

CITY OF HOUSTON

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE

DECEMBER 2024



Aria - 11 - Believe Dream and Conquer

LETTER FROM DIRECTOR

I am thrilled to present the second edition of the [Mayor's Office of Education and Youth Engagement's groundbreaking "Youth Mental Health Guide."](#) This comprehensive resource is a testament to our commitment to the well-being of the young people in our community. As the Director, I am profoundly proud of the dedicated efforts that have gone into crafting a guide that addresses the critical need for mental health support among our youth.

In a world that is evolving at an unprecedented pace, our young citizens are facing unique challenges that can impact their mental health. Recognizing this, the Youth Mental Health Guide has been meticulously developed to serve as a beacon of support and empowerment for the youth in our community. It is a testament to our belief that every young person deserves access to the resources necessary to navigate the complexities of their wellness journey.

This guide is more than just a compilation of information; it is a lifeline for those seeking guidance and support. It offers a wealth of information on a range of topics, including identifying mental health concerns, seeking professional help, and accessing community resources. It is our hope that this guide will empower our youth to prioritize their mental well-being and encourage open conversations about mental health within our city.

To the youth who lent their voices to this project, thank you for your invaluable contribution. Your passion, creativity, and dedication to the well-being of your peers have made a lasting impact, and we are grateful for your involvement. It is through collaboration with young leaders that we can create resources that resonate with and genuinely support our community's youth.



OLIVERA JANKOVSKA

Director of Education
& Youth Engagement

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Mental health is for **EVERYONE**. This guide can benefit anyone in their wellness journey by providing information on how to receive support and find the mental health resources.



Gabriel - 20 - The Power of Strength

The guide's artwork is from the Center for School Behavioral Health Youth Art Showcase at Mental Health America of Greater Houston. The ultimate aim of the showcase is to encourage open conversations about mental health between young people and adults, while promoting art as a means of healthy coping and expression and eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health.

DISCLAIMER: THIS MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE IS A RESOURCE USED TO PROVIDE MORE AWARENESS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND IS NOT INTENDED AS A WAY TO DIAGNOSE OR GIVE MEDICAL ADVICE. THE INCLUSION OF ANY ORGANIZATION, AGENCY OR SERVICE IN THIS RESOURCE GUIDE DOES NOT IMPLY OR CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT OR RECOMMENDATION. THE CITY OF HOUSTON NEITHER GUARANTEES NOR MAKES ANY REPRESENTATIONS AS TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN ITS RESOURCE GUIDE. THE CITY OF HOUSTON DOES NOT CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ACTIONS TAKEN BY ANY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES INCLUDED IN THE RESOURCE GUIDE. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL THE CITY OF HOUSTON OR ITS EMPLOYEES BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, PUNITIVE OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES WHICH MAY RESULT IN ANY WAY FROM THE USE OF THE INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE GUIDE.

FINDING BALANCE

Balancing various responsibilities and life challenges can cause stress and negatively affect your mental health. Taking care of your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health, as both will impact how you feel and act. Use this guide to learn about how to take care of yourself with the Mayor's Office of Education and Youth Engagement (MOEYE) friends Mindy and Polly.



Meet the Authors!



Hi! I am Mindy, the Mayor's Office's friendly guide to navigating mental health and wellness. Look for Polly and me throughout the guide to find advice and important resources!



Hey there! I am Polly, Mindy's bee friend. We are here to help you learn how to find balance and take care of your mental health.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



1

Introduction

<u>What is Mental Health?</u>	6
<u>Do I Need Support?</u>	7
<u>Mental Health Stigma</u>	8
<u>Online Safety</u>	12

2

Building a Support Network

<u>What is a Support Network?</u>	14
<u>Finding a Trusted Adult</u>	15
<u>Reaching Out</u>	18
<u>Facing Potential Challenges</u>	22

3

Connecting to Care

<u>Mental Health Care</u>	24
<u>Self-Advocacy</u>	27
<u>Mental Health Laws</u>	28
<u>Understanding Barriers</u>	29
<u>Finding a Therapist</u>	33

4

Resource Guide

<u>Identifying An Emergency</u>	36
<u>Crisis Resources</u>	37
<u>Using Online Resources</u>	38
<u>Local Resources</u>	40
<u>Special Populations</u>	41

5

Activities

<u>Activity Worksheets</u>	48
<u>Postcards</u>	58

<u>Glossary</u>	59
<u>References</u>	61
<u>Acknowledgments</u>	72





PART 1

INTRODUCTION

“Mental health is a continuous process of self-discovery and self-care. It can’t be fixed overnight, it’s about taking small steps every day to prioritize your well-being.”

—Aysha, 16

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is important at every stage of life [1]. Mental health is how we feel about ourselves, how we understand and process our feelings and emotions, how we relate to others, and how we think about and view our life.

Mental health is...

a lifelong journey

closely linked to our physical health

a sign of strength

something everyone has

essential for our overall well-being

worth making time for

important and real

Mental health is NOT...

limited to a certain age

an illness nor something to neglect

a sign of weakness

unique to certain people

always positive

something you snap out of

fake news



Learn more about [Children's Mental Health](#) from the CDC [2].

DO I NEED SUPPORT?

“
I recently contacted a mental health counselor through my school's wellness program. Initially, I was hesitant about seeking help, but the overwhelming stress and anxiety I was experiencing made me realize that I needed support. - Anonymous
”

If you answer "yes" to some of these questions, consider talking to a trusted adult or contacting a mental health professional.

Are you having a hard time keeping up with your responsibilities?

Are you eating or sleeping too little or too much?

Is there something you used to enjoy that no longer interests you?

Are you feeling down most days?

Are you having trouble concentrating or making decisions?

Have you been losing friends?

Are you worried you have a mental health illness?

Have you experienced a traumatic event?



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA?

Mental health stigma is negative beliefs toward those with mental health conditions. It means someone is defined by their illness rather than who they are as an individual [3]. There are different types of stigma including:



SELF-STIGMA

When a person feels shame or blames themselves for their emotions or how they are doing mentally.



Genieve - 13 - New Me

PUBLIC STIGMA

When people have negative attitudes toward those with mental health conditions.



Mark - 15 - Insecure World

CULTURAL STIGMA

When someone's cultural background or community views mental health treatment as shameful or reduces its importance.



Mia - 17 - Cut and Paste

INSTITUTIONAL STIGMA

When public policies, purposely or accidentally, include actions that put people with mental health conditions at a disadvantage.



Learn more about [mental health stigma and discrimination](#) from the American Psychiatric Association [3].

IMPACT OF STIGMA

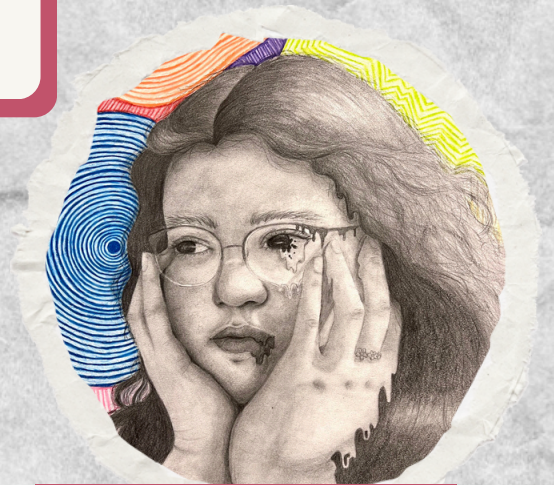
“

Let people know it's okay not to be okay and that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Share your experiences because it helps humanize the topic and makes a big impact. – Inioluwa

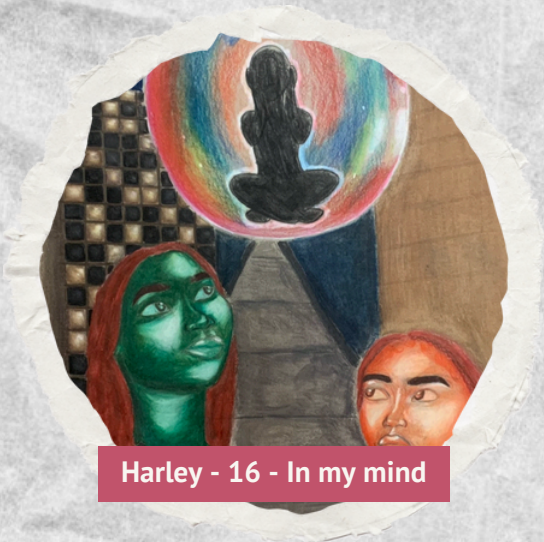
”

People are not willing ask for help or commit to treatments due to shame and fear of being stigmatized.

A lack of understanding from family and friends can make people feel like they are alone and have nowhere to turn.



Kimberly - 16 - Dissociation



Harley - 16 - In my mind

The government doesn't allocate adequate funds toward psychiatric research or provide accessible public health services for those affected by mental health conditions.

According to a national analysis, [Texas ranks last for mental health access](#) [4], with residents having the least access to mental health care compared to the rest of the country.



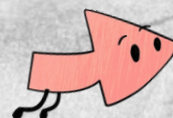
Learn more at [“The Impacts of Pressures and Stigma”](#) from Mental Health America [5].

LANGUAGE AND STIGMA

“
It's important to be mindful of the language we use when discussing mental health. Words can either reinforce stigma or promote understanding, so it's essential to choose them carefully and with sensitivity. – Aysha, 16
 ”



Instead of...	Use...	Because...
He is schizophrenic.	He has schizophrenia.	A person has a diagnosis, rather than is the diagnosis.
Don't think about it. Stay positive! Good vibes only!	Your feelings are valid. I'm here to listen.	Positive thinking isn't the only solution and it deters people from seeking social support.
It could be worse. Just get over it.	I hear you. What you're going through is difficult.	Silencing emotions doesn't make them go away.
That's so crazy/insane.	That's so surprising/unpredictable.	Catchall words draw on stereotypes and perpetuate stigma.
I was so OCD this weekend. I spent all day cleaning my house.	I spent all day cleaning my house.	Using a mental health condition as an adjective for a strange habit minimizes the severity of the disorder.



