



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

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The following materials have been created and compiled by Canadian Mental Health Association - Calgary Region. Sourced materials have been referenced throughout. These handouts may not be used or revised without the written permission of Canadian Mental Health Association - Calgary Region.



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WHO WE ARE

WHAT IS THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - CALGARY REGION?

Canadian Mental Health Association - Calgary Region (CMHA Calgary) builds awareness and provides education and support for individuals and families living with mental health or substance use concerns. CMHA Calgary works closely with other community organizations to bridge gaps in the mental health care system and facilitates access to important services and resources.

WHAT IS YOUTHSMART?

CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART (**Youth Supporting Mental Health and Resiliency Together**) integrates collaborative, youth-led mental health learning opportunities in local junior and senior high schools, and youth-focused community groups. YouthSMART knows that students are incredibly influential amongst their peers, within their schools, families, and communities. As such, YouthSMART values students, teachers, and group leaders as co-contributors, actively involved in the programming and opportunities that directly impact youth wellness, and works with schools and community sites to inspire, inform, and transform the culture surrounding mental health. For more information about CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART, check out: [YouthSMART.ca](https://youthsmart.ca)

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This parent resource guide will emphasize the key factors of youth mental health awareness and helping youth address their stress with healthy coping, while providing information on supportive parent and caregiver relationships, youth self-efficacy, perceived control, adaptive skills, self-regulatory capacities, mobilizing sources of hope, connection, and positive community links.

This resource is designed to build mental health literacy as parents and caregivers, and empower you to develop the skills to support your mental health and the mental health of your child. This resource will increase mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and create greater comfort in engaging in conversations around mental health.

You may note this resource guide uses the terms “parents” or “your child” throughout, but this guide is appropriate for anyone who supports or cares for young people in anyway.

Topics include:

- Stress Management
- Mental Health and Mental Illness
- Stigma
- Mental Health Conversations
- Suicide Prevention
- Self-Care
- Mental Health Skills



STRESS MANAGEMENT



WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is the body's reaction to a real or perceived threat. Everyone experiences some form of daily stress. Depending on the situation, stress can feel like a hardship, or affliction that impacts an individual's well-being. In other situations, stress can be a positive force that motivates you to focus on a task or solve a problem.

Most stress is not harmful

It can be healthy and it is part of how you learn to become resilient or develop the skills to adapt to challenges. Stress becomes a problem when individuals feel overwhelmed or they cannot fix the problem.

Young people are dealing with high levels of stress. For some, this is the first time they are developing habits and behaviours around stress and how to cope. Young people may need some support to recognize and appropriately manage stress.



Pressures young people face [1]:

- Achieve good grades, get into college/university
- The need to excel or be a superstar in sports or other extracurriculars
- Tough schedules that don't allow for rest, relaxation, or unstructured fun
- Bullying (in-person or via social media)
- Persistent fears or stress about big issues such as climate change, global conflict, etc.
- Discrimination
- Pressure to fit in and comparison to others

[1] Chung, R. (2019, November 9). Mental Health and Teens: Watch for Danger Signs. HealthyChildren.org.
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Mental-Health-and-Teens-Watch-for-Danger-Signs.aspx>



HOW TO RECOGNIZE STRESS

Stress may look different depending on the person and the situation. A few indicators of stress can include:

Physical



Headaches	Sweating	Fast Breathing	Increased Heart Rate
Butterflies in Stomach	Fidgeting	Alertness	Difficulty Sleeping

Emotional



Anxious	Scared	Frustrated	Nervous/On Edge
Sad	Cranky/Grumpy	Feeling Overwhelmed	Mood Swings

Thoughts



Fuzzy Thinking	Negative Thinking	Worrying	Too Many Thoughts
Lack of Attention	Judgemental	"What ifs"	Lack of Thoughts

Behaviour



Procrastination	Snappy	Distracted	Trouble Focusing
Avoidance	Isolation	Withdrawal	Critical



CONSIDER

- How do you experience stress?
- How does your child experience stress?
- How can you use this information to manage your stress better and help them to manage theirs?



CAUSES OF STRESS

Stress can be externally or internally based.

External stress is stress outside of one’s control. This includes things you can respond or react to but cannot control. Internal stress is stress based on things you can control. How you react to an external stressor can also cause internal stress.

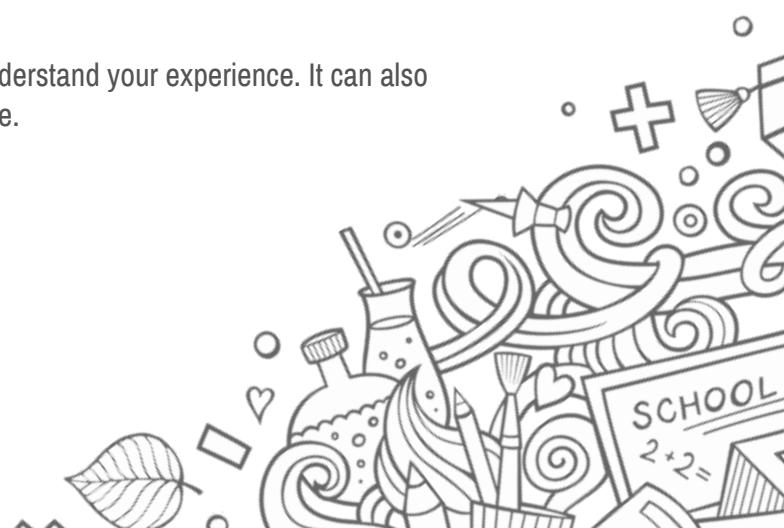
External Stress

School/Academic Demands	Career/Job Changes
Uncertain Future	Drama
Weather	Traffic
Social Media	Public Speaking
World News	Death of A Loved One

