal problems that impact your mental health and your relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY THERAPY</td>
<td>Assists families and couples during periods of change, specifically relating to how they interact with each other.</td>
<td>If you or a member of your family is having difficulty functioning in their normal capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP COUNSELING</td>
<td>Therapists counselling a group of people who are struggling with issues similar to yours.</td>
<td>If you are willing to share and be open, try a few groups before you find the best fit for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT GROUPS</td>
<td>Provides support and guidance from people who have faced similar challenges.</td>
<td>If you feel alone and want to meet others in similar situations, try different ones to find the best fit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To learn more visit MHA website: "Mental Health Treatments"
MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The length of mental health care can vary depending on the person’s needs. Below, read more about the different ways physicians and mental health professionals can assist you.

OUTPATIENT

- Traditional outpatient: ~30-60 minutes session 1-2 times a week.
- Intensive Outpatient: ~3 hrs/day, multiple days a week.
- It can include group therapy and individual mental health counseling.
- During outpatient treatment, patients are able to continue their normal day-to-day activities including going to school or work.
- Outpatient care can be scheduled around your normal daily schedule.

IN-PATIENT

- Partial Hospitalization: ~8 hours a day/multiple days a week
- Residential Treatment: staying overnight at a treatment facility, which could be at a hospital, mental health care facility, or drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers.
- During inpatient stays, patients are monitored more closely.
- This can be helpful for those needing drug or alcohol treatment.

MEDICATION

Researchers believe that the symptoms of mental illness come from chemical imbalances in a person’s brain. Medication does not cure mental illness but can help manage chemical imbalances or relieve symptoms.

It is very important to work with a doctor and your family to determine the best way for you to receive care. To learn more go to Medication on MHA Website.
If you are not comfortable speaking with a therapist or feel extra support would be helpful, there are many bridges to therapy that can help support your mental health. These however do not substitute professional medical care.

**ART THERAPY**

- A distinct discipline that incorporates creative methods of expression through visual art media.
- It allows you to be more relaxed, especially for those who do art as a hobby, as you tap into your creative side. However, it can be frustrating for those who aren’t as creative as others or do this as a hobby.

**MUSIC THERAPY**

- The clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.
- Music therapy is a broad field, and based on most licenses, therapists are not considered counselors.

**PET THERAPY**

- An alternative or complementary type of therapy that includes the use of animals in treatment.
- The goal of this animal-assisted intervention is to improve a patient’s social, emotional, or cognitive functioning.
- However, since there are not a lot of regulations around obtaining an animal for assisted therapy, anyone can get one, thus rendering it almost obsolete as it is just one tool.
SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-advocacy is about understanding your rights, learning and utilizing community resources, and knowing when to speak up for yourself or reach out to allies. It can be a very useful skill when seeking mental health care or overcoming barriers to access.

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 parents (parental consent to seek therapy)
- Asking for accommodations in school
- Utilizing resources in my school and community
- Understanding my rights as a patient (when hospitalized for a crisis)

PATIENT RIGHTS

Below learn more about the rights you and your family have when receiving health care. These rights must be respected by physicians and health care providers.

- Patient Rights - American Medical Association Code of Medical Ethics.
- The Pediatric Bill of Rights from the Society of Pediatric Nurses
UNDERSTANING BARRIERS

Figuring out how these terms connect to mental health care can be as complicated as solving math problems. Let's break down these terms to better understand them and how to overcome potential barriers.

The Waitlist
Parental Consent
Accessibility

Finding a Therapist
Medical Insurance
Sliding Scale
ACCESSIBILITY

Many communities do not have enough mental health care providers for their residents. Research shows there is only one mental health provider for every 800 residents in the three-county area (Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery), less than half the access compared to the national average.

ACCESSIBILITY

Anyone has the right to mental health care. However, some populations find it more difficult to access mental health support due to financial issues, immigration status, and living location, among other challenges. For example, people living in rural areas might have less access to in-person treatment because there are not many clinics or therapists in their neighborhood. If this is the case for you, call your closest Local Mental Health Authority or call 988 suicide and crisis lifeline.