Learn [how to use person-first language to reduce stigma](#) [6].

ENDING STIGMA

“—
| *Have discussions with friends, family members, and those around you. Making change doesn't always mean being in front of a big crowd speaking about these matters, it happens in the rooms you happen to be in. [You can] create a chain of change that blossoms into something bigger. — Samiaht, 18*
—”



Keerthana - 17 -
Education Empowers

Youth

- Speak up when you hear people judging others or making jokes about mental illness.
- Encourage peers to learn more about mental health.
- Spread awareness of mental health resources in your community.

Parents

- Encourage open, nonjudgmental communication.
- Help your child understand and accept their feelings.
- To learn more, read [“How to Talk About Mental Health with Your Child”](#) on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [7].



Roxia - 18 - Family First

Educators

- Teach students self-care techniques such as mindful meditation and deep breathing exercises.
- Cultivate an inclusive environment where students feel safe to ask for help.
- Invite experts to speak to students about mental health issues, stress management, resources, and wellness.



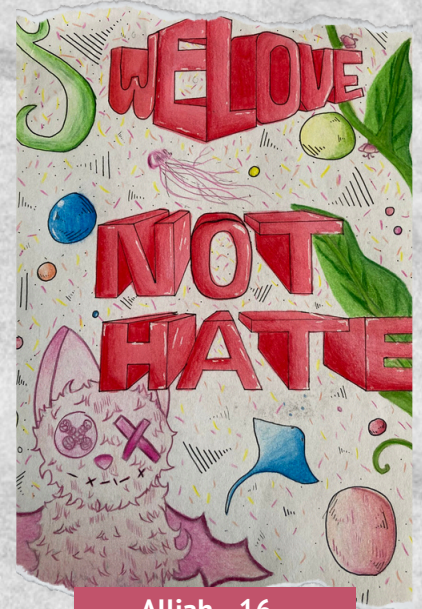
Learn more in [“9 Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma”](#) on National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) [8].

ONLINE SAFETY

“
Comparing ourselves to what we see on social media can lead to feelings of insecurities, and dissatisfaction, or being constantly critical of our bodies.
— Samiaht, 18
”

TIPS TO STAY SAFE ONLINE

- **Mental Health Impact.** What you eat impacts your physical health; your body and how you move. Similarly, what you see and hear on social media impacts your mental health; your brain and how you think about yourself and the world.
- **Followers are not the same as friends.** Not everyone that follows you on social media has your best interest in mind. Be careful and notify a trusted adult if something feels strange or someone is making you uncomfortable.
- **Avoid Negativity and Harm.** Do not engage with groups that encourage unhealthy behaviors (i.e. pages that promote bulimia and anorexia, self-harm, suicidal thinking, hate, etc.) You are never required to answer anyone’s comments, especially if it takes a toll on your mental health. Put your safety first, and disengage from harmful conversations.
- **Finding Balance Online.** Follow pages or groups that support your wellness and make you feel good about who you are.
- **Manage Screen Time.** Pay attention to both the quantity and quality of the time spent online. Work to fill that time with meaningful and fun activities offline.



Alliah - 16 -
The Bat at Home

FINDING SUPPORT

- [The Importance of Safe Language On Social Media](#) [9] from The Trevor Project.
- [Online Safety for LGBTQ Youth](#) [10] from The Trevor Project.
- [Meta Family Center](#) [11] has resources, insights and expert guidance to support you and your family’s online experiences.



PART 2

BUILDING A SUPPORT NETWORK

“Remember, you don't have to face it alone. Reach out to those around you for support.”

— Ruqayyah, 16

WHAT IS A SUPPORT NETWORK?

A support network includes family, friends, trusted adults, and anyone who contributes to our well-being and success in life. They can help us better understand our emotions and give us a shoulder to lean on during tough times [12].

A strong support system help us...

See our best qualities

Build our confidence

See a different perspective

Brainstorm steps to receive help

During difficult times

Be encouraged to take care of ourselves

Connect to resources and professional help

Identify opportunities for personal and professional growth



Learn more in "[Relationships to Help Young People Thrive](#)" on Search Institute [12].

Gabriel - 10 - Strength

FINDING A TRUSTED ADULT

“—
Don't be afraid to share your struggles – vulnerability fosters connection. Surround yourself with understanding people, whether friends, family, or professionals. – Mariana, 17
—”



Tkya - 17 -Family

ASK FOR SUGGESTIONS

- Ask your friends and family if they can be a part of your support system or recommend someone who has helped them get through tough times.
- Ask school administrators or teachers if there is someone you can talk to about your emotional or mental health needs.

IDENTIFY TRUSTED ADULTS

- List the adults who you trust or feel safe and comfortable with.
- Select a few people who are always supportive, available to chat, and can identify with the challenges you face.
- Not all adults can be trusted. Say no when an adult acts inappropriately, makes you feel guilty, or pushes you to do something uncomfortable.

BE PATIENT

- Not everyone understands what you're going through or knows how to provide the support you need.
- Identifying a trusted adult can take time, but there's always someone who is ready to listen and more than willing to help. Don't give up!



Learn about [Developing Your Support System](#) from the University of Buffalo [13].

FINDING A TRUSTED ADULT

“*You are not alone. If you need help, counselors or family members are here to support you. Asking for help is okay and the only way that progress can be made. – Hope, 14*”

AT SCHOOL

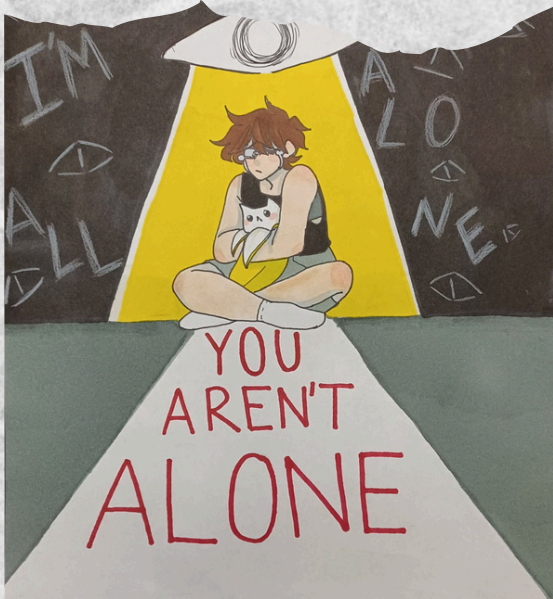
- Wraparound Specialist
- School Administrator
- Counselor
- Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Care Coordinator
- Teacher/ Teaching Aid
- Librarian
- Sports Coach
- Extracurricular Staff
- Resident Advisor

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Mental health professionals are licensed healthcare providers who are trained to improve our mental health. They can identify and treat mental health conditions. [14]

- Peer Specialist
- Social Worker
- Mental Health Counselor
- Behavior Specialist
- Therapist
- Psychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Nurse practitioners

Find definitions for some of these terms listed in the Glossary (pgs. 60 - 61)



(there is always someone who won't make you feel alone.)

Alexandra - 14 - The Light on the Other Side

COMMUNITY ALLIES

- Parents/Guardians
- Other Family Members
- Family Friends
- After-School Program Staff
- Community Organizations
- Pastors, Clergy, Youth Ministries
- Neighbors
- Mentors

FRIENDS VS TRUSTED ADULTS

When discussing mental health, friends and trusted adults can be a great source of support, with different knowledge and access to resources.



	Friends/Peers	Trusted Adults
Why are these connections important?	Sometimes it's more comfortable to talk to friends. They can be a good first step in looking for help.	Adults have more experience and can help us expand our support system.
What does a healthy relationship look like?	Good friends respect our feelings and differences. They value who we are and cheer us up when we are down.	We feel safe around them. They listen to us without making us feel ashamed or judged.
Knowledge of mental health care	Friends share similar experiences with us and can help us look for community resources.	They can share their experiences with mental health care and connect us to the appropriate professionals.
How can they help?	They can help us feel less alone and encourage us to make healthy choices.	Adults can help us navigate the health system and find the support and accommodations we need.

Xelenie - 6 - Surround Yourself w/ Friends



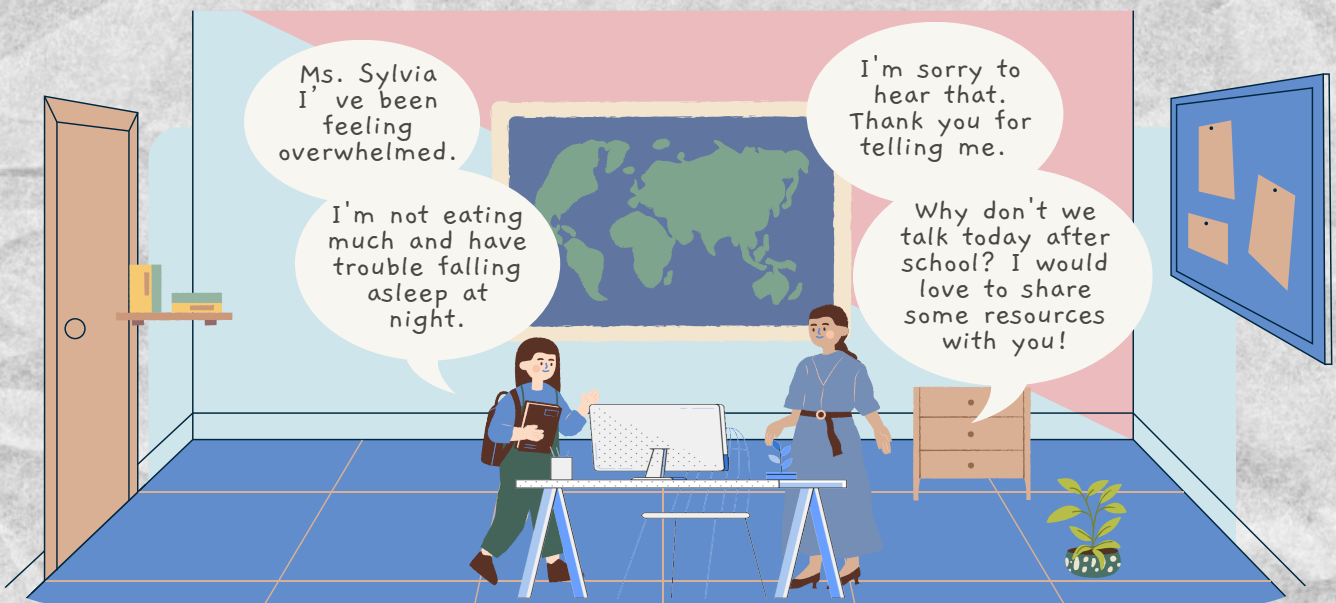
REACHING OUT

“Opening up to a friend or peer can be easier and is a great **FIRST** step. My friends and I support each other by always checking up on each other, and making sure we are mentally doing okay.” – Anonymous



REACHING OUT

“
I used a mental health resource at school, and it was one of the best decisions I've made. We would have a weekly meeting about how to combat struggles. My counselor would also give me daily affirmations to help me stay positive throughout the day. — Anonymous
”



Jaagat - 17 - Talking to Teachers

SCENARIO 1

Talking to a coach:

Hi, Coach. I know we mainly talk about sports stuff, but I have been feeling worried and scared. Could I talk to you or someone at school about how I've been feeling?