Internal Stress

Not Enough Sleep	Procrastination
Setting High Standards	Low Self-Esteem
Negative Thinking	Anticipating Worst-Case Scenarios
Feeling Disorganized	Thoughts and Feelings About External Stressors
Perfectionism	Rigid Thinking

Recognizing the cause of stress can be helpful to better understand your experience. It can also inform how you react and respond to this stress in the future.





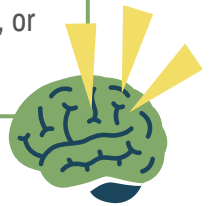
STRESS MANAGEMENT

Coping skills are actions taken to help tolerate stress or uncomfortable emotions. It is important for both youth and adults to have access to coping strategies to keep themselves healthy, balanced, and ready to handle the next challenge. Coping can be healthy or unhealthy depending on how it impacts you long-term.

Healthy Coping

Healthy coping strategies may not provide instant gratification, but they tend to lead to longer-lasting positive outcomes by helping you tolerate, minimize, or deal with stressful situations.

Identify the Problem	Learn Thinking Strategies	Do Something You Enjoy
Talk To Others About Problems	Get Active	Try Breathing, Meditation, or Mindfulness Exercises



Unhealthy Coping

Unhealthy coping strategies may feel good in the short term and can lead to increased stress later on due to negative consequences or failure to deal with the problem.

Drugs, Alcohol, Vaping, Smoking	Unhealthy Food	Caffeine or Energy Drinks
Not Talking about Feelings	Avoiding Family/Friends	Toxic Positivity



MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL ILLNESS



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is the state of well-being in which every individual realizes their potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, do well, and fully enjoy life.



Everyone has mental health

It is important to take care of your mental health just as you would your physical health. Think of how people see a doctor or have regular check-ups even when feeling good. It is important to think about checking on mental health in good times or hard.

Everyone needs good mental health to build strong relationships, adapt to change, and deal with life's challenges.



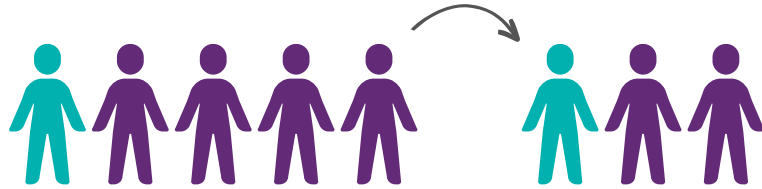


MENTAL HEALTH VS. MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental health is a change in thinking, mood, or behaviour, and is accompanied by distress and impaired functioning over time. Mental illness is a medical condition diagnosed by qualified mental health professionals.

Examples can include:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Substance-Related Disorders



1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness and this jumps to 1 in 3 if you include substance-related disorders

Mental health is not the absence of mental illness

RECOGNIZING CHANGES

Thinking

- Excessive worries or fears
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Trouble understanding situations or relating to others
- Thinking something is wrong with you



Mood

- Sad or anxious
- Frustrated
- Sensitive or irritable
- Poor outlook on the future
- Becomes stressed more easily
- Extreme moods or mood swings



Behaviour

- Withdrawn or isolated
- Loss of interest in activities usually enjoyed
- Less productive
- Missing or showing up late
- Increased use of drugs, alcohol, or overeating
- Losing temper more easily





WARNING SIGNS

- Feeling sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Severe or extreme mood swings
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Sudden overwhelming fear, sometimes for no reason
- Significant or prolonged changes to normal eating or sleeping habits
- Intensified risk-taking
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Drastic changes in personality or behaviour
- Extreme difficulty concentrating, focusing, or staying still
- **Any major change from what was once typical**



How do I know the difference between normal ups and downs vs. signs of concern?



It can be easy to confuse "typical" teenage behaviour with signs that something more serious is going on. This can make it easier to dismiss what your child is going through.

Understand that this period can be an important time to gain independence. As your child challenges this independence, they still need guidance and reassurance from parental figures.

It is important to pay attention to make it easier to notice when something doesn't seem right.

Create open and genuine conversations about mental health before you notice something is wrong. This creates a foundation of trust and respect to come to you when something is going on.





Although there are always ups and downs, children and youth who have good mental health will [2]:

- Bounce back from upset or disappointment
- Have healthier relationships with those around them
- Feel happier or more positive about life
- Feel like they belong in their communities

NEURODIVERSITY

There are natural variations in the human brain when it comes to learning, sociability, mood, attention, and other mental functions. Neurodivergent people experience, interact with, and interpret the world in different ways.

