Mental health is a big part of every person's life. How we see the world, cope with issues in one's life, deal with stress, and how we interact with others who are important to us. It can affect our overall health and wellbeing. Here are some tips to cope with life stressors.

The 5 Pillars of Overall Health:

- Communication Skills
- Learning
- Emotional Growth
- Resilience
- Self-esteem

Mental health can be shaped by biological and environmental factors – life experiences and genes. (The place where you live, the people in your family, your friend connections, and your brain chemistry)

In recent years 1 out of 5 young people has been dealing with hopelessness, anxiety, and depression increased by 40% from 2009 to 2019 and suicide rates have gone up by 57% among groups 10-24 years old in 2020.

1 in 5 children ages 3 to 17 in the US with a reported mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder being disabled or have poor life outcomes.

Factors that can shape mental health in young people are: social and economics inequalities, discriminations, racism, technology, culture and policy.

Society

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Neighbors

Another factor in neighborhoods is access to green spaces, healthy food or food deserts, pollution, climate change, housing, safety and crime.

Community

Important relationships in every young person's life are when the community of teachers, peers, mentors, spiritual communities, and community supports and takes a hand in balancing mental health stressors.

Family

One of the most important factors in having a healthy mental health support system is family. Connections to parents, a caregiver, siblings, financial stability, and support for childhood trauma (ACE), all play a role.

Step Up For Kids Program
Youth Mental Health Circle

Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health - 1999

*The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory
TIPS ON STRESS
COPING WITH ANXIETY

What Youth Can Do to Cope with Anxiety 8-12 yrs

- Deep Breathing for relaxation
- “Talk about it” with someone you trust
- Journaling: Encourage decreasing to avoid and recognizing feelings
- Make a list of things you are grateful for; gratitude = well being
- Make a playlist of relaxing music
- Watch a funny movie. Humor works wonders!
- Do something new to stay busy
- Focusing on a different thought
- Increase your favorite activities
- Calm your mind: 5-4-3-2-1
- Hang out with friends or families
- Connect with a faith community
- Do something for others, volunteer, neighborhood

What Youth Can Do to Cope with Anxiety 13-17 yrs

- Deep Breathing for relaxation
- “Talk about it” with someone you trust
- Journaling: Encourage decreasing to avoid and recognize feelings
- Make a list of things you are grateful for; gratitude = well being
- Make a playlist of relaxing music
- Watch a funny movie. Humor works wonders!
- Do something new to stay busy
- Focusing on a different thought
- Increase your favorite activities
- Calm your mind: 5-4-3-2-1
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Hanging Out with Friends Can Direct You to Happy Thoughts

TIP: Learn Mindfulness
Exercise: 5-4-3-2-1

- Five: Things you see, pick one to focus on and say in detail out loud
- Four: Things to touch, pick and describe
- Three: Things you can hear, pick one sound to focus on
- Two: Things you can smell, and describe it
- One: Thing you can taste

How do you feel now? Are you calm? Good. Do this daily, or when you need to refocus on a negative thought. Practice is key.

Remember, meditate on:

5 - Sight, 👀
4 - Touch, 🤭
3 - Hearing, 🎧
2 - Smell 🦋
1- Taste 🍔

National Academy of Sciences
Take the time to pick one affirmation a week. Practice saying them out loud:

1. I am enough, I do not have to change myself to be enough.
2. I believe in myself and in what I am capable of doing.
3. I am smart and competent and am willing to learn when needed.
4. I am strong and steadfast and can overcome adversity.
5. I am safe and loved by my friends and family and those that know me.
6. It is ok to be proud of myself and my accomplishments, I worked hard for them.
7. I trust my decisions and the instincts that I have.
8. It is ok to listen to my heart and trust my better judgment even if it goes against the advice of someone else.
9. I am important and my presence is important to myself and to others.
10. I am loved and more people care about me than I know.
11. It is ok to be scared, or hurt, or angry, I do not have to be strong all the time.
12. My emotions and feelings are valid and should be heard and listened to.
13. I can help others and change their lives, I want to help others.
14. I can change the life that I have for the better, I can believe in myself.
15. I may not look like models in magazines but my body is strong and healthy and capable.
16. I respect myself and my body, I do not have to compromise my morals for anyone.
17. I should not compare myself to others, I am my own person.
18. I am beautiful and perfect the way I am, no one can tell me otherwise.
19. I can fight with my family and still love them and be loved by them.
20. I am an important part of my family, I am needed.
21. I can make mistakes and still reach my goals and be successful.
22. I work hard and am ready to be challenged to get what I want.
23. It is a good thing to stand up for myself.
24. I respect other people, even when we have a difference of opinions.
25. I have the courage to share my true thoughts and feelings.
26. My voice, my opinion, and my truth matter and should be heard.
27. It is ok to ask for help when you need it, you do not have to be an island and do everything alone.
28. I have family and friends that support me and will help me overcome challenges.
29. I can handle anything that comes my way.
OUR PROGRAM
LIST OF ACTIVITIES

Reading Camp
Digital or traditional reading sessions for at-risk kids that need a fun way to learn! (Young Learners 1-8 years old)

Step Up Art Workshop
Coloring books, watercolor, colored pencils, chalk, ink/wash, and acrylic, help reduce stress and anxiety and bring creativity. (all ages)

Step Up peer Talk Circle
Peer support on feelings, cyberbullying, peer pressure, career, introduction to mental health discussions. (14-17)

Step Up For Meditation
Self-care, mindfulness, and meditation for kids. (Kindness, breathing exercises, tai chi, yoga, all ages)

Mental Health Journals
During our #GivingForward Campaign in 2022, we are supporting kids (8-18 years old) via our Step Up For Kids Program and donating journals to help kids process any stress and anxiety that we know many young people are facing. Write or draw important feelings or success ideas or affirmations. Self-care is key!

NEVER LET ANYTHING STOP YOU FROM BEING YOUR UNIQUE, GEEKY, SHY, LOUD, FUN, ADVENTUROUS, AND BRILLIANT SELF!

BE YOU!

STEP UP FOR KIDS PROGRAM
By Step Up For Mental Health®

WWW.STEPUPFORMENTALHEALTH.ORG

Learn More Via Our YouTube Channel

STEP UP FOR KIDS: READING