



# **Mental Health for teens and youth**

Tutor's Handbook



# Mental Health for teens and youth

## Pre-teen and teenage mental health

What is pre-teen and teenage mental health?

**Mental health is a way of describing social and emotional wellbeing. A child needs good mental health to develop in a healthy way, build strong relationships, adapt to change and deal with life's challenges.** Pre-teens and teenagers who have good mental health often:

- feel happier and more positive about themselves and enjoy life
- have healthier relationships with family and friends
- do physical activity and eat a healthy diet
- get involved in activities
- have a sense of achievement
- can relax and get a good night's sleep
- feel like they belong to their communities.

Adolescence can be a risky period for mental health problems. On top of environment and genes, teenagers go through many changes and challenges in a short period of time. This all happens while teenage brains are still maturing.



## Promoting good teenage mental health

Love and support and a strong relationship with you can have a direct and positive impact on your child's mental health. It can even reduce the chances of your child experiencing mental health problems.

Here are some ideas to promote child's mental health and wellbeing:

- Show love, affection and care for your child.
- Show that you're interested in what's happening in your child's life. Praise his efforts as well as his good points and achievements and value his ideas.
- Enjoy spending time together one on one with your child, and also as a family.
- Encourage your child to talk about feelings with you. It's important for your child to feel she doesn't have to go through things on her own and that you can work together to find solutions to problems.

-Talk to trusted family members, friends, other parents or teachers if you have any concerns.

-Keep active. Physical fitness will help your child stay healthy, have more energy, feel confident, manage stress and sleep well.

-Develop and maintain healthy eating habits.

-Get lots of regular sleep. Quality sleep will help your child to manage a busy life, stress and responsibilities.

-Avoid alcohol and other drugs.

Alcohol and other drugs are a major risk factor for teenage mental health problems. You should encourage your child to avoid drugs, and don't give him

opportunities to drink alcohol until he's 18 years old. If you know your child is using alcohol or other drugs and you're worried, talk with your child. Also consider speaking to a health professional or counsellor.



## The most common mental diseases teens and youth

### Depression

- Depressed mood that affects thoughts, feelings, and daily activities, including eating, sleeping, and working
- Occurs in approximately 13 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds
- Examples include depressive disorder, postpartum depression, and seasonal affective disorder

### Anxiety disorders

- Characterized by feelings of excessive uneasiness, worry, and fear
- Occur in approximately 32 percent of 13- to 18-year-olds<sup>3</sup>
- Examples include generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, social anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and phobias

## Eating disorders

- Characterized by extreme and abnormal eating behaviors, such as insufficient or excessive eating
- Occur in almost three percent of 13- to 18-year-olds
- Examples include anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating disorder

## Phobias

is an exaggerated, intense fear “that is out of proportion to any real fear” found in children or teenagers. It is often characterized by a preoccupation with a particular object, class of objects, or situation that one fears. A phobic reaction is twofold—the first part being the “intense irrational fear” and the second part being “avoidance.”

## General Anxiety Disorder

### Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)

is an anxiety disorder characterized by excessive, uncontrollable and often irrational worry about events or activities. This excessive worry often interferes with daily functioning, and sufferers are overly concerned about everyday matters such as health issues, money, death, family problems, friendship problems, interpersonal relationship problems, or work difficulties. Symptoms may include excessive worry, restlessness, trouble sleeping, feeling tired, irritability, sweating, and trembling.



## Who can help?

### 1. Parents

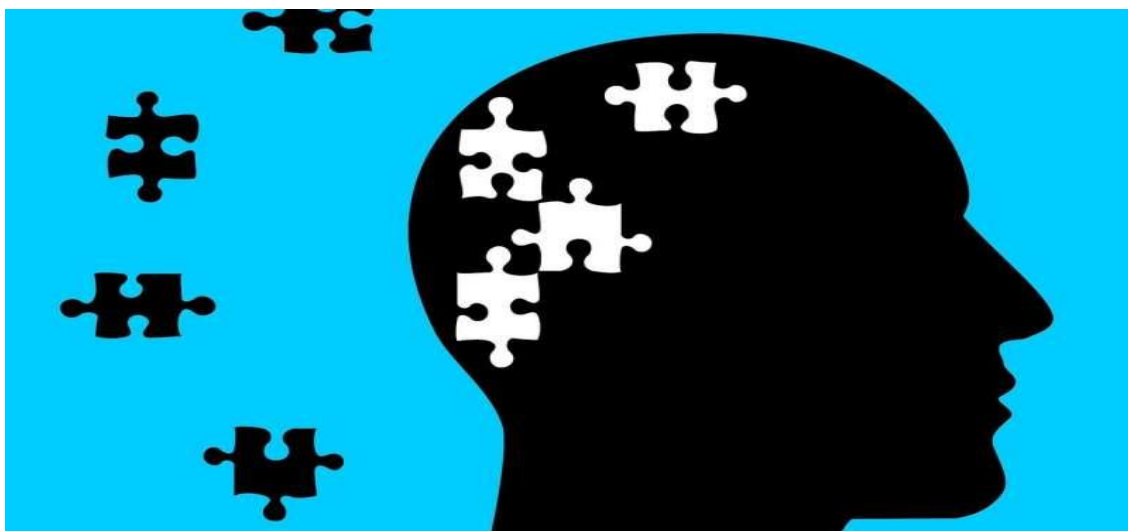
Families, loved ones, friends and the patient themselves are all impacted by mental illness, whether it is through waiting for a diagnosis, operating day-to-day, or receiving treatment. A strong support network is important for all individuals involved. The stresses and strains will impact your family similar to any other disease or illness and should be treated the same, with love and unconditional support.

### 2. Friends

too often, friends are the forgotten support mechanisms for those with a mental illness. Your support is crucial and necessary, so it's important for you to have access to the right information.

### 3. Health Professionals

It is worth going to a specialist such as a psychologist or psychiatrist to recover quickly or implement specialized treatment. The sooner a person is cured, the better for her and her future life. We should not be ashamed of specialists, because doctors are there to help us and mental health is a very important element of our lives







# ON CALL

Lay Community Health Advisors



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