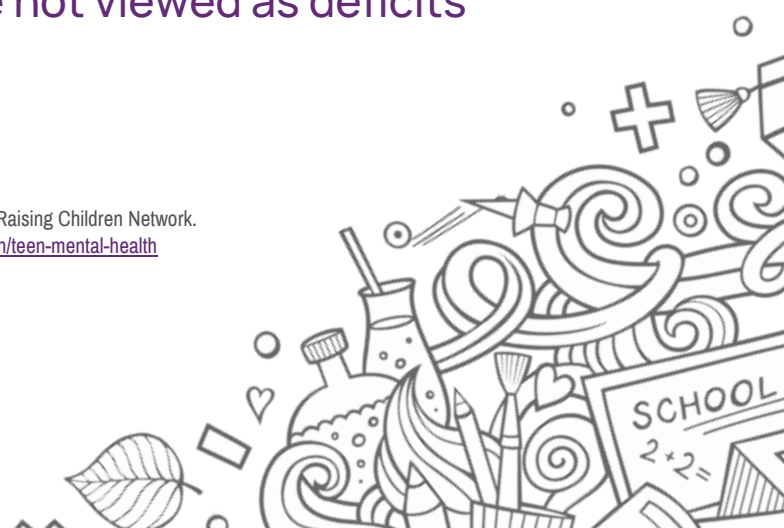
Examples include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Tourette Syndrome



There is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, or behaving, and these differences are not viewed as deficits

[2] Raising Children Network. (2019, February 5). Pre-teen and teenage mental health. Raising Children Network. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/mental-health-physical-health/about-mental-health/teen-mental-health>



STIGMA



WHAT IS STIGMA?

Stigma is the negative attitudes and beliefs that motivate the general public to fear, reject, avoid, and discriminate against people with mental health problems and mental illness.



Stigma can result in youth feeling shame, guilt, or being afraid to talk about their experiences and can lead to an increased spread of misinformation over time.

Stigma is incredibly damaging and prevents individuals from getting the help they need. Individuals may fear being judged, not taken seriously, or viewed as weak.

This can lead to the feeling of being alone with their struggles and not knowing where to get help.

REFLECT: STIGMA ASSESSMENT



Check all that agree with you.

- 1. "People should work out their mental health problems on their own."
- 2. "People with mental illness are generally violent and dangerous"
- 3. "You can tell by looking at people whether they have a mental illness."
- 4. "The term mental illness is used as an excuse for bad behaviour."
- 5. "Mental illness only happens to certain kinds of people."
- 6. "Most people will never be affected by mental illness."





If you agree with any of these statements, your perception of mental health and mental illness may be impacted by stigmatizing information. Take some time to read the facts here:

1. "People should work out their mental health problems on their own."

FALSE: Just as you would go to a doctor for a physical illness, sometimes we need professional assistance for a mental illness.



2. "People with mental illnesses are generally violent and dangerous,"

FALSE: People with mental illness are generally not more violent than the rest of the population.

3. "You can tell by looking at people whether they have a mental illness."



FALSE: Generally, no, you cannot tell if someone has a mental illness based on appearance.

4. "The term mental illness is used as an excuse for bad behaviour."

FALSE: Mental illness is a diagnosable health concern, plus many people can live productive and successful lives with a mental illness.

5. "Mental illness only happens to certain kinds of people."

FALSE: Mental illness occurs due to a variety of reasons and can happen to anyone.



6. "Most people will never be affected by mental illness."

FALSE: 1 in 5 people in Canada will experience a mental illness. Everyone will be affected by mental illness at some point whether it is by having the experience themselves, or by knowing someone with a mental illness.





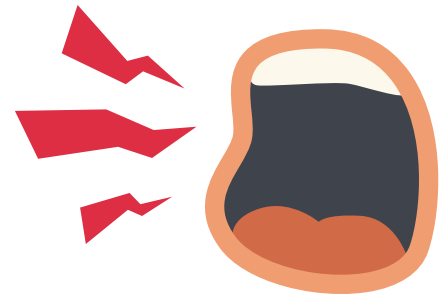
Children often mimic their parents' actions, speech, beliefs, etc. Studies show that the same goes for parents' stigma towards mental health [3].



If a parent or trusted adult holds a negative view of people with mental health concerns, the child is less likely to speak up about their mental health

You can reduce stigma by:

- Speaking out about your mental health experiences and listening to the experiences of others
- Talk about mental health responsibly, in an informed way
- Watch your language and avoid stigmatizing words and phrases
- Ask questions and learn more about mental health and mental illness
- Educate others when you hear stigmatizing or negative beliefs



[3] Mental Health Stigma: Like Parent, Like Child. (n.d.). Rogers Behavioural Health. <https://rogersbh.org/about-us/newsroom/blog/mental-health-stigma-parent-child>



MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS

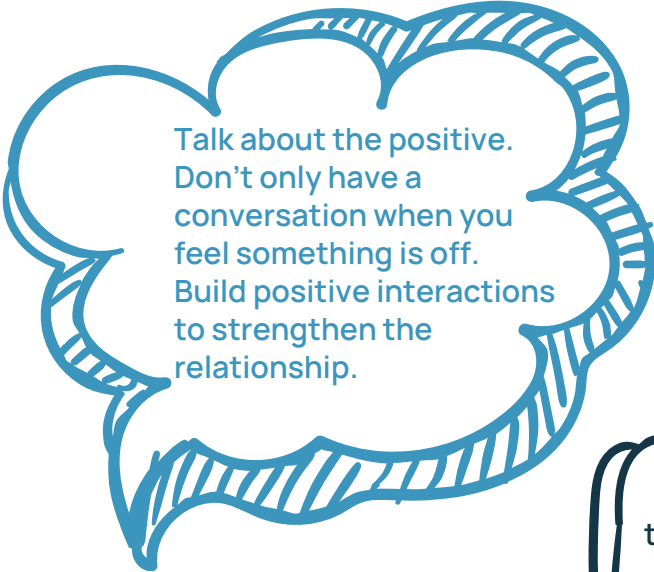


STARTING THE CONVERSATION

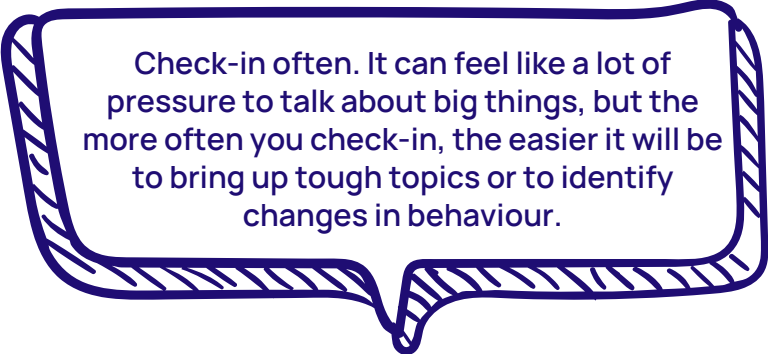
The best way to support children and youth is to talk about mental health. Don't wait until your child is struggling to bring up mental health.

- Find a quiet time without interruptions
- Start the conversation by describing changes you have noticed in their mood, behaviour, etc.
- Talk about your own experiences too. It can feel like a lot of pressure being the one who has to disclose
- Make it a safe place where you both discuss your feelings and experiences openly
- Normalize feelings. Let them know it's okay to be experiencing these things and that it is what is done with these challenging emotions that makes a difference
- Offer alternatives. Maybe they want to speak to someone other than you or want to try a new treatment plan

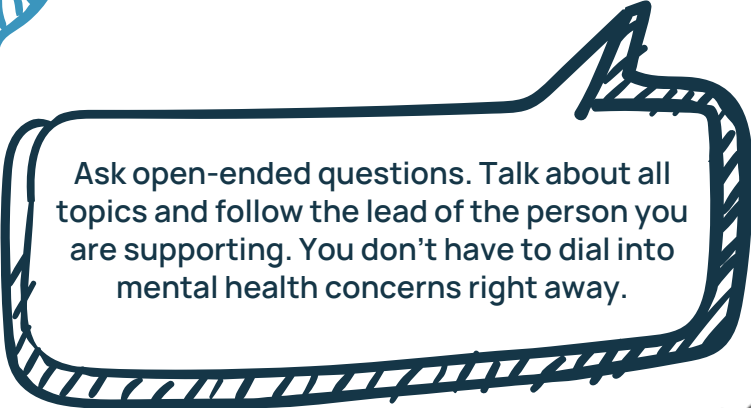
TIPS FOR HAVING BETTER CONVERSATIONS



Talk about the positive. Don't only have a conversation when you feel something is off. Build positive interactions to strengthen the relationship.



Check-in often. It can feel like a lot of pressure to talk about big things, but the more often you check-in, the easier it will be to bring up tough topics or to identify changes in behaviour.



Ask open-ended questions. Talk about all topics and follow the lead of the person you are supporting. You don't have to dial into mental health concerns right away.



Keep trying. The conversation won't always flow, but it is important to continue to be there.

Listen. It can be tempting to jump in, ask questions, or focus on what you want to know. By simply listening, they may share more than you realize.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMETHING SERIOUS IS DISCLOSED

Acknowledge the difficulty your child may have had to bring that up. Reassure them it is a good thing they shared.

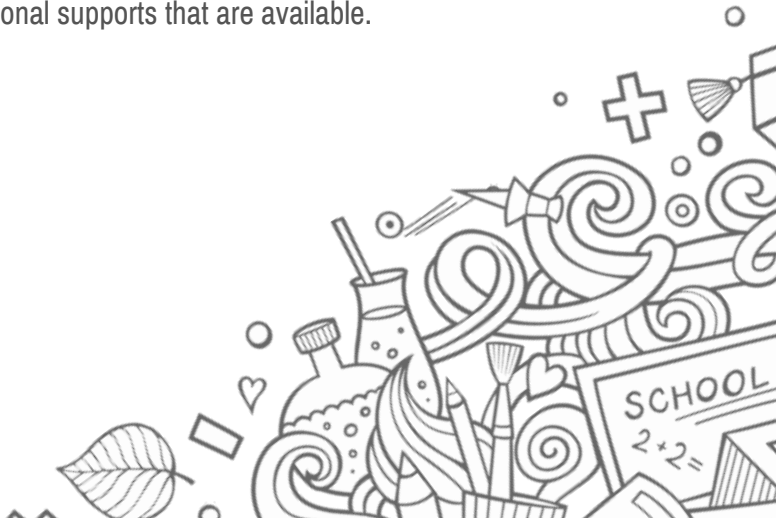
Assess risk/severity

- Is this something you need to connect with a professional on for extra support?
- What resources do you currently have that can help?
- What gaps exist?