SCENARIO 2

Talking to a counselor:

Hi, Mr. Johnson. I've been having a lot of anxiety, but my parents don't think what I'm going through is real. Would you mind talking to my parents and helping them learn more about mental health?

REACHING OUT

“—
We must create open and non-judgmental spaces where young people can discuss their mental health concerns. Encouraging dialogue, empathy, and integrating mental health education into every young person's life is a vital message for parents, educators, and policymakers to internalize. — Aysha, 16
—”



SCENARIO 1

Requesting professional help:

Auntie, I have been feeling very scared. I'm not sure if it's because I'm stressed or if it's something more serious. Can we talk about it with a therapist?

SCENARIO 2

Caregivers don't believe in mental health:

Grandpa, I know you've told me depression isn't real, but I am really not feeling well. Is there any chance we can talk about it? I found [this article we can read together to learn about youth depression](#). [15]

SCENARIO 3

Financial Challenges:

Hey Mom, I found some free/low-cost mental health services near us. They are in the [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#) website [16], can we see which one works best for our family?

SCENARIO 4

Religious Barriers:

Dad, I have been feeling hopeless for a while now, and I need more than spiritual support. Could we find a therapist who can help me feel better?

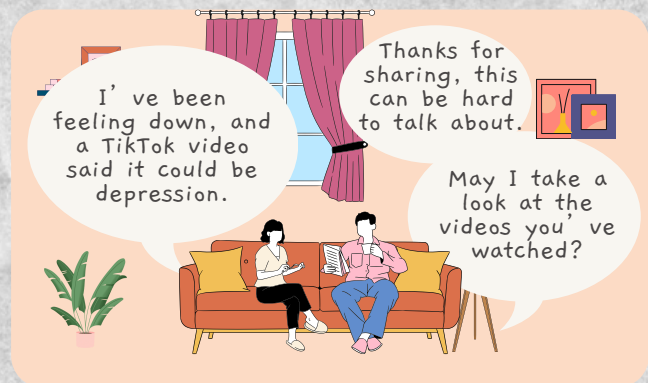
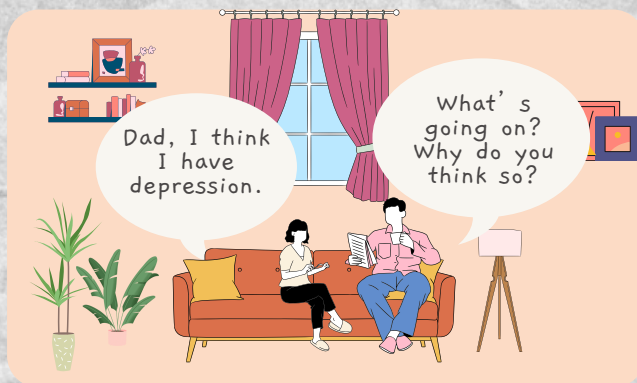


Learn more in "[Time to Talk: Talking to Your Parents](#)" from MHA [17].

Miriam - 16 - Joyous Reunion

REACHING OUT

“
It's okay to talk about [mental health] because it's only human. The more we talk the better we can understand and be there for each other. Talking about our struggles can make our relations more meaningful [...] and stronger. – Shania, 17
”



FACING POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

“
I have struggled [...] to find help because my parents didn't believe in mental health. I was able to find an alternative through my school. They assigned me a counselor to aid me through struggles I was facing in and outside of school.
”

– Anonymous

FEAR OF SPEAKING UP



Zahyre - 18 -
Amor Eterno

- You don't have to share anything until you are ready. However, sharing what you are going through can help you feel less alone.
- Knowing what you're afraid of can help you identify the next steps:
 - Are you worried that people will not believe you?
 - Are you afraid your parents will find out?
 - Are you scared of what will happen if you tell people?
- To learn more, read [“I'm afraid to talk to anyone about my mental health”](#) on Mental Health America (MHA) [18].

LIMITED PARENTAL SUPPORT

- Find a trusted adult who can help you brainstorm the best ways to approach your parents/caregivers. They can also explain the situation to your parents from an adult's perspective.
- Be patient. Just because your loved ones don't understand your situation now, it doesn't mean they never will.
- To learn more, read [“How can I get help without family knowing”](#) on MHA [19].





PART 3

CONNECTING TO CARE

"I feel that there is still some judgment regarding reaching out for help, but there are actually more people than you think who have [mental health] support."

- Julia

Melanie - 13 - Born to Fly

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

“
Choose based on how urgent and how much you need that support.
— Alishba, 14
”

	Description	Benefits
Individual Therapy	One-on-one sessions with a licensed mental health professional that can include cognitive and behavioral therapies.	It helps people recognize their patterns of thinking and learn healthy coping skills [20].
Family Therapy	Family members meet with a mental health professional to improve their relationships.	It can help family members work through conflicts and learn how to communicate more effectively [21].
Support Group	Participants listen to each other and work on healing and recovering together [22].	Participants can connect with the experiences of fellow group members and feel less alone.
Medication Management	The process of working with a psychiatrist to evaluate the need for medication and/or monitor a medication plan [23].	Medication doesn't cure mental illness but can help restore the balance of brain chemicals and alleviate symptoms.



Learn more in
[“Mental Health Treatments”](#) from
Mental Health
America [24].



TREATMENT SETTINGS

The length of mental health care can vary depending on the person's needs. Below are the different ways mental health professionals can help you.

OUTPATIENT



- **Traditional Outpatient**
 - ~30-60 minutes session, 1-2 times a week
 - Frequency of appointments depends on your needs and personal schedule
- **Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)**
 - Typically 3 hours/day, 3 days a week
 - Provides both individual and group therapy
- **Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP)**
 - Typically 5 hours/day, 5 days a week
 - Provides medication management in addition to individual and group therapy

INPATIENT

- **Inpatient Acute Care**
 - Short-term hospital stay (30 days or less) for those who are in a crisis or psychiatric emergency
 - Typically provides group therapy, medication management, and discharge planning (treatment coordination for continuity of care after leaving the hospital)
- **Inpatient Residential**
 - Long-term stay (90 days or more) for those who need less intensive care in a home-like environment

Madalyn - 12 - Happy Pills



To learn more visit [“Types of Treatment”](#) from SAMHSA [25].

OTHER FORMS OF CARE

“
| *We had a mental health period during our finals week at school where pets offered support and relief during times of stress. This certainly alleviated my stress personally, and I know others could say the same. – Rosie*
| ”

These therapies are complementary and do not substitute psychiatric care.

ART THERAPY

- A type of psychotherapy that helps us to explore self-expression through visual art, such as card-making, collages, and watercolor painting.
- Art therapy shifts our focus from difficult situations to self-worth and identity, helping us feel more relaxed and grounded. It also encourages us to form healthy and creative coping skills [26].

MUSIC THERAPY

- A form of treatment that helps us manage our mental health conditions through music, singing, playing instruments, or simply listening and sharing how music makes you feel.
- Music therapy is a powerful tool for emotional release and self-reflection. It helps us take a step back and see how our thoughts and feelings affect our behaviors [27].

PET THERAPY



- A type of therapeutic intervention that incorporates animals into our treatment plan. Animals are nonjudgmental listeners. By directing our attention to another living being, we can feel less alone and anxious.
- Pet therapy can help us explore and understand our feelings. Animals live in the moment and accept us as we are. Some of us may even find it easier to talk about our emotions in the presence of an animal [28]!

SELF-ADVOCACY

“

I've learned that seeking support is not a sign of weakness but an act of courage. It's okay not to have everything figured out [...] progress may be gradual, but every step counts. – Mariana, 17

”

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- Learning how to take care of yourself physically and mentally
- Identifying people who can be in your support system
- Reaching out to friends, parents, or teachers when you need help
- Asserting your needs to your parents
- Asking for accommodations in school
- Utilizing resources in your school and community
- Understanding your rights as a patient



Lucy - 16 - Alone

PATIENT RIGHTS

- We have the right to receive informed care and participate in treatment decisions. Below are some examples of Patient Rights:
 - **Patient Rights** - [American Medical Association \(AMA\) Code of Medical Ethics](#) [29]
 - **The Pediatric Bill of Rights** - [Society of Pediatric Nurses](#) [30]
- If you feel you have been unfairly treated or denied services or accommodation, file a complaint with the [Texas Health and Human Services \(HHS\) Civil Rights Office](#) [31].

MENTAL HEALTH LAWS

We all have the right to mental health support. Knowing mental health laws can help us better understand the treatment process and the legal responsibilities of service providers.

PARENTAL CONSENT

- Under Texas state law, if you're under 18, you need parental consent to receive mental health care [32].
- However, there are specific situations where minors can consent to treatment. To learn more, read the *Adolescent Health Guide for Providers* by [Texas Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#) [33].

