

Tips For Teens

Intended Audience:

- Youth ages 11-18

Ohio Learning Standards:

- Social and Emotional Learning
- Health Education – suicide awareness and prevention

Lesson Objectives:

Participants will:

- Learn the difference between mental health and mental illness
- Recognize warning signs of mental illness
- Identify self-help strategies and resources to help

Time: 30-45 minutes

Equipment & Handouts:

- PowerPoint slides
- Laptop
- Projector
- Screen
- Pen or Pencil
- Blank paper
- Wipe board or flip chart and markers

Do Ahead:

- Review lesson &

Teen Mental Health- You Matter

BACKGROUND and OUTCOME

Mental illness causes disturbances in a person's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 3 youth struggles with a mental health illness. A person experiencing mental health issues may experience suicidal thoughts. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in individuals ages 15-29. It is important to destigmatize mental illness and educate people on the importance of taking care of their mental health just like they take care of their physical health.

WHAT TO DO**Anchor: (10 minutes)**

Mental health includes a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental illness is when a person experiences **disturbances** in thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that are severe enough to affect day-to-day functioning. These disturbances cause the person to have difficulty handling stress, relating to others, and making healthy/appropriate choices.

Have the group brainstorm what signs or symptoms would indicate someone struggling with a potential mental health issue or illness? Responses may include loss of interest in things they used to enjoy, low energy or motivation, poor sleep, isolation, little or no self-care, self-harm, risky or destructive behavior, thoughts of suicide, irrational thoughts, etc.

Living with a mental illness doesn't mean you can't have good mental health. For example, a person with diabetes can live a healthy life if they follow their doctor's treatment orders, so can a person with a mental illness.



Sources:

- youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health
- mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health
- cmha.ca/blogs/mental-health-what-is-it-really
- nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health
- apa.org/topics/resilience

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Add: (10 minutes)

Resiliency is the ability to “bounce back” or recover from difficulties and struggles. Building resiliency is key to being able to adapt and cope with adversity, tragedy, trauma, stress and manage mental health issues effectively. Practicing self-help strategies on a regular basis can build resiliency. Have the group brainstorm a list of self-help strategies. Answers may include making connections with others, accepting change, developing a positive attitude about self, practicing self-care, learning about self, defining goals and being proactive, having a hopeful outlook and avoiding negative outlets, and practicing healthy coping strategies. List may also include examples of positive coping strategies such as journaling, exercising, playing/listening to music, deep breathing, reading, eating well, etc.

Have each participant identify one self-help/coping strategy they plan to start using in their own life.

Apply: (10-15 minutes)

Journaling is a cathartic way to express feelings. It can be a great way for people to process what they are feeling when they struggle to use words. Provide each participant a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to practice journaling. Give them a topic to write about, for example, have them write a love note to themselves. Remind them what they write in their journal is private and they will not have to share with others.

Away: (5 minutes)

Mental health challenges and disorders can be successfully navigated with treatment and support from peers, family, and professionals. YOU MATTER! If you or someone you know is struggling to cope, reach out for help! Add the crisis text line 747-747 “4Hope” to your phone for easy access. Remember there is HOPE and YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Practice self-care/coping strategies to build resiliency.

Evaluation: (5 minutes)

Distribute evaluation questions to participants. Questions are answered on a 1 to 5 scale; **1** (strongly **disagree**), **5** (strongly **agree**).

1. The “Teen Mental Health” lesson was informative and helpful to me.
2. I learned new information from this lesson.
 - a. For example, I learned...
3. I plan to use at least one new self-help/coping strategy.
 - a. Identify and list strategy here...
4. I feel confident I could recognize the warning signs and symptoms of someone struggling with a mental health issue.
5. I know who to call or text for help.
6. Additional comments