Take the concern seriously.

Act. While how you act may change based on the situation, it is important to respond appropriately when a mental health concern is presented. If you worry that your child is in immediate danger, consider this to be an emergency and act accordingly.

Check out the resource at the end of this guide to see additional supports that are available.



SUICIDE PREVENTION



Suicide is a leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 12 to 24 [4]



There is incredible stigma around talking about suicide. As a result, it can interfere with people asking for help. It is important to acknowledge and talk about mental health challenges and suicide with anyone who may be struggling.

WARNING SIGNS

If your child is considering suicide you may notice the following warning signs:

Feelings

- Hopelessness
- Trapped, numb
- Lonely
- Failure
- Overwhelming sadness
- Anger, frustration
- Guilt
- Poor outlook for the future

Behaviours

sudden change in behaviour patterns:

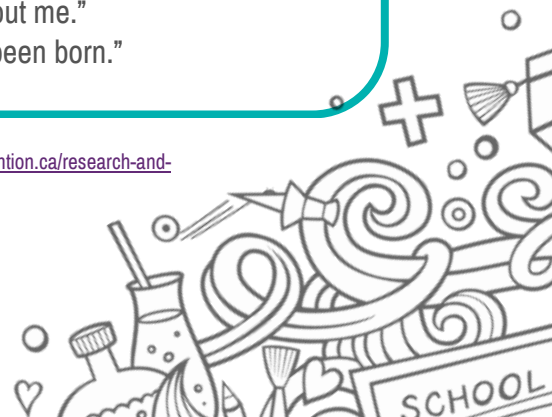
- Sleeping/eating/appearance
- Loss of interest in activities usually enjoyed
- Unexplained changes in mood
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Withdrawn/isolated
- Giving away possessions
- Pushing people away
- Risk-taking behaviours

Verbal

someone thinking of suicide might say:

- “Life sucks, it isn’t worth it.”
- “I wish I was dead.”
- “Would anyone miss me if I was gone?”
- “No one cares about me.”
- “The world would be better off without me.”
- “I shouldn’t have been born.”

[4] Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. (2023). Research and Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://suicideprevention.ca/research-and-statistics/>





HOW TO HELP

If someone in your life is thinking of suicide, it is important to recognize warning signs, take the situation seriously, and ask clearly and directly about suicide.

- Be calm and listen, let them know you care about them and want to help
- Let them talk about the reasons they are thinking about suicide
- Identify trusted individuals who can support whether it be a doctor or therapist
- Call 9-1-1 in any emergency situation



Be present and allow them to tell you whatever it is that they are going through



SELF-CARE



WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

Self-care is anything you do to take care of yourself so you can stay physically, mentally, and emotionally well. It is important to use self-care so you can be your best for yourself and so you can also help care for others [5].

The idea that self-care involves bubble baths or spa treatments is a myth. Self-care looks different for everyone and can be anything from taking a few deep breaths to spending time with your pets and other people. Even a small act of self-care can have a big impact.

See the reflections section to brainstorm what self-care means for you.



PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY

While everyone's journey is different, here are some important tips to promote well-being with a mental illness.

- Seek help from trusted sources and medical professionals
- Take medication as prescribed
- Learn more about mental health concerns and mental illnesses
- Explore therapeutic techniques
- Build a strong support team
- Practice self-care

[5] Lawler, M. (2021). What is self-care and why is it critical for your health? Everyday Health. <https://www.everydayhealth.com/self-care/>





HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE

Practice Active Listening Skills and Empathy



- Be empathetic and non-judgmental
- Remove distractions
- Ask for clarification
- Don't offer "quick fixes"

ASK

- What do you typically find helpful in these situations?
- How can I support you?
- Would you like me to help you find additional support/resources?

Be Patient



- Remember, there will always be good and bad days
- Celebrate successes (big and small)
- Try to keep hopeful and positive
- Remember: **Recovery is Possible**

Accountability



Encourage them to take responsibility for what they can control:

- Attending appointments
- Following through on goals
- Taking medication
- Self-care

Self-Care



- Encourage meaningful leisure activities
- Encourage healthy lifestyle choices including diet and exercise
- Volunteer opportunities increase self-worth through giving to others
- Meditation/mindfulness
- Favourite activities
- Adequate sleep and rest
- Good hygiene, exercise, and diet habits
- Spending time alone to recharge
- Stress management techniques
- Maintain your self-care and stress management





MENTAL HEALTH SKILLS



These activities and reflections can be used to increase your mental health literacy and awareness, but they can also be used as a tool to provide to the person you are supporting. Please exercise your judgement regarding the appropriateness of the activity for the child you are supporting.

REFLECTION: CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL HEALTH

Take some time to reflect on your current ideas and understandings regarding mental health. Consider how this information shapes how you support your mental health as well as how you discuss mental health with your child.

What do I currently think about mental health?