WAITLIST

Due to issues of accessibility, you might end up on a waitlist when you schedule an appointment to talk to a mental health professional. Here are some actions you can take while you wait:

- If you require immediate help you call 911, 988, or a crisis hotline
- Try to reach out to different resources and hospitals
- Find a support group, some examples below
  - Alateen: for teens who are struggling with the effects of someone else’s problem drinking or click here
  - Re:MIND Online Support for youth, women, LGBTQ or click here
- Check-out these Self-Help Techniques for Coping with Mental Illness by NAMI or click here
PAYING FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Getting the mental health support you need can sometimes be pricey. However, this should not discourage you from reaching out for help. Below are some options that allow you to receive mental health support at a lower price.

**HEALTH INSURANCE**

- Medical insurance can cover some or most mental health costs including therapy sessions, medication, etc.
- Start by asking your parents/guardians what type of health care you have (i.e. Medicaid, insurance name, etc.) and ask if your insurance plan covers mental health care.
- **If you have insurance** you can call or go to your health insurance's website to receive a list of therapists or mental health care providers in your area.
- **If you DO NOT have insurance** you might need to pay out of pocket. Some places might base your payment on how much money your parents earn and if they earn less you will pay a smaller fee.
- If your parents cannot help or need more information you can try calling the number for Medicaid which is 8776338747.

**SLIDING SCALE**

A sliding scale is a fee structure that therapists sometimes use to provide mental health services at a lower cost to people who have financial difficulties.

To see a list of mental health providers who provide counseling services for Medicaid or low-income Houston families go to Texas Children’s Hospital or click here.
FINDING A THERAPIST

Finding a therapist whom we can click with will take time and effort and might require meeting multiple people. Stay hopeful and patient and you will find the appropriate therapist who can walk with you on your mental health journey.

BENEFITS

There are many benefits to speaking with a therapist including:

- Feeling happier and enjoying life
- Better physical well-being such as better sleep or less stress
- Healthier relationships in your life
- Learning skills and mechanics to face and win struggles in everyday life
- Better care of emotions and feelings

TIPS FOR YOUR SEARCH

Below, we put together some tips on how to find the right therapist for you:

- Research the therapist's fees and insurance coverage
- Reach out to your school, primary doctor, or friends and family for referrals or recommendations.
- Check your therapist’s credentials and what they focus or specialize on
- Trust your instinct when you meet with a therapist and don’t be afraid to change if the relationship doesn’t feel right
- Look for a therapist who understands the struggles that are specific to your identity (i.e. race, culture, gender, or sexuality).
- Write down what you hope to address in therapy and communicate your goals with your therapist
CULTURAL COMPETENCY

A therapist who is culturally competent can understand, appreciate, and work with people from cultures or belief systems different from their own.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

A therapist practicing cultural competency can help your therapy experience by making you feel safe to share your experiences, values, and beliefs around culture, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexuality.

A therapist who practices cultural humility can encourage you to ask questions, develop your own solutions, and provide feedback.

To read more about the similarities and differences between cultural humility and cultural competency, go to the University of Oregon’s website under “distinguishing cultural humility from cultural competence” or click here.
SWITCHING THERAPISTS

Sometimes your therapist isn't the right fit for you. There can be many reasons behind a need to change, such as feelings of discomfort, financial issues, or different value systems. Whatever the reason, do not feel like you have to remain with your therapist.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS

- You and your therapist might not be a good fit if you experience any of the following:
  - Therapy sessions out of financial reach
  - Issues with insurance
  - Scheduling conflicts
  - Inability to open up to your therapist
  - Sessions are not engaging or helpful
  - Differences in core beliefs
  - You want a second opinions
  - Therapist is not interested in your emotions or experiences
  - Lack of cultural humility or cultural awareness

STEPS TO TAKE

- **Reflect on what you need in a therapist**
  - Write down your likes and dislikes about therapy sessions from the past
  - Identify your preferences in a therapist, i.e., their focus, background, beliefs, ideas, cost, etc.
- **Communicate with your current therapist**
  - Be confident. Have a direct, brief conversation with your therapist
  - If you are comfortable, ask them if there are other therapists you can talk to
- **Activate Your Search**
  - Look for other resources at school or through crisis lines
  - Ask for recommendations from adult allies or friends
PART 4