MANDATED REPORTERS

- A mandated reporter is a working professional who has direct contact with children. If they notice signs of child abuse or neglect (e.g., injuries, changes in behaviors) they are required by Texas law to contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) immediately [34].
- To learn more, read "[When and How to Report Child Abuse](#)" on DFPS [35].

CONFIDENTIALITY

- A physician is legally required to maintain the confidentiality of care provided to a minor, except when the law requires parental notification, parental consent, or the provider to report health information [36], [37].
- Psychotherapy notes are different from medical records. While you have the right to access your medical record, disclosure of psychotherapy notes is at the discretion of the mental health provider [38], [39].



Maya - 11
Heart to Heart

UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS

When we look for mental health support, many of the words and phrases we run into can be very confusing. This is why we dedicated the next few pages to breaking down these terms so you can use the right words to describe your experience and get the help you need.

in-network providers

ROI

mental health benefits

sliding scale

insurance

waitlist

HIPAA



Christine- 17 - Chubby Checka

ACCESSIBILITY

“

The biggest thing I've run into is not wanting to tell other people about my weaknesses or imperfections. I'm still looking for a solution to that problem. - Scotia, 15

”

ACCESS TO CARE

- In Houston's three-county area (Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery), there is only **1 mental health professional for every 800 residents**, much less than the average provider availability in the nation [4].
- Due to limited providers and treatment facilities, those who live in **rural, low-income** areas have even less access to mental health care [4].
- Despite having insurance or financial assistance, many are discouraged from seeking help because of the **high mental health service costs**. Some have to choose between paying for daily necessities and mental health treatments.



Valery - 14 - Reign of the Blooms

RACE & CULTURE

- The fear of facing **discrimination** can create a barrier to seeking support. People may worry that if they disclose their mental health struggles, they might be treated differently at school, in the workplace, or at family gatherings.
- Mental health stigma is higher among **racial and ethnic minorities**, partly due to cultural differences, language barriers, and lack of representation in the mental health workforce [40].

Although mental health disparities can't be solved overnight, we have the power to educate ourselves and raise awareness in our community. With time, we can remove barriers and make mental health care more accessible and equitable.

COST OF CARE

“—
| *Mental health resources can be expensive if not covered by insurance.*
Luckily our insurance does cover virtual therapist resources. — Anonymous |
—”

HEALTH INSURANCE

- Health insurance can help us receive medical treatments without paying the full cost. Most insurance plans have **mental health benefits**, which cover expenses such as medication, visits to mental health providers, emergency care, and hospital stays.
- Start by asking your parents/guardians what type of health insurance you have and if your plan covers mental health care.
- **If you have insurance**, you can call the number on the back of your insurance card, find a list of **in-network providers** on the insurance company’s website, or call the healthcare provider’s office to confirm if they are part of your insurance plan’s network.
- **If you DO NOT have insurance**, consider reaching out to your [Local Mental Health Authority \(LMHA\)](#) [41], e.g., [The Harris Center](#) [42]. LMHAs provide a wide range of public outpatient mental health services for a small fee or have a sliding-scale, which has different fees depending on income level.



SLIDING SCALE

- Don’t be afraid to ask for financial support. Some mental health providers offer **sliding scale** with FREE or reduced fees for those with limited income.
- To find providers that accept Medicaid or provide lower rates, go to [“Mental Health Services for Medicaid or Low Income Families”](#) list by Texas Children’s Hospital [43].

STILL NOT SURE?

- If your parents can’t help or need more information, contact your LMHA (e.g., **The Harris Center at 713-970-7000**).
- They will help answer your questions and connect you to resources in your community.

CULTURAL FACTORS

“
My ethnicity impacted my mental health journey, as my culture doesn't believe in mental health. Having a therapist helped me discover my identity and what I struggle with. – Anonymous
”



Macie - 12 - Strong Like the Women Next to Me

CULTURAL HUMILITY



- A set of rules and beliefs that helps clinicians acknowledge their biases and recognize the complexity of our identities [44].
- It involves respecting clients' beliefs and empathizing with their lived experiences.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- An ongoing developmental process in which clinicians strive to learn more about different cultural values and practices [45].
- It is a necessary skill for clinicians to have to effectively work with culturally and ethnically diverse populations.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Clinicians who practice cultural humility and cultural competence are:

- knowledgeable about your cultural background,
- genuinely interested in understanding your identity and engaging you in collaborative treatment planning,
- willing to adapt their counseling approach to your unique needs, and
- empower you to open up about your feelings and have difficult conversations [46].

FINDING A THERAPIST

“—
| *The counselor provided a safe space where I felt heard and not judged. We worked on developing coping strategies for daily life, and connected me with additional resources. It's reassuring to know there's no shame in using them. This experience has significantly improved my mental well-being.* — Anonymous |
—”

TIPS FOR YOUR SEARCH

- **Ask** family members, school counselors, primary care doctors, or trusted friends for recommendations.
- **Check** your therapist's credentials and **verify** if they accept your insurance plan. If not, check with your insurance company to see if you have **out-of-network benefits** (i.e., paying the full amount upfront and then getting reimbursed by the insurance company).
- **Identify your preference.** Do you prefer a particular therapy approach or someone who specializes in specific mental health conditions or who shares a similar cultural background as you?
- **Be open and honest.** Share with your therapist your goals and the values and beliefs that are important to you.

Learn more at [How do I Find a Therapist](#) from MHA [47].



Jasmin - 16
New Beginning

WAITLIST



If you get put on a **waitlist**, don't worry! Here are some steps you can take in the meantime:

- Call **911, 988**, or your **local crisis hotline** if you're in an emergency.
- Call **211** and ask if they could **refer** you to other mental health providers or give you a list of low-cost agencies in your area.
- Find a **support group** (i.e., National Alliance on Mental Illness) [22].
- Remember to take care of yourself! Consider building a **self-care toolbox** to help alleviate any stress or anxiety. Learn more at "My Coping Toolbox" from [Barnardo's Education Community](#) [48].

SWITCHING THERAPISTS

The relationship we have with therapists can greatly impact our personal growth. If you feel like your therapist isn't the right fit for you, it's okay to make a switch.

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

- **Unhealthy boundaries.** Your therapist talks about their personal life excessively, gives unsolicited advice, pushes their values on you, or violates [the code of ethics](#) [29].
- **Lack of progress.** You are not making positive changes or it is difficult to be vulnerable and open up to your therapist.
- **Lack of professionalism.** Your therapist frequently shows up late, reschedules appointments, or checks their phone during sessions.
- **Unfair judgments.** Your therapist is insensitive to your identity, religion, or cultural background. You feel judged and embarrassed.

Learn more by listening to [I don't like my therapist](#) from MHA [49].

NEXT STEPS



- **Communicate.** If you're ready to switch therapists, let your current therapist know (in person or by email) and ask them to transfer your records to your new provider.
- **Reflect on what didn't work.** Identify what's missing from your current therapeutic relationship, then make a list of qualities you want from your new therapist.
- **Prepare for your first session.** Prepare to discuss with your therapist why you are there and your expectations. Reiterating your life story might feel daunting, but it's helpful for your new therapist to learn about your background.

Learn more by listening to [How Does Therapy Work?](#) from MHA [50].



Tip from Mindy:

Signing a **Release of Information (ROI)** form could be an option to catch your new therapist up to speed. Your health information is protected by the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**, which prevents any sensitive health information from being disclosed without your consent. A signed ROI form allows your new therapist to contact your previous provider regarding your previous treatment [51].





PART 4

RESOURCE GUIDE

"It's reassuring to know that resources are available and that there's no shame in using them."

— Aysha, 16

IDENTIFYING AN EMERGENCY

This page contains resources to help you connect to mental health care during a crisis. If you or someone you know is at risk of harming themselves or others, or are in imminent danger, **CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.**



COMMON WARNING SIGNS

- Isolating or withdrawing from school, family, or friends
- Displaying drastic changes in mood or personality
- Experiencing overwhelming emotional pain and feelings of extreme guilt, hopelessness, and worthlessness
- Giving away personal possessions and saying goodbye
- Engaging in high-risk or self-destructive behavior
- Researching ways to die; making plans to harm themselves or others

Read the [“*Navigating a Mental Health Crisis*” resource guide](#) by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) [52].



Wiber - 9 - Salvar Vidas

WHAT TO DO WHEN...

I am in a crisis:

If you think you are in a mental health crisis, please:

- Tell someone you trust
- Call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room
- Call or text **988** to connect with the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) [53]. Support is free, available 24/7, and accessible via live chat

Remember you're not a burden. You deserve to be listened to and cared for.

Someone I know is in a crisis:

If you notice any of the above warning signs, stay calm and assess the urgency of the situation.

- Start the conversation by asking the person about the warning signs you've noticed.
- Listen and focus on being **understanding** and **nonjudgmental**
- If the person needs emergency assistance, call **911**. Don't leave them alone unless you don't feel safe around them. [54]

CRISIS RESOURCES



HOTLINES & HELPLINES

Hotlines are for emergency services, and **helplines** offer non-urgent assistance (e.g., confidential support and community resources). The resources listed below are all free and available 24/7.

Hotlines

- [988 Lifeline Chat and Text](#) [53]
 - For those who are in a crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts.
 - Call or Text **988**.
- [Houston Area Women's Center \(HAWC\)](#) [55]
 - For anyone who experienced domestic or sexual violence.
 - Domestic Violence: **713-528-2121**
 - Sexual Assault: **713-528-7273**
 - Teletype (TTY): **346-295-8994**.

Helplines

- [SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](#) [56]
 - For those who are in emotional distress due to natural or human-caused disasters.
 - Call or text **800-662-4357**.
- [Texas Youth Helpline](#) [57]
 - For those looking for counseling, shelter, legal resources, pregnancy information, free rides for runaway youth, or just someone to talk to.
 - Call or Text **800-989-6884**.

MCOT

[The Mobile Crisis Outreach Team \(MCOT\)](#) [58] is a 24/7 crisis intervention mobile team at [The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD](#). [42].