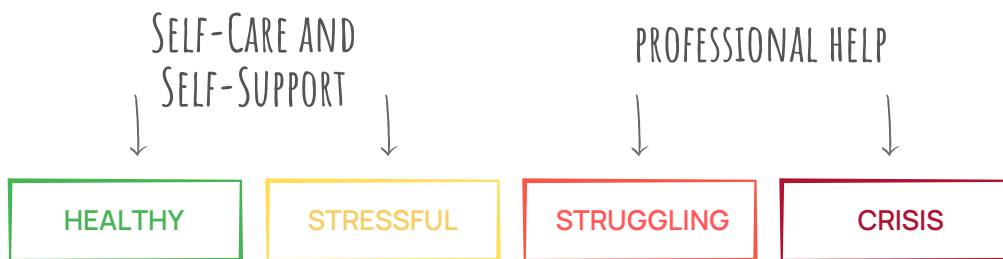
How does my current understanding of mental health make me feel?

What can I do to improve how I think about (or understand) mental health?





REFLECTION: MENTAL HEALTH SPECTRUM



Where do you feel you are on the spectrum today, at this moment?

What are some things that impact your mental health positively?

What are some things that challenge your mental health?

How can you prepare for or deal with these challenges?

Who can help support your mental health?





ACTIVITY: CONVERSATION GUIDE

Having better conversations is a key way to support your child with their mental health. Here are some question prompts to help you start or guide conversations:

- It seems like you are going through a difficult time. How can I help?
- I noticed _____. Do you want to talk about it?
- When I am stressed, I feel _____. How do you feel?
- Are you thinking of harming yourself? Are you thinking of suicide?
- You sound upset... is everything okay?
- What has helped with this in the past?
- How can I help you find more information or resources?



It is important to make the time to have conversations about emotions, stress, or mental health. Have these conversations often to get a good sense of what is going on with your child.





CHECKLIST: WHEN TO SEE A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

Use this guide to help decide if the current situation is something you deal with as a family or if it is time to talk to a medical professional. While you may be qualified to handle certain situations on your own, sometimes you need assistance from a professional.

NOTE:

This checklist is for guidance and is not a diagnostic tool. This cannot replace medical advice, so when in doubt, discuss your concerns with a medical professional.

Signs it is time to consider seeing a professional with your child:

- They feel challenges they are facing are more than they can manage on their own
- It is beginning to affect the things they enjoy
- Feels like a 'new normal' and not a temporary situation
- Avoiding those they care about or who care about them
- Negative feelings are intense or persistent and seem hard to shake
- Sleep, eating habits, or hygiene are impacted

You may also want to check-in with a professional if:

- You feel like it might bring you relief to ask for help or unload some stress
- You want a change but aren't sure where to start
- You want to consider a new perspective
- You are currently treating this concern but think there could be a better treatment option





GUIDE: HOW TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

It can feel intimidating to bring up a mental health concern to your doctor. It is important to ask for the help you or your child need.

Mental health issues or mental illnesses may not go away on their own and treatment can make a big impact on your well-being.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM SEEING A DOCTOR?

- Questions about what is going on, how you are feeling, and what you and/or your child are currently doing to manage
- Information about supports that are available such as counselling
- Prescribed medications if appropriate
- Recommended lifestyle changes that might have an impact
- Referral to a specialist if needed
- Set a follow-up appointment

Here are some things to consider before, during, and after conversations with medical professionals.

This can be used as a reference guide. Depending on what your child is going through, some of the questions related to symptoms, medications, side effects may or may not be relevant.

Before Your Appointment

- Have a conversation with your child and write down any important information. It can relieve some of the pressure of opening up in front of the doctor and also makes sure nothing is forgotten. See the fillable form to use as a resource
- Define the problem and set a goal

Why are you going to the doctor and what do you and your child hope to achieve from this visit?





During Your Appointment

- Support your child in stating concerns as clearly as possible
- Refer to the notes as needed
- Ask questions as applicable
 1. What are the treatment options?
 2. What else can be done at home to help?
 3. Do you have any printed materials, resources, or website recommendations?

After Your Appointment

- Help your child follow through with treatment as prescribed
- Follow up with medical professionals
 - Contact your child's doctor immediately if they have worsening symptoms or other negative effects
- Be patient
 - It may take time to find the right treatment plan





RESOURCE FORM: TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

You may find it easier to talk to your doctor while referring to this form. You can write down concerns you notice leading up to your appointment and make sure you have any questions identified in advance.

Write down the concerns you are experiencing. Be as detailed as possible.

Physical

Emotional

Thoughts

Behaviours





Describe any recent changes in your life: Are there any recent events or situations in your life that have caused stress or impacted your mental health?

Any other physical or mental conditions: Are you experiencing or being treated for anything else that is impacting your health?

Medications or supplements you are taking:

Questions:





REFLECTION: INCREASING HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOURS

To help others, they need to recognize that they have a problem they can't overcome on their own. It also requires them to have the ability to express what they are feeling, to know where they can get support, and to be willing to seek out that help [6].

It is also important people know what goes beyond the normal threshold of stress. If they don't know that this is above/beyond, how will they know when to ask for help?