RESOURCE GUIDE

Find resources to access mental and emotional support
IDENTIFYING AN EMERGENCY

This section contains resources to help you connect to mental health care. In dangerous or emergency situations, however, CALL 911 for emergency medical services, fire, and police, or CALL 988 for support for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis, or emotional problems.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Below are times that qualify as an emergency but aren’t limited to:

- Bleeding that will not stop
- Breathing problems (difficulty breathing or shortness of breath)
- Change in mental state (unusual behavior, confusion)
- Coughing up or vomiting blood
- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Feelings of committing suicide or murder
- Sudden dizziness, weakness, or change in vision
- Sudden injury (near drowning, deep or large wound, other injuries)
- Swallowing a poisonous substance

To learn more, go to "Recognizing Medical Emergencies" on the Medline Plus website.

If you or a friend or loved one is thinking about suicide, call 988.
If you want to do your own research online, please read below for things to think about. Remember that talking to a trusted adult is highly recommended and can make your search easier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You can do things in your own time, no rush.</td>
<td>May not be sure where to look or how to start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your search can be accessed from computers at home, school, library, etc.</td>
<td>You don’t have control over your privacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have access to an infinite amount of information.</td>
<td>Unreliable sources are mixed among the credible ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are able to find a lot of different examples and situations.</td>
<td>Information can be overwhelming or inaccurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You learn new language and terms aimed at mental health.</td>
<td>The language used can be confusing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Erin - 17 - Mental Escape
When doing your own research on mental health, go to credible sources written by experts and are free from mistakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credible Resources</th>
<th>Noncredible Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Blogs and social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>10 years or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Contains spelling and grammar errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main focus</td>
<td>Describe daily habits and share personal experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>TikTok, Reddit, Depression Tests Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Try NOT to use online screening tools.** They are **NOT** a clinical diagnosis, and often oversimplify situations. To learn more about the dangers of self-diagnosing go to: "A Challenge with Social Media: Self-Diagnosing Mental Health."
RESOURCES

MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINES

- The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD - provides basic support and community referral information, available 24 hours a day
  - Call 713-970-700 or Text 832-479-2135
  - To access the crisis services department, click here
- Lifeline Chat and Text - connect with crisis counselors for emotional support and other services
  - Call 988 or TEXT 838255
  - To access the website virtually, click here
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline - an information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders
  - Call 1-800-985-5990 or Text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor
  - To access the website virtually, click here

WHAT TO SAY (EXAMPLE)

Hello, this is (name). I am (age) years old. Lately, I have been hurting myself and my parents haven't been supportive during this difficult time. I don't know where to turn. What can I do?

Lucy - 16 - Alone
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Find a mental health professional in your area by going to the following:

- **Mental Health America of Greater Houston Youth Resource Guide** - a guide for mental health and substance abuse services for youth in the Greater Houston area. To access the guide virtually, [click here](#).
- **988** - a confidential suicide and crisis lifeline
- **211** - a free, anonymous social service hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year with information about resources in your local community.
- **Teen Health Clinic** at Baylor College of Medicine, [click here](#)
- **Texas Health and Human Services** - a website with information about how to contact local mental health authorities. To access the website virtually, [click here](#)
- "**Find your Therapist Directory**" from the Anxiety & Depression Association of America - a resource to help find a therapist in your area that suits your specific needs. To access the website virtually, [click here](#)
- **Therapy for Black Girls** - a database specifically designed to help African-American women find a therapist. To access the website virtually, [click here](#)
**REMOTE RESOURCES**

**TELEHEALTH**

Telehealth (telemedicine): mental health care provided virtually or thru the phone rather than in-person; done through the internet on a computer, tablet, or smartphone

Options for telehealth:
- Talking to your healthcare provider live via the internet
- Sending and receiving messages from a healthcare provider
- Using remote monitoring

For more information go to the Telehealth website and search "What is telehealth?" or [click here](#)

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**MOBILE CRISIS OUTREACH TEAM**

This is a mobile team of psychiatrists, registered nurses, licensed master’s level clinicians, bachelor level clinicians, and psychiatric technicians specializing in helping people in crisis.