- MCOT includes Psychiatrists, Registered Nurses, Licensed Clinicians, Psychiatric Technicians, and Peer Specialists.
- It provides psychiatric assessment, brief therapy, and intensive case management.
- MCOT also offers referrals to primary healthcare, mental health and substance use treatments, legal services, vocational support, and rehabilitation programs.
- For help call **713-970-7000** or Text **832-479-2135**.



Tip from Mindy:

If you're not sure what to say when calling for help, here's an example:

Hello, this is (name). I'm (age) years old. I've been struggling with my mental health, but my parents don't want to listen to me. I don't know what to do. Can you help me?



USING ONLINE RESOURCES

“—
Use reliable sources. Stick to reputable websites, such as government health agencies, academic institutions, or well-known mental health organizations.

— Max, 15
—”



PROS

Ability to read and process new information at your own pace.

Flexibility to access information from anywhere at anytime.

Opportunity to learn about others' lived experience.

Convenient links to browse a vast sea of information.

Better understanding of mental health terms and experiences.



CONS

Information could be inaccurate or confusing.

Not everyone has reliable internet or access to compatible devices.

Difficult to show the subtle differences of mental illness.

Identifying trustworthy sources can be overwhelming.

Potential to fall into the trap of self-diagnosing mental illness.

Erin - 17 - Mental Escape



RESOURCE CREDIBILITY



“
Make sure to seek advice from credible websites to get the best information and help you need. – Ruqayyah, 16
”

Credible Resources

Non-Credible Resources

Publisher

URL ends in
.gov (government),
.edu (universities), or
.org (organizations).

Personal blogs,
commercial websites,
social media posts.

Timeliness

Website is actively
maintained and has
current information.

Copyright date in the
website's footer is
several years ago.

Accuracy

No spelling or grammatical
errors. Information is
neutral and objective.

Website is poorly edited
and proofread.
Information is biased.

Author

Authors have expertise in
the subject matter at hand.

Information is not reviewed
by qualified professionals.

Examples

[Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) [2]; [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#) [54]

TikTok, Reddit, Depression Tests or Questionnaires



Tip from Mindy:

Try NOT to use online screening tools. They are not clinical diagnoses and often oversimplify situations. Read about the dangers of self-diagnosing: [“Social Media and Self-diagnosis” on Johns Hopkins](#) [59].

LOCAL RESOURCES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

- [211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE](#) [60] - Free and available 24/7. Information and Referral staff can help you find resources in your area.
- [Mental Health America \(MHA\) Youth Resource Guide](#) [61] - A comprehensive list of behavioral health services for youth in the Greater Houston area.
- [Psychology Today](#) [62] - An extensive directory of mental health providers, support groups, and treatment centers.
- [Therapy for Black Girls](#) [63] - A therapist database designed to address the mental health needs of Black women and girls.
- [LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory](#) [64] - A free database of healthcare professionals who are knowledgeable and sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ+ patients.

FREE/LOW-COST

- [The Teen Health Clinic at Baylor College of Medicine](#) [65] - Offers free or low-cost services to those aged 13-23.
- [Family Houston](#) [66] - Multilingual counselors offer services on a sliding scale. All major insurance plans and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) are accepted.
- [Lone Star Circle of Care](#) [67] - A clinic that provides low-cost/ sliding-scale services.
- [re:MIND](#) [68] - Free, confidential support groups facilitated by trained and supervised mental health professionals. It also has a Youth Program that supports schools in Houston.
- [Medical Transportation Program of Texas Health and Human Services Commission \(HHSC\)](#) [69] - Allows families with Medicaid to request non-emergency rides to pharmacies and doctor's appointments.

MINORITY YOUTH

“ I build connections with people who share identities with me and go through similar mental struggles. That way, we can grow and learn from each other.

— Shania, 18

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

- **Connect through storytelling.** Sharing our stories can help us heal and build a sense of belonging within our community. Communicate with trusted individuals if you are experiencing uncomfortable feelings about your identity.
- **Empower through education.** Learning about mental health facts and resources can help us feel less isolated and advocate for our needs more effectively. Find resources in [“Mental Health Resources for People of Color and Indigenous People” on PsychCentral](#) [70].
- **Unlearn stigma and biases.** Breaking down biases can help us reduce uncomfortable feelings and embrace our identities and backgrounds. To learn more, read [“The Power of Unlearning” on Psychology Today](#) [71].

Tips for Loved Ones:

- **Encourage positive racial identity.** Learning about and discussing inclusion and racial dynamics can help youth better understand stigma and become more resilient [72]. Offer young people support and positive affirmations to encourage them further.
- **Look for culturally responsive care.** Providers who share similar backgrounds are more sensitive to the nuances of complex issues such as racism and microaggressions.
- **Find time for mental health check-ins.** Encourage youth to share their feelings openly and honestly. Look for signs of stress and ask questions to understand how they feel. Learn more in [“Starting the Conversation with Kids” on The Kids Mental Health Foundation](#) [73].

RESOURCES

- [BIPOC Toolkit](#) [74] - BIPOC (pronounced bye-pok) stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color [75]. Mental Health America offers a tool kit to help BIPOC communities reduce mental health stigma, facilitate intergenerational conversations, and address mental health myths.
- [Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation](#) [76] - A Black mental health advocacy group that offers resources and programs centering on the African-American community.
- [We R Native](#) [77] - A Native youth-led health program with resources on mental health and self-advocacy.
- [National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association \(NAAPIMHA\)](#) [78] - A nonprofit focusing on mental health advocacy. The website lists Asian and Pacific Islander providers in all 50 states and youth mental health resources.
- [National Alliance for Hispanic Health](#) [79] - A nonprofit that advocates for Hispanics' well-being. The website provides mental health infographics and a free digital book in both English and Spanish.



Keleigh - 18 - Seeking Comfort

LGBTQ+ YOUTH

“
| *Hey queen/king/non-binary royalty equivalent, your feelings are valid and life can definitely be super hard. It's totally okay to feel alone and not to have everything figured out now. Take each day as it comes, and don't hesitate to reach out. – Rehman*
| ”

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

- **You matter.** Being LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) is **NOT** a mental health disorder. You deserve to be your authentic self and be treated with respect.
- **Gather support.** Identify allies and find resources in your community (e.g., [Hatch Youth at The Montrose Center](#)) [80].
- **Advocate for yourself.** If you're bullied at school because of your sexual orientation or gender identity (SO/GI), document everything and speak to a trusted adult.

Tips for Loved Ones:

- **Be a visible advocate.** Stand up for anyone who is harassed or discriminated against because of their SO/GI.
- **Use inclusive language.** Refer to youth using their gender-affirming names and pronouns. Respect their evolving identity and celebrate who they are.
- **Be mindful.** Outing (i.e., disclosing) someone's SO/GI can have a major impact on their safety. Don't out anyone without their permission. Let them take the lead.

RESOURCES

- [Free to Be Me Toolkit: A Toolkit to Protect LGBTQIA+ Students' Rights](#) [81] - Resource guide for transgender youth in Texas on how to practice, defend, and advocate for their' rights.
- [The Coming Out Handbook](#) from *The Trevor Project* [82] - Helps youth explore their identities and figure out what being out means to them.
- [The Mental Health Toolkit](#) from *Equality Texas* [83] - Helps caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth recognize risk factors and signs of mental health struggles.
- [The Welcoming Schools Program](#) from *the Human Rights Campaign* [84] - Includes resources for educators to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ students.



Abigail - 18 - A Little Ball of Hope

IMMIGRANT YOUTH

“Everyone is human, and everyone is different. Whether you’re different through your hair color, skin color, or the way you think. At the end of the day. We’re all still human. – Scotia, 15”

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

- **Share your feelings.** If you are stressed out or can't focus in class because of your immigration status, consider reaching out to a trusted school teacher or counselor. They can provide emotional support and help you look for resources in the community.
- **Take care of your mental wellbeing.** Create a coping toolbox with relaxation exercises and self-care activities (e.g., [Mental Health Toolbox by United We Dream](#)) [85].
- **Empower yourself.** Volunteer at local immigrant advocacy groups or legal aid organizations. [Know your rights](#) [86] if you encounter law enforcement.

Tips for Loved Ones:

- **Create a supportive environment.** Encourage open and honest conversations about youth's feelings, fears, and concerns.
- **Be resourceful.** Make a list of health clinics that offer free/ low-cost services to undocumented families.
- **Build a support network.** Connect youth with other newcomers. Participate in cultural events to help youth feel connected to their heritage and community.

RESOURCES

- [Greater Houston Low-Cost Clinic List](#) from *Texas Children's Hospital* and created by the Program for Immigrant and Refugee Child Health ([PIRCH](#)) [87] - Contains clinics' phone numbers, addresses, and specialties.
- [The Immigrant Resource Hotline](#) from *the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative* (1-833-468-4664) [88] - Provides updates on immigration laws, referrals to free/ low-cost legal and social services, and resources on disaster recovery. It's available Tue.-Fri., 9am-5pm (except holidays).
- [The Resource Library](#) from *Informed Immigrant* [89] - Information on education, legal help, and healthcare services for undocumented immigrants.
- [UndocuWisdom](#) [90] - Website with stories, advice, and life lessons from undocumented youth.

Ronit - 6 - Strength in my Diverse Community



YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Youth with disabilities often face unique challenges that can impact their mental health. Understanding and addressing these challenges is essential for promoting their well-being and fostering a supportive environment.

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

- **Embrace your strengths.** Focus on what you do well. Everyone has unique talents and abilities.
- **Connect with peers.** Join groups or clubs that share your interests. Finding friends with similar experiences can be empowering.
- **Practice self-advocacy.** Communicate your needs and preferences to teachers, caregivers, and peers. To learn more, read [“10 Self-Advocacy Tips” on Disability Rights Texas](#) [91].

Tips for Loved Ones:

- **Educate yourself.** Understand the specific needs and challenges associated with the youth’s disability.
- **Offer emotional support.** Provide a safe space for youth to express their feelings and concerns.
- **Foster self-confidence.** Encourage the youth to try new things and celebrate their achievements.



