

# Step Up For Kids Program

## Youth Mental Health Circle



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



Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health - 1999

## 2 out of 5 Young People



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 2 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.

\*The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory

## Society

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

## 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.

How individuals connect to family, friends, peers, and community can make a difference in a young person's life.

## 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.



\*Adverse Childhood Experiences ACEs

# TIPS ON STRESS

## COPING WITH ANXIETY



**TIP: When you are happy, what are you doing?**

Create a list of things that make you happy, then do them!

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

- Belly breathing
- Doing fun activities
- Use Play-doh or slime to squeeze (stress ball)
- **Journaling:** Write or draw exercises
- Calming your mind
- Change your thoughts
- Do activities throughout the day.
- **4 Activities:** Do something alone, do something with someone, do things that keep you busy, Help others

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

- Deep Breathing for relaxation
- “Talk about it” with someone you trust
- **Journaling:** Encourage the decrease in avoiding feelings, and recognizing them instead.
- 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



### Hanging Out with Friends Can Direct You to Happy Thoughts



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



Sit in a chair, think about your breathing, lay hands on your lap, exhale slowly, look around you, and think of the things you see. Pick one object to focus on:

- 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



# TEEN AFFIRMATIONS

## SELF ESTEEM AND SELF CARE



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Take the time to pick one affirmations a week. Practice saying them outloud:

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. I am worthy and so are my feelings and trepidations.
  12. I do not have to be perfect all the time, I can let my guard down and still be loved and accepted.
  13. I can forgive myself and others, even for larger transgressions.
  14. I accept myself and my flaws, they are what makes me who I am.
  15. I can speak to myself with words of kindness and forgiveness, it is ok to cut myself some slack.
  16. I deserve happiness and to be content and joyful in what I have and what I have done.
  17. I do not have to be perfect to be loved or to be accepted.
  18. I love myself.
  19. It is ok to be scared, or hurt, or angry, I do not have to be strong all the time.
  20. My emotions and feelings are valid and should be heard and listened to.
  21. Being scared does not make me less, it does not make me weak.
  22. Thinking positive thoughts about myself is a good thing and can help me grow and change.
  23. I accept the things I cannot change about myself, they are what makes me who I am and do not make me any less special or loved.
  24. It is ok to be scared and confused. I do not have to always have a clear direction.
  25. I am kind and compassionate and can feel love for myself and others.
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# 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).



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

**BE YOU!**



## Mental Health Journals

During 2022-23, we are supporting kids (8-18 years old) via our **Step Up For Kids Program** and donating writing or drawing 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!

STEP UP FOR KIDS PROGRAM

By Step Up For Mental Health®

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