- All Harris County residents willing to voluntarily accept MCOT services are eligible
- To access the crisis line, dial **713-970-7000** and press 1
- Services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and include the following: psychiatric assessment, brief therapy, substance abuse assessment, and intensive case management
- To learn more, go to "The Harris Center Mental Health and IDD Mobile Crisis Outreach Team MCOT" or [click here](#)
FINDING SUPPORT

If you are LGBTQ+ here are some ways to find support:

- Maintain social connections, especially within the LGBTQ+ community
- Seek trusted adults who are members of the LGBTQ+ community such as teachers, counselors, coaches, or relatives
- Join LGBTQ+ organizations and support networks, whether it be in person or online
- Know your rights as an LGBTQ+ citizen
- Use daily affirmations or positive statements to help counter unsupportive messages

RESOURCES

Local:
- Hogg Foundation for Mental Health LGBTQ+ Mental Health Resources: click here
- Mental Health America of Greater Houston: click here
- The Montrose Center: click here
- National Alliance on Mental Health Greater Houston: click here

National:
- Free to be Me: A Toolkit to Protect LGBTQIA+ Students’ Rights: click here
- It Gets Better Project: click here
- Mental Health America: click here
- National Center for Transgender Equality: click here
- The Trevor Project: click here
  - Call 866-488-7386 or Text START to 678678
TIPS

- Join organizations that support you and get involved in activism projects within the community
- Look for support from immigrant/refugee-friendly services
- Find trusted sources of information to stay up to date on changing immigration policies and guidelines
- Know your rights and how to report instances of discrimination and abuse
- Develop a routine, doing everyday activities can make things feel normal and reduce fear and feelings of stress, confusion or doubt.

RESOURCES

- Access Hou: click here
- Star Counseling and Consultation: click here
- Servicios en Español: click here
- VeryWellMind: click here (National)
MENTAL HEALTH TERMS

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

Mental Disorder: a significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern causing emotional, mental, or physical distress to an individual

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

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

Suicide Ideation: or suicidal thoughts; a term used to describe contemplations, wishes, and preoccupations with death and suicide
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 a clinical social worker who is authorized to practice by the State and performing 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

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
211 Texas: [click here]
988 Lifeline: [click here]
Access Hou: [click here]
Al-Anon Family Groups: [click here]
Anxiety and Depression Association of America: [click here]
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [click here]
Free to be Me: A Toolkit to Protect LGBTQIA+ Students' Rights: [click here]
Hogg Foundation for Mental Health LGBTQ+ Mental Health Resources: [click here]
Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaboration: [click here]
It Gets Better Project: [click here]
McGovern Medical School Social Media: [click here]
Medline Plus Emergency Situations: [click here]
Mental Health America of Greater Houston LGBTQ+: [click here]
Mental Health America Help Without Family Knowing: [click here]
Mental Health America LGBTQ+: [click here]
Mental Health America Mental Health Treatments: [click here]
Mental Health America Podcast: [click here]
Mental Health America Stigma: [click here]
Mental Health America Talk About Mental Health: [click here]
Mental Health America Talking to Parents: [click here]
National Alliance on Mental Illness Greater Houston: [click here]
National Alliance. of Mental Illness Self-Help Techniques: [click here]
National Alliance of Mental Illness Stigma: [click here]
National Center for Transgender Equality: [click here]
National Immigrant Women’s Advocacy Project: [click here]
National Institute of Mental Health: [click here]
Re: mind Depression and Bipolar Support: [click here]
Servicios en Español: [click here]
Star Counseling and Consultation: [click here]
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: [click here]
Telehealth: [click here]
Texas Health Steps Adolescent Health Guide for Providers: [click here]
The Harris Center: [click here]
The Harris Center Mobile Crisis Outreach Team: [click here]
The Montrose Center: [click here]
The Search Institute Developmental Relationships: [click here]
The Search Institute Developmental Relationships Help Young People Thrive: [click here]
The Trevor Project: [click here]
Therapy for Black Girls: [click here]
Understanding Houston Mental Health: [click here]
University of Houston Clear Lake: [click here]
University of Oregon Cultural Humility and Competency: [click here]
VeryWellMind: [click here]
Youth Resource Guide: [click here]
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Find guide at www.houstontx.gov/education