How you can support help-seeking behaviour in your child:

- Make them aware of the help you can provide. This can be as simple as letting them know you are there for them
- Remove shame, stigma, or embarrassment. Create a safe space where your child feels anything can be shared, and remove judgement
- Educate yourself. It can be common for young people to think a parent can't possibly understand what they are going through. Children are more likely to open up if they know someone is aware or informed about mental health, or just holds more knowledge about dealing with emotions
- Share information and resources as applicable. It is important to be informed about mental health to seek change and make good decisions
- Confidentiality and trust. Keep what your child shares with you private. The only exception is in the case of emergencies or talking to trusted medical professionals

REFLECT

1. How do you currently support help-seeking behaviours?
2. How can you improve these skills?
3. Do you feel like you can seek help when you need it?

[6] AVMC Well-Being Advisory. (2020). https://www.aavmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Wellbeing-Encouraging_Help_Seeking_Behaviors.pdf





BUILDING MENTAL WELL-BEING

In addition to seeking support for mental illness or mental health concerns, it is important to consider how to build your well-being.

Having a strong set of skills related to building resilience, creating supportive relationships, and finding positive community resources can build protection against future stressors or challenges, and support you while you seek out treatment for mental health challenges or mental illness.



As a reminder, these do not replace medications or treatment advice from your doctor





ACTIVITY: WELLNESS WHEEL

Wellness is about making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life. This means feeling healthy beyond diet and exercise habits and overall having balance in our lives.

Using the Wellness Wheel can help you find different ways to support your well-being. It is important to note that access to different dimensions of wellness helps build a rounded coping strategy.

Environmental: Living in and supporting a clean and safe environment

Spiritual: Discovering a sense of purpose and meaning within your life

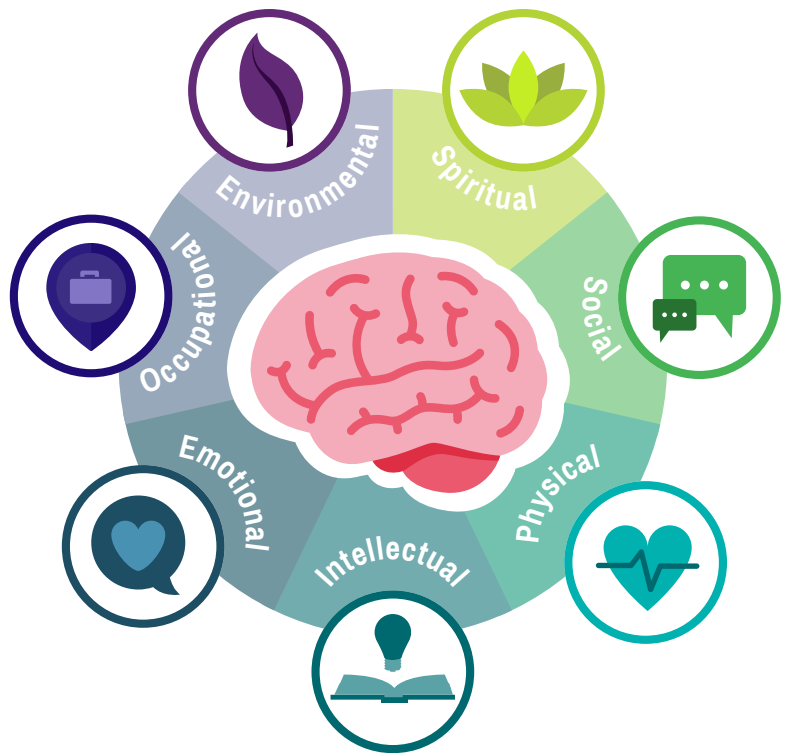
Social: Positive connections and relationships with family, friends, and community

Physical: Listening to your body and taking care of your physical health

Intellectual: Stimulated with activities, growing knowledge and abilities, and learning new skills

Emotional: Positive feelings, optimistic view on life, ability to express and process emotions

Occupational: Satisfaction with career or academic work, feeling safe and secure in the job or school environment





REFLECTION: BUILDING RESILIENCE

Resiliency is the ability to recover from setbacks and adapt to challenging circumstances.

Resilience Assessment

Rate yourself from 1 - 5 on the following statements

Statement	Rating (1 = Strongly Disagree 5 = Strongly Agree)				
"I am usually optimistic"	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
"I see difficulties as temporary"	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
"I can handle uncertainty about new situations"	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
"I am good at solving problems"	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
"Feelings of discouragement don't last long"	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
"I can see the good in a tough situation"	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>

The higher your score the more likely you are to be resilient. A max score is 30.

While sometimes you don't know how you'll react in a given situation, this can give you a glimpse of your resilient tendencies.



HOW TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS [7]:

1

Encourage resourceful thinking

2

Allow for failure and focus on the next steps

3

Practice self-compassion

4

Develop problem-solving skills

5

Be optimistic

[7] Cherry, K. (2022, October 6). 10 Ways to Improve Your Resilience. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/ways-to-become-more-resilient-2795063>



REFLECTION: SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is a person’s belief in their ability to complete a task or achieve a goal [8].