Elise - 9 - Room to Bloom

RESOURCES

- [Disability Rights Texas](#) [92] - Assists those with disabilities in Texas with accessibility, community living, education, employment, health care, housing, protection and civil rights, and transportation.
- [The Early Childhood Intervention Services](#) from *Texas Health and Human Services* [93] - A statewide program for families with children with disabilities and developmental delays.
- [Family to Family Network](#) [94] - Education and training, referrals, and support for families with children with disabilities.
- [Nexus Health](#) [95] - Treats medically complex children and adults.

NON-VERBAL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Below are tips and resources for non-verbal youth with disabilities .

COMMUNICATION

When speaking to a non-verbal youth ask yes or no questions, avoid long words, and use simple sentences. Take note of a child's body language, communication style, and their actions: are they trying to communicate their emotions through their body? It will be difficult at first and that is normal. Try implementing different communication methods to better understand a child's wants and needs including gesturing while speaking, always looking at the them while speaking, using iPad apps, text-to-speech, as well as a visual schedule. For more info see [6 Strategies for Encouraging a Non-Verbal Child to Communicate](#) [96].

ROUTINES

Routines are important for any child but especially for non-verbal youth. Creating a daily routine can provide stability, reduce anxiety, and bring predictability to your child's life. If you're not sure where to start, think about what your child already does on certain times of the day, and work around that schedule. Learn more at:

- [Why is structure important for someone with a learning disability?](#) [97]
- [Routines and Autism: 17 Tips for Resilience](#) [98]



Ishaal - 16 - Promise

SELF-CARE

[Create a self-care kit](#) [99] that contains a child's favorite things and soothes them during frustrating times. A highly stimulating environment full of loud noise can overwhelm a child's senses. A self-care kit can contain headphones, earplugs, and all the good things that can stabilize their mental well being.

ACTIVITIES

Teachers spend a lot of time with children and will have insight on what activities and hobbies make them happy and at peace. Spend 15 minutes a day doing the things they like at school and this may improve their mental well-being and possibly be an expressive outlet. Learn more in [How to help a child with a learning disability](#) [100].

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Foster care is not easy for anyone. Learning how to take care of our mental health can help us recover from difficult experiences and become more resilient.

FINDING SUPPORT

Tips for Youth:

- **Be kind to yourself.** Feeling scared or frustrated is part of being human. Don't let your circumstances define who you are. Learn what triggers you and how to address triggers with healthy coping strategies.
- **Find a trusted mentor.** They can help you navigate life challenges and offer insights on how to build your own support system after foster care.
- **Know your rights.** You have the right to live in a safe and healthy home. Report to your foster care coordinator if you feel violated, abused, or neglected. To learn more, read the [Texas Foster Care Handbook for Youth by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services \(DFPS\)](#) [101].

Tips for Loved Ones:

- **Show up and connect.** Be open and understanding. Do regular emotional wellness check-ins with youth and listen to what they have to say.
- **Seek ongoing education and training.** Create a nurturing environment and learn about trauma-informed foster care.
- **Make time for self-care.** Being a caregiver can be both rewarding and overwhelming. You are enough. Don't forget to take a break and find support if needed.

RESOURCES

- [The HAY Center](#) [102] - A program that offers services to current and former foster youth, including life skills training, peer advocacy, and transition coaching.
- [The Riverside Project](#) [103] - A nonprofit that provides resources for foster families as well as training for Foster Care Babysitter Certification and [Trust-Based Relational Intervention \(TBRI\)® for Caregivers](#) [104].
- [Sunrise Lofts](#) [105] - Housing for those who are transitioning out of foster care. It also has counseling, education support, and vocational training.
- [DePelchin Children's Center](#) [106] - Provides support for foster care placement, trauma-informed training, and in-home case management.



Cameron - 13 - Strength Within



PART 5

ACTIVITIES

"[...]The absence of pain is not enough to stop the suffering, youth need opportunities to step away from the rush of life so they can fill their moments with joyous experiences.

– Shania, 17

Meet Mindy and Polly

Name: _____

Date: _____

Life can sometimes be a bumpy ride, but I've learned a few tricks to stay happy and strong. I listen to my feelings, take breaks for fun activities like coloring, and always remember to be patient with myself and surround myself with supportive friends like Polly. I can help you navigate life's twists and turns by sharing resources and buzzworthy mental health tips!



Gratitude Journal

Name:

Date:

Gratitude is one of our most powerful emotions. Keeping a gratitude journal can help us focus on what we have, not what we lack. It helps us take a moment to reflect on simple things that bring us joy, and invite more happiness and positivity into our lives.



What am I grateful for at this moment?

○

○

○

What do I appreciate about myself?

○

○

○

Today's Affirmation

An affirmation is a statement to help reprogram our mind to think positive! Positive affirmations help us improve ourselves, accept ourselves, and achieve our dreams.



Confidence Journal

Name:

Date:

Did you know confidence can be a superpower? Use this Confidence Journal to reflect on your past, value your present self, and appreciate what you have gained along the way! Our confidence can grow when we appreciate how far we've come.

3 difficulties
I have overcome:



3 things that make
me feel safe:



3 things I have
learned about life:



3 things I value
the most:



3 things I am
good at:



3 compliments
I've received:



Self-Care Checklist

Name:

Date:

Our mental health is like a car engine—it needs regular check-ups and maintenance to keep it running properly. Self-care is all about how to take care of our mind and body. It means taking time to do things that help keep us functioning at our best.

Below is a checklist of activities that can help you recharge your mental health battery!



Take a walk outside

Doodle in your journal

Stretch all your muscles

Eat a healthy snack

Do your skin care routine

Make a vision board

Watch something funny

Bake Cookies

Practice meditation

Take photos of nature

Tidy up your bedroom

Water your plants

Drink a cup of warm tea

Listen to calming music

Stay offline for a day

Take a power nap

Visit your local library

Cuddle with your pet

Mood Tracker

Name:

Date:

Mood Trackers can be simple yet powerful tools that help us process our feelings mindfully. By monitoring our emotions consistently, we can identify what affects our moods and make changes to feel better! Record your moods and be your own mental health guardian!

Today I feel...

I feel this way because...

To take care of myself, I will...

Emotions can be difficult to explain in words. If your feelings had colors, shapes, or textures, what would they look like? Go with your intuition and draw your feelings below [107]!

Hint: Check out the Feelings Wheel on the next page!



My Support Network

Name:

Date:

Sometimes we feel like we have to face the world alone. Having a support network can give us more strength and resilience when we go through difficult times. They are trusted people who respect us and make us feel seen and understood.

Fill out this page and keep it handy in case you need extra support!



Name

Phone

Email

This person is important to me because...

.....

Name

Phone

Email

This person is important to me because...

.....

Name

Phone

Email

This person is important to me because...

.....

Name

Phone

Email

This person is important to me because...

.....

Name

Phone

Email

This person is important to me because...

.....

Name

Phone

Email

This person is important to me because...

.....

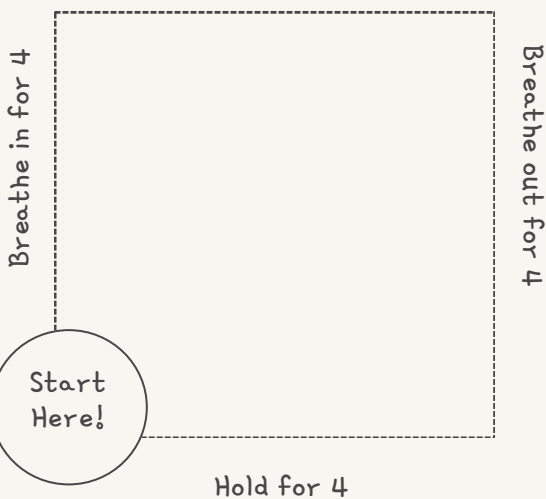
Breathing Exercises

Breathing exercises are a great way to take care of your mental health, they help manage your stress and reduce anxiety. Check out more grounding exercises, mental health resources, and stress management tips on [UNICEF's "On My Mind" podcast, co-created with youth.](#) [110]



Box Breathing

Hold for 4



- Start at the bottom left of the square.
- Trace your finger up the side, while you take a deep breath in.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds as you trace the second side.
- Breathe out as you slide down the other side.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds, as you trace the bottom of the square. [111]

Cupcake Breathing 😊



Imagine you are holding a cupcake. Take a deep breath in and smell the frosting, then blow out the candle! [112]

Bumble Bee Breathing



Breathe in slowly and breathe out while making a bee humming sound. Cover your ears with your hands to feel the soothing and calming vibration.

Noticing Window

Name:

Date:

Hi friend! As a bee, one thing I know is that nature is always changing. Finding a noticing window where we can pay attention to nature, allows us to pause, appreciate nature, and practice mindfulness [113]. This can help you feel more grounded and understand your emotions better. And you might see me smelling flowers and filling my belly with delicious nectar!

Observe nature and use the space below to write about what you see!



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Mindful Drawing Exercises [114]

Contour Line Drawing

- Study the Object and draw without lifting your pencil!
- Go back over lines to emphasize or move across the page.
- No erasing, coloring, or shading.

Blind Contour Line Drawing

- Contour Line Drawing with a twist!
- Follow the same rules, except this time, you aren't allowed to look down at your paper while drawing!

Gesture Drawing

- Study your object and draw as much as you can in 2 minutes!
- Forget about mistakes. Make your drawing bold!

Non-Dominant Hand

- Draw with your "bad" hand.
- You may look at the object and your paper, but your focus should be primarily on the object!

Draw the Negative Space

- Study the area around and behind the object.
- Draw the space around the object, but don't draw the actual object!



Tip: Doodle absentmindedly, don't overthink. Just draw!

See drawing examples in QR code below.



