



REMEMBER

- Help the teen retain as much of a voice as they can as you help them get connected to support services. Never do for them what they can do for themselves because that reinforces a sense of powerlessness which brings despair.
- Encourage the youth to stick with services that are in place for them such as counselling, medication prescribed by a doctor/psychiatrist, or a support group. You can also speak hope into their situation, reminding them that many people have made it through what they are going through - they aren't the only one.
- Positive parent involvement makes a huge difference. Connect the parent to resources and support such as teenmentalhealth.org/care
- Help young people understand that what they feel is not the determiner of what is true about their lives. Introduce them to Lamentations 3:19-23 where Jeremiah expresses his difficult negative feelings then reminds himself of what is still true about God in the middle of them.



RECOGNIZE

- Mental health is a moveable point on a continuum. Good mental health involves thinking, acting and feeling in ways that allow someone to approach life and its challenges with strength and hope. Poor mental health means that for a space of time it is difficult to meet the demands of everyday life with clear thinking and positive feelings.
- Mental illness is one possible reason for poor mental health. It is a health problem that affects thoughts, feelings, and behaviours making it difficult to meet the demands of everyday life.
- Someone can have a mental illness and good mental health; someone can have no mental illness and poor mental health. Mental illness does not need to determine the quality of someone's life.
- Some common mental health disorders in teens are anxiety disorders, depression, conduct disorder, ADD/ADHD, alcohol use disorder, and eating disorders.
- By the age of 25, more than 20% of Canadian youth experience a mental illness but less than half of those access services.
- It can sometimes be difficult to know if changes in a teen's behaviour are part of adolescence or something more serious. If a teen is having difficulty coping with life and also suffers from things such as sleep difficulties, little interest in what used to bring them joy, loss of appetite, isolation, and personality shifts, it's time for some concern.



RESPOND

- **Educate yourself** - especially around anxiety, depression, and substance use disorder. Become aware of the information and help that is available.
- **Develop a net of support for the teen.** The amount of care required by mental health concerns is too heavy for one helper to manage alone. Together is better.
- **Encourage a visit to their doctor** to explore what may be going on inside.
- **If the young person is reluctant to seek help, talk about their reasons.** Chances are they may feel that nothing will help or they may be embarrassed about being seen as "crazy".
- **Explore online information** with the teen to help them recognize that they aren't the only one and help is available.
- **Warn them that getting professional help can involve lots of waiting.** Look at options with them and move multiple directions at once because there's rarely one answer.
- **Look for meaningful ways for the young person to contribute** in the middle of their difficulties. Helping them focus outside of themselves can build meaning and purpose and help them recognize that they are more than their difficulties.
- **Make a list together** of the things they can do to offer positive support to themselves. Help them learn ways of managing emotions by directing their thoughts to the concrete environment in front of them rather than the thoughts and feelings within them. (Research "grounding techniques" for ideas.) Strongly encourage regular sleep, exercise and healthy food. Connect them to a 24 hour crisis line that they can call when things are overwhelming.
- **Remember** that if the inability to manage overtakes them, the E.R. at the hospital always has a psychiatrist on call.



MENTAL HEALTH

lifeteams
resources



RESOURCES

heretohelp.bc.ca/skills - Toolkits and training to equip you to walk with youth through a variety of mental health challenges.

crisistextline.ca - is where you'll find info about a 24/7 crisis text line from Kids Help Phone. Teens can text CONNECT to 686868 to start a conversation with trained crisis responders.

"Booster Buddy" is a mental health app that teaches coping skills, helps manage meds, and supports them on the journey. Download for free in the app store.