People with strong self-efficacy

- Recover quickly from setbacks or disappointments
- View challenging problems as something to be mastered
- Develop a deeper interest in activities in which they participate

ASSESSING SELF-EFFICACY

Statement	Assessment	
Do you feel like you can handle most problems you are faced with?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Are you confident in your ability to achieve your goals?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Are you able to bounce back quickly after stressful events?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Do you stay calm in the face of chaos?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Do you believe hard work will pay off?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>



[8] Cherry, K. (2023, July 22). Self Efficacy: Why Believing in Yourself Matters. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-efficacy-2795954>





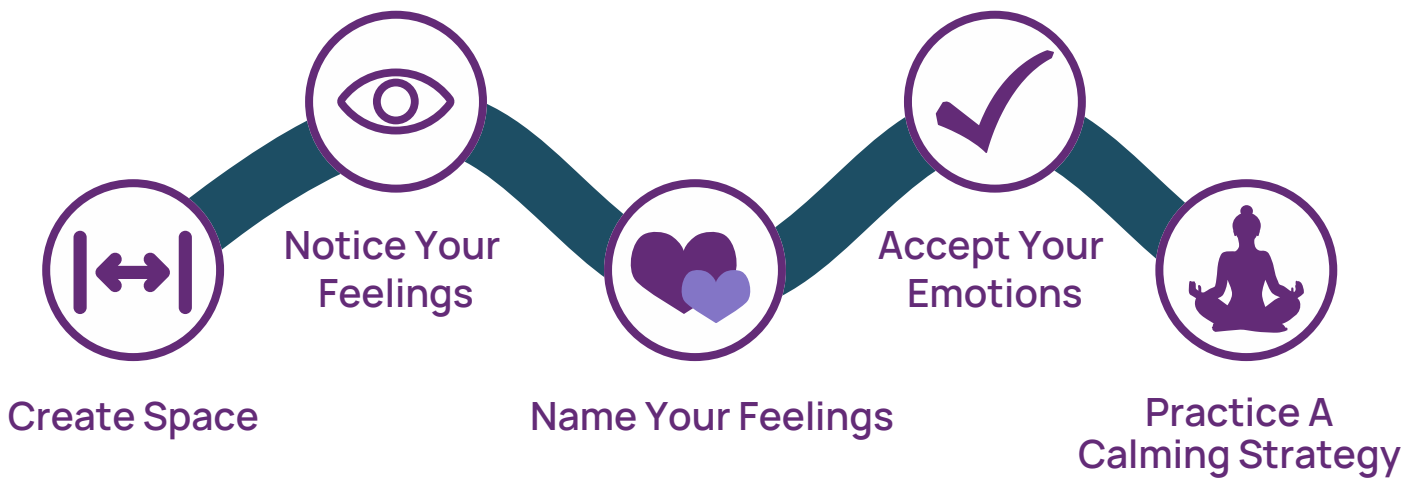
ACTIVITY: SELF-REGULATION

Self-regulation is the ability to control one’s behaviour, emotions, and thoughts in the pursuit of long-term goals.

It can involve taking a pause between a feeling and an action, taking the time to think through the feeling, and making a plan [9]. Self-regulation allows us to be more resilient and bounce back from failure, while also staying calm under pressure.

Mindfulness, the art of paying attention to the present moment, is a helpful tool to increase self-regulation skills. Breathing exercises and gratitude can also increase calmness and help to put some space between your emotions and your reactions.

When feeling upset or overwhelmed try the following [10]:



[9] Cuncic, A. (2022, January 27). How to develop and use self-regulation in your life. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-you-can-practice-self-regulation-4163536>

[10] Klynn, B. (2021, June 22). Emotional regulation: Skills, exercises, and strategies. BetterUp. <https://www.betterup.com/blog/emotional-regulation-skills>



4 STEPS TO FINDING MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES IN CALGARY

Struggling with mental health or substance use concerns can be overwhelming – and while Calgary is home to a wealth of resources, finding the right ones to help you embark on your or your child’s recovery journey can be just as daunting.

If you’re unsure where to start or feeling lost amidst the sea of information, [CMHA Calgary’s Community Navigator](#) is here to guide you – completely free of charge. In this section, we’ll uncover the four steps to help you connect with our Community Navigator and find the mental health resources that are perfectly tailored to your child’s unique needs.

CONNECT THROUGH EMAIL!

1

Reach Out

The first step on your journey to recovery is reaching out and connecting with the Community Navigator. Whether you’re an individual seeking support or a concerned loved one, the Community Navigator is your dedicated ally. They will listen to your story, provide a safe space for you to express your concerns, and offer valuable guidance on next steps. By building a rapport with the Community Navigator, you’ll begin to feel empowered, knowing that someone understands your struggles and is committed to helping you find the support you or a loved one needs.

2

Identify Your Child’s Needs

Once you’ve established a connection with the Community Navigator, it’s time to assess your child’s specific needs. Each person’s journey is unique, and understanding your challenges will help identify the resources that can best support you. The Community Navigator will work closely with you, asking relevant questions and discussing your concerns to gain a comprehensive understanding of your child’s situation. By collaboratively assessing your needs, they can recommend tailored resources and interventions for you and your child’s mental health journey.



3

Discover Resources Available

With the guidance of the Community Navigator, it's time to explore the available mental health services in Calgary. From therapy and counselling to support groups and workshops, Calgary offers a range of resources tailored to various needs. The Community Navigator will help you navigate through these options and find the ones that align best with your requirements. Together, you can consider factors such as location, affordability, and specialized areas of focus, ensuring you find the right fit for your recovery.

4

Follow Through and Prioritize Self-Care

