

MENTAL HEALTH HELPSHEET FOR PARENTS

A bout of poor mental health isn't a reason to panic any more than a bout of poor physical health. Both simply require some special care and attention for a space of time. As parents, we can build resilience in our teens to help them hold onto good mental health. We can intentionally develop character strengths, interpersonal and life skills, and values to navigate the difficulties of life.

NOTICE THIS:

Your teen is consistently unable to manage the everyday stuff of life from a place of strength and hope.



WATCH FOR THIS

Moodiness and irritability can be a common part of a teen's repertoire but if your teen consistently has difficulty coping day-to-day and pulls away from what used to bring them joy, it's time for concern. Start with your family doctor to figure out what's going on.

Poor mental health may also cause loss of appetite, isolation, growing anxious feelings and sleep difficulties.

Parents can work at prevention by pursuing relationships with their teen, practicing empathy and teaching coping skills.

Parents need to be aware of minimizing their teen's struggles. The sooner challenges are given attention the less chance they will grow.



SAY THIS

Offer a caring, listening ear rather than a solution. Try these questions:

- I'm noticing that the everyday stuff you have to do has been really hard for you lately. Would you tell me about how you're feeling?
- When did you feel most stressed/anxious/down today? What was that like for you? What do you need from me? How can I help support you in this?
- How about if we make a list together of things you can do to help you get through this difficult time? I believe you can get through this and I'll be here to help.
- What do you think is your best next step to care for yourself right now?



TRY THIS

Initiate conversations about mental health to find out what they know and to help normalize the difficulties everyone faces at some point.

Encourage and model patterns of regular sleep, exercise, healthy food and gratefulness.

Create opportunities to focus outside of themselves to build meaning and purpose. Help them brainstorm places of contribution to remind them that they are more than their difficulties.

Mental health challenges in the home can be exhausting. Improved mental health takes time and accessing help involves much waiting. Be sure you reach out for support for yourself.



RESOURCES

To access all of our helpsheets online, visit youthunlimited.com/teentools

Credit to: lifeteams.ca

Remember:

"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."

(Isaiah 26:3)