GLOSSARY

Mental Health Terms

The definitions below are directly cited from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [115], the National Library of Medicine (NLM) [116], and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) [117],

Mental Health: Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. – [SAMHSA](#)

Mental Illness: Mental illnesses are disorders, ranging from mild to severe, that affect a person's thinking, mood, and/or behavior. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one-in-five adults live with a mental illness. – [SAMHSA](#)

Anxiety Disorders: Conditions in which you have anxiety that does not go away and can get worse over time. The symptoms can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, schoolwork, and relationships. – [NLM](#)

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): ADHD is marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. – [NIMH](#)

Bipolar Disorders: A mental illness that causes unusual shifts in a person's mood, energy, activity levels, and concentration. These shifts can make it difficult to carry out day-to-day tasks. – [NIMH](#)

Depression: Depression (also known as major depression, major depressive disorder, or clinical depression) is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. – [NIMH](#)

Eating Disorders: Associated with severe disturbances in one's eating behaviors and related thoughts and emotions. Preoccupation with food, body weight, and shape may also signal an eating disorder. – [NIMH](#)

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD): A long-lasting disorder in which a person experiences uncontrollable and recurring thoughts (obsessions), engages in repetitive behaviors (compulsions), or both. – [NIMH](#)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): A disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event. – [NIMH](#)

GLOSSARY

Mental Health Professionals

The definitions below are adapted from the American Psychology Association (APA) [118], the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) [119], Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), the Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Psychiatrist: Educated at the doctoral level (MD or DO); licensed to prescribe medication; can identify and treat mental health conditions. – [APA](#)

Psychiatric Mental Health Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (PMH-APRNs): Educated at the master's and/or doctoral levels (DNP or PhD); licensed to prescribe medication; responsible for assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and evaluation of mental illness. – [APNA](#)

Physician Assistant (PA): Educated at the master's level; licensed to prescribe medication; usually works with a physician to identify and treat mental health conditions. – [APA](#)

Psychologist: Educated at the doctoral level; most psychologists are not licensed to prescribe medication; can identify and treat mental health conditions. – [APA](#)

Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC): Educated at the master's level; not licensed to prescribe medication; can identify mental health conditions and give counseling for a range of concerns. – [APA](#)

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW): Educated at the master's and/or doctoral levels; not licensed to prescribe medication; offer assessment, counseling, and a range of services. – [APA](#)

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT): Educated at the master's level; not licensed to prescribe medication; trained to diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage, couples, and family systems. – [AAMFT](#) [120]

Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC): Provides chemical dependency counseling services; not licensed to prescribe medication; can diagnose substance disorders. – [HHSC](#) [121]

Peer Specialist: Provides non-clinical, strengths-based support; not licensed to prescribe medication; has lived experience of recovery from a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder. – [SAMHSA](#)

REFERENCES

- [1] World Health Organization. “Mental Health.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response.
- [2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “About Children’s Mental Health.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.cdc.gov/children-mental-health/about/.
- [3] American Psychiatric Association. “Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination Against People with Mental Illness.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination.
- [4] Understanding Houston. “Mental Health.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.understandinghouston.org/topic/health/mental-health/#mental_healthcare_availability.
- [5] Mental Health America. “Youth Mental Health: The Impacts of Pressures and Stigma.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://mhanational.org/blog/youth-mental-health-stigma>.
- [6] Mental Health First Aid. “Use Person-First Language to Reduce Stigma.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2022/04/use-person-first-language-to-reduce-stigma/.
- [7] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. “For parents and caregivers of children.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/how-to-talk/parents-and-caregivers.
- [8] National Alliance on Mental Illness. “9 Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.nami.org/education/9-ways-to-fight-mental-health-stigma/.
- [9] The Trevor Project. “The Importance of Safe Language On Social Media.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/the-importance-of-safe-language-on-social-media/.
- [10] The Trevor Project. “Online Safety for LGBTQ+ Young People.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/online-safety-for-lgbtq-young-people/.
- [11] Meta Family Center. “Home Page.” Accessed: November 1, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://familycenter.meta.com/>.

REFERENCES

- [12] Search Institute. “Developmental Relationships.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://searchinstitute.org/developmental-relationships>.
- [13] University at Buffalo. “Developing Your Support System.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/additional-self-care-resources/developing-your-support-system.html>.
- [14] Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. “Mental Health Professionals: Who’s Who?” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.yourhealthinmind.org/psychiatry-explained/mental-health-professionals>.
- [15] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Anxiety and Depression in Children.” Accessed: November 3, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.cdc.gov/children-mental-health/about/about-anxiety-and-depression-in-children.html.
- [16] Mental Health America of Greater Houston. “Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Services.” Accessed: November 3, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://mhahouston.org/mental-health-resources/child-behavioral>.
- [17] Mental Health America. “Time to Talk: Talking to Your Parents.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.mhanational.org/time-talk-talking-your-parents.
- [18] Mental Health America. “I’m Afraid to Talk to Anyone About My Mental Health.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://screening.mhanational.org/content/im-afraid-talk-anyone-about-my-mental-health>.
- [19] Mental Health America. “How Can I Get Help Without My Family Knowing?” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://screening.mhanational.org/content/how-can-i-get-help-without-my-family-knowing>.
- [20] Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care. “In Brief: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK279297/.
- [21] National Alliance on Mental Illness. “Tips for Successful Family Therapy.” Accessed: October 23, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.nami.org/family-member-caregivers/tips-for-successful-family-therapy/.

REFERENCES

- [22] “Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Find a Support Group or Local Program for Mental Health, Drugs, or Alcohol.” Accessed: October 23, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.samhsa.gov/find-support/health-care-or-support/support-group-or-local-program.
- [23] Mental Health America. “Medication.” Accessed: October 23, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://mhanational.org/medication>.
- [24] Mental Health America. “Mental Health Treatments.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://mhanational.org/mental-health-treatments>.
- [25] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. “Types of Treatment.” Accessed: October 23, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.samhsa.gov/find-support/learn-about-treatment/types-of-treatment.
- [26] K. Cherry. “What is Art Therapy?.” Verywell Mind. Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-art-therapy-2795755>.
- [27] Cleveland Clinic. “Music Therapy.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/8817-music-therapy>.
- [28] Psychology Today. “Animal-Assisted Therapy.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/animal-assisted-therapy.
- [29] American Medical Association Code of Medical Ethics. “Patient Rights.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/ethics-opinions/patient-rights>.
- [30] Society of Pediatric Nurses. “The Pediatric Bill of Rights.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: [www.pediatricnursing.org/article/S0882-5963\(14\)00242-5/pdf](http://www.pediatricnursing.org/article/S0882-5963(14)00242-5/pdf).
- [31] Texas Health and Human Services. “Your Civil Rights.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.hhs.texas.gov/services/your-rights/civil-rights-office/your-civil-rights.
- [32] Texas Health and Safety Code § 572.001. Available: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.572.htm>.
- [33] Texas Health and Human Services. “Adolescent Health Guide for Providers.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/health-services-providers/thsteps/thadolescent-health-guidance.pdf.

REFERENCES

- [34] Texas Family Code § 261.102. Available: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/FA/htm/FA.261.htm>.
- [35] Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. “When and How to Report Child Abuse.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Child_Safety/report_abuse.asp.
- [36] 45 C.F.R. § 164.508. Available: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-C/part-164/subpart-E/section-164.508>.
- [37] American Medical Association Code of Medical Ethics. “Confidential Health Care for Minors.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/ethics-opinions/confidential-health-care-minors>.
- [38] Texas Health and Safety Code §181.051(b). Available: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.181.htm>.
- [39] U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. “HIPAA Privacy Rule and Sharing Information Related to Mental Health.” U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/hipaa-privacy-rule-and-sharing-info-related-to-mental-health.pdf>.
- [40] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Prioritizing Minority Mental Health.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/minority-health/features/minority-mental-health.html>
- [41] Mental Health TX. “Local Mental Health Authorities.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://mentalhealthtx.org/resources/local-mental-health-authorities/>.
- [42] The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD. “Home Page.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.theharriscenter.org/>.
- [43] Texas Children’s Hospital. “Mental Health Services For Medicaid or Low-Income Families.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.texaschildrens.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Counseling%20Services%20for%20Medicaid%20and%20low%20income%20families.pdf>.
- [44] K.A. Yeager & S. Bauer-Wu. “Cultural humility: Essential foundation for clinical researchers.” National Library of Medicine. Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3834043/>.

REFERENCES

- [45] National Prevention Information Network. “Cultural Competence In Health And Human Services.” Accessed: October 28, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://npin.cdc.gov/pages/cultural-competence-health-and-human-services>.
- [46] S. Khan, “Cultural Humility vs. Cultural Competence – and Why Providers Need Both,” Health City. Accessed: October 28, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.focus.20190041>.
- [47] Mental Health America. “How do I find a therapist?” Accessed: October 28, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://screening.mhanational.org/content/how-do-i-find-therapist/>.
- [48] Barnardo’s Education Community. “My Coping Toolbox.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.educators-barnardos.org.uk/media/s4xfmntj/my-coping-toolbox-booklet.pdf>.
- [49] Mental Health America. “I don’t like my therapist.” Accessed: October 29, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://screening.mhanational.org/content/i-dont-my-therapist/>.
- [50] Mental Health America. “How does therapy work? What to expect?” Accessed: October 29, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://screening.mhanational.org/content/how-does-therapy-work-what-expect>.
- [51] HIPAA Journal. “HIPAA Release Form.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hipaajournal.com/hipaa-release-form>.
- [52] National Alliance on Mental Illness. “Navigating A Mental Health Crisis: A NAMI Resource Guide For Those Experiencing A Mental Health Emergency.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nami.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Navigating-A-Mental-Health-Crisis.pdf>.
- [53] 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. “Get Help.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://988lifeline.org/get-help/>.
- [54] National Institute of Mental Health. “If You or Someone You Know is in Crisis and Needs Immediate Help.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/site-info/if-you-or-someone-you-know-is-in-crisis-and-needs-immediate-help>.
- [55] Houston Area Women’s Center. “Home Page.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://hawc.org/>.

