



Youth Mental Health *Resources for Students & Families*



Facts & Data

- Mental health challenges are common in children and teens. Anxiety, depression, and stress can affect their emotions, relationships, physical health, and academic success.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2023, 4 in 10 U.S. high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or helplessness, and 2 in 10 seriously considered attempting suicide.
- Schools, families and communities play an important role in supporting youth mental health by developing strong relationships, belonging, connection at school, healthy coping skills, feeling valued, safe spaces to ask for help, regular sleep, physical activity, and balanced routines.
- Washington Healthy Youth Survey data show that youth who feel connected to caring adults, peers, and their school community are more likely to experience better mental health outcomes.
- Mental health challenges can look different for every young person such as anger, withdrawal, fatigue, perfectionism, or less interest in activities they once enjoyed.

Action Items

- Learn the signs that a child or teen may be struggling. Changes in behavior, mood, relationships, school performances, sleep, eating habits, or substance use may indicate that a young person needs additional support.
- Have regular conversations about mental health before a crisis. Ask open-ended questions, listen without judgment, and let your child know they can ask for help.
- Digital experiences can affect mental health. Talk with our youth about online stress, cyberbullying, social comparison, screen habits, and knowing when to step away from technology.
- If your child or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress, thoughts of suicide, or a mental health crisis, call or text 988. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides free, confidential support 24/7. If there is immediate danger, call 911.

Conversation Starters

If you are concerned about a child or teen, start a conversation and listen. Take concerns seriously and avoid being dismissive or trying to solve the problem.

- "What has been going well for you lately?"
- "What has been difficult?"
- "How do you know when stress is becoming too much?"
- "What helps you feel calm and supported?"
- "Who are the people you trust when you need help?"
- "How can I support you better?"

*Consider reaching out for additional support if the conversation uncovers topics such as: feelings of hopeless or not wanting to be alive; withdrawal from friends, family or activities; major changes in sleep, eating or behavior; experiences of ongoing anxiety, sadness or irritability; and/or difficulty functioning at home, school, or with relationships.

Additional Resources

- [WA DOH Youth Suicide Prevention](#): Youth suicide prevention, toolkits, data, parent resources
- [WA Health Care Authority – Suicide Prevention Resources](#): Children's behavioral health, school behavioral health, prevention resources.
- [Teen Link Washington](#): Peer support, youth education, outreach, leadership
- [Evidence-based information on children's mental health](#), healthy development, common mental health conditions, prevention, early identification, treatment, and resources for parents, educators, and healthcare professionals.
- [Plain-language primers and educational resources](#) explaining common mental health conditions, psychological treatments, resilience, and evidence-based mental health care for the public.
- Free, [evidence-based fact sheets covering child and adolescent mental health topics](#) such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, autism, bullying, trauma, suicide prevention, and when to seek help. Resources are available in English and Spanish.
- [Curated collection of practical behavioral health resources](#), screening tools, handouts, patient education materials, and clinical guidance for providers, educators, families, and community organizations.
- [Statewide prevention resources including youth suicide prevention toolkits](#), mental health promotion, parent and school resources, data, and community education materials.
- [Prevention campaign](#) designed to help parents and trusted adults have ongoing conversations with youth about mental health, substance use, stress, and healthy coping. Includes conversation guides, videos, and downloadable resources.