Teen Esteem on Mental Health

EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR LIFE

www.TeenEsteem.org

Mental health issues have risen dramatically in recent years amongst youth. Studies show this is connected to increased academic pressures, and the rise in use of social media and screens in general, which also often results in lack of social interactions.

Mental health issues can be experienced in different ways. These struggles become more prominent during adolescence. Mental health goes beyond emotional reactions and can become something longer lasting.

Some common signs may include:

· Feeling sad or down · Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate · Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt · Extreme mood changes of highs and lows · Withdrawal from friends and activities · Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping · Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations · Inability to cope with daily problems or stress · Trouble understanding or relating to situations and to people · Problems with alcohol or drug use · Major changes in eating habits · Excessive anger, hostility or violence · Suicidal thinking

Prevention is key!
Research has now shown that most mental health issues follow a developmental course that typically starts early in life.
Many people who suffer from anxiety, psychotic or mood disorders, depression, social phobia, obsessive compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia showed signs in adolescence or even earlier. Intervening as early as possible preserves quality of life and it can cost less both emotionally and monetarily.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among high school-aged youth ages 14–18.

Nearly one in three parents (**31%**) shared that their children's emotional health is worse than before the pandemic.

Half of all mental illness presents **by age 14**, yet few get the services they need.

5-11 YEAR OLDS (2020)
12-17 YEAR OLDS (2020)

In 2020, the proportion of mental health-related emergency room visits for children 5-11 and 12-17 years increased by **24%** and **31%**, respectively.

In 2019, one third of high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, **an overall increase of 40% from 2009.**

Source: HopefulFutures.us: America's School Mental Health Report Card

Encourage your child to take mental health breaks daily:

- Take a walk or a hike. Getting outside decreases our stress levels. Even if it's raining.
- Do something fun (and healthy): listen to music, exercise, journal or read a good book. Implement mandatory study breaks. Our kids are under heavy academic pressures and need to learn how to balance their study and play time.
- Help someone out. It's proven to be therapeutic when we selflessly help others.
- Take a break from social media, maybe even from technology (for a few hours, or a few days).

4 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU START YOUR DAY:

1) Express gratitude
2) Set your intentions with realistic expectations
3) Smile for no reason in a mirror
4) Take 5 long, deep breaths

If you're concerned about your child's mental health:

- Seek professional advice. Don't avoid getting help for your child out of shame or fear.
- Seek ways to join your child in relaxing activities, even if that means watching their favorite TV show with them.
- Explore fun, interactive activities that can facilitate a better connection between you and them.
- Encourage your child to take a chance on trying something new (sport, club, hobby, interest). Explain that they don't have to be great at everything and that it's important to try new things in life even if we 'fail' at them. These practices will equip them with more resilience and teach them how to recover from setbacks.
- Consider doing a social media or screen detox, maybe absolute abstinence for a period of time or just more regulated use.
- Seek professional advice on how to improve interactions with your child and how to handle difficult behavior. Explore different stress management techniques.
- Inform school counselors/teachers if you're concerned about your child's mental wellness.
- Contact the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI to find out what services and support are available in your community.
- Connect with a trained crisis counselor to receive free, 24/7 crisis support via text message by texting "NAMI" to 741741.