REFERENCES

- [56] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. "SAMHSA's National Helpline." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>.
- [57] Texas Youth Helpline. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online.] Available: <https://www.dfps.texas.gov/youth-helpline/>.
- [58] The Harris Center. "Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT)." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.theharriscenter.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/MCOT%20%281%29.pdf>.
- [59] E. McVay. "Social Media and Self-diagnosis." Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital. Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/articles/2023/08/social-media-and-self-diagnosis>.
- [60] United Way Greater Houston. "211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://unitedwayhouston.org/what-we-do/211-texas-united-way-helpline/>.
- [61] Mental Health America of Greater Houston. "Youth Resource Guide." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://mhahouston.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Mental-Health-America-of-Greater-Houston-Youth-Resource-Guide-2023-1.pdf>.
- [62] Psychology Today. "Find a Therapist." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>.
- [63] Therapy for Black Girls. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://therapyforblackgirls.com/>.
- [64] LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://lgbtqhealthcaredirectory.org/>.
- [65] Baylor College of Medicine. "Teen Health Clinic." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.bcm.edu/community/healthcare-outreach/teen-health-clinic>.
- [66] Family Houston. "Mental Health Counseling." Accessed: November 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://familyhouston.org/houston-counseling/>.
- [67] Lone Star Circle of Care. "Lone Star Circle of Care at Houston Museum District." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://lonestarcare.org/location/lone-star-circle-of-care-at-houston-museum-district/>.

REFERENCES

- [68] re:MIND. “Youth Program.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.remindsupport.org/youth-program/>.
- [69] Texas Health and Human Services. “Medical Transportation Program.” Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip/medicaid-chip-members/medical-transportation-program>.
- [70] PsychCentral. “Mental Health Resources for People of Color and Indigenous People.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://psychcentral.com/health/mental-health-resources-for-people-of-color>.
- [71] Psychology Today. “The Power of Unlearning.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-gen-y-psy/202004/the-power-unlearning>.
- [72] The Kids Mental Health Foundation. “Kids and Race-Related Violence.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.kidsmentalhealthfoundation.org/mental-health-resources/minority-mental-health/media-race-violence-exposure>.
- [73] The Kids Mental Health Foundation. “Starting the Conversation with Kids.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.kidsmentalhealthfoundation.org/mental-health-resources/starting-conversations/starting-conversations>.
- [74] Mental Health America Toolkit. “Bipoc Mental Health month.” Accessed: November 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://mhanational.org/bipoc/mental-health-month>.
- [75] National Institutes of Health. “Race and National Origin.” Accessed: November 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: www.nih.gov/nih-style-guide/race-national-origin.
- [76] Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation. “Home Page.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://borislhensonfoundation.org>.
- [77] We R Native. “My Mind.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.wernative.org/my-mind>.
- [78] National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association. “Student Resources.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.naapimha.org/studentresources>.
- [79] National Alliance for Hispanic Health. “Mental Health.” Accessed: Jun. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.healthyamericas.org/mental-health>.

REFERENCES

- [80] The Montrose Center. "Hatch Youth." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://montrosecenter.org/micro-sites/hatch-youth/>.
- [81] Resources for Trans Youth in Texas. "Free to Be Me: A Toolkit to Protect LGBTQIA+ Students' Rights." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.txtranskids.org/toolkit>.
- [82] The Trevor Project. "The Coming Out Handbook." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/the-coming-out-handbook/>.
- [83] Equality Texas. "Mental Health Toolkit." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.equalitytexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Mental-Health-Toolkit.pdf>.
- [84] The Human Rights Campaign. "Welcoming Schools." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://welcomingschools.org/>.
- [85] United We Dream. "Mental Health Toolkit." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://unitedwedream.org/resources/mental-health-toolkit/>.
- [86] Informed Immigrant. "Know Your Rights." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.informedimmigrant.com/resources/know-your-rights/know-your-rights/>.
- [87] Texas Children's Hospital. "Greater Houston Low-Cost Clinics." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.texaschildrens.org/departments/program-immigrant-and-refugee-child-health/patient-resources>.
- [88] "Houston Immigrant Resource Hotline." Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative. Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://houstonimmigration.org/hilsc-program/houston-immigrant-resource-hotline/>.
- [89] Informed Immigrant. "Resource Library." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.informedimmigrant.com/resources/>.
- [90] Undocumented Wisdom. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://undocuwisdom.com/>.
- [91] Disability Rights Texas. "10 Self-Advocacy Tips." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/handout/10-self-advocacy-tips/>.
- [92] Disability Rights Texas. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/home/>.

REFERENCES

- [93] Texas Health & Human Services Commission. "Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECI)." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services-eci>.
- [94] Family to Family Network. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://f2fn.org/>.
- [95] Nexus Health Systems. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://nexushealthsystems.com/>.
- [96] AppliedBehaviorAnalysisEdu.org. "6 strategies - encouraging a non-verbal child to communicate." Accessed: November 4, 20 24. [Online]. Available: <https://www.appliedbehavioranalysisedu.org/6-strategies-for-encouraging-a-non-verbal-child-to-communicate/>.
- [97] NHS Lanarkshire. "Why is structure important for someone with a learning disability?" Accessed: November 4, 20 24. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/services/occupational-therapy/learning-disability/why-is-structure-important-for-someone-with-a-learning-disability>.
- [98] ABA Centers of America. "Routines and Autism: 17 Tips for Resilience." Accessed: November 4, 20 24. [Online]. Available: <https://www.abacenters.com/routines-and-autism-resilience/>.
- [99] Lifeline Support Kit. "Creating a self-care box." Accessed: November 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://toolkit.lifeline.org.au/articles/techniques/creating-a-self-care-box>.
- [100] G. Kemp, M. Smith, & J. Segal. "How to help a child with a learning disability." Accessed: November 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.helpguide.org/family/learning-disabilities/helping-children-with-learning-disabilities>.
- [101] Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. "Texas Foster Care Handbook for Children, Youth, & Young Adults." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/documents/foster-care-handbook.pdf.
- [102] The HAY Center. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.haycenter.org/>.
- [103] The Riverside Project. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://riversideproject.org/>.

REFERENCES

- [104] The Riverside Project. "Trauma Training." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://riversideproject.org/trauma-training/>.
- [105] Sunrise Lofts. "Home Page." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.sunriselofts.com/>.
- [106] DePelchin Children's Center. "Foster Care." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.depelchin.org/foster-care/>.
- [107] Y. Son. "How to Draw Your Feelings (+ Paint Them Too)." Thirsty For Art. Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thirstyforart.com/blog/how-to-draw-feelings>.
- [108] G. Willcox, "The Feeling Wheel: A Tool for Expanding Awareness of Emotions and Increasing Spontaneity and Intimacy," *Transactional Analysis Journal*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 274-276, 1982. [Online]. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/036215378201200411>.
- [109] Mindful Coaching Tools. "The Feelings Wheel PDF (EDITABLE in Canva & Printable)." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mindfulcoachingtools.com/free-tools/p/the-feelings-wheel>.
- [110] UNICEF. *On My Mind* [Audio podcast]. Spotify. Accessed: November 18, 2024. [Online]. Available: https://open.spotify.com/episode/4PCbaXBfMrwKyT8geijkrt?si=7cYSMuR1T_2INI-SFHyDbw
- [111] Hug A Bug World. "Breathing Break Worksheets." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://hugabugworld.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/3-SheetsBreathing-Break-Worksheets.pdf>.
- [112] Grace's Learning Loft. Canva "Cupcake Breathing." Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: https://www.canva.com/templates/EAFsmv02q_U-breathing-social-emotional-educational-poster-in-pink-orange-illustrative-fun-style/.
- [113] H. Jo, C. Song, & Y Miyazaki. "Physiological Benefits of Viewing Nature: A Systematic Review of Indoor Experiments." National Library of Medicine. Accessed: November 4, 2024 [Online]. Available: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6926748/>.
- [114] R. Hagemann. "Drawing Exercises." Canva. Accessed: May 24, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.canva.com/templates/EAFoRXvwpel-visual-arts-drawing-exercises-poster-in-colorful-illustrative-style/>.

REFERENCES

- [115] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. "What is Mental Health?" Accessed: Jun. 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health>.
- [116] National Library of Medicine. "Health Topics." Accessed: Jun. 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://medlineplus.gov/healthtopics.html>.
- [117] National Institute of Mental Health. "Health Topics." Accessed: Jun. 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics>.
- [118] American Psychological Association. "APA Dictionary of Psychology." Accessed: November 4, 2024/ [Online]. Available: <https://dictionary.apa.org/>.
- [119] American Psychiatric Nurses Association. "Common Questions about Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses." Accessed: Jun. 4, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.apna.org/about-psychiatric-nursing/faqs/>.
- [120] American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. "About Marriage and Family Therapists." Accessed: November 4, 2024/ [Online]. Available: www.aamft.org/About_AAMFT/About_Marriage_and_Family_Therapists.aspx.
- [121] Texas Health and Human Services. "Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor Program." Accessed: November 4, 2024/ [Online]. Available: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/licensing-credentialing-regulation/professional-licensing-certification-compliance/licensed-chemical-dependency-counselor-program>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Houston Leadership & Staff

Mayor John Whitmire
Assistant Chief Policy Officer Dr. Cynthia Wilson
Director Olivera Jankovska
Program Manager Laura Cuellar
Program Intern Nicole Kwan
Program Intern Osiris Cordova-Torres



Mental Health Providers

Mental Health America of Greater Houston
Texas Children's Hospital
The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD
Houston OCD & Anxiety

Community Partners

Houston Health Foundation
Episcopal Health Foundation
Greater Houston Community Foundation
Harris County Juvenile Probation and the Office of Safety
Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast

Youth Contributors

Ashley Scott	Lauren Williams
Ebony Jones	Rebecca Mejia
Jared Lewis	Samiaht Busari
Jaagat Prashar	Scotia Linn
Kendall Pierce	City of Houston Youth Ambassadors





The City of Houston Education & Youth Engagement

901 Bagby St., 4th Floor,

Houston, TX 77002

moedu@houstontx.gov



Scan the QR code to
access the *digital version*
of the City of Houston
Youth Mental Health
Guide and *clickable links*
for references!



To learn more, visit www.houstontx.gov/education.



ISBN 978-0-99-702549-1



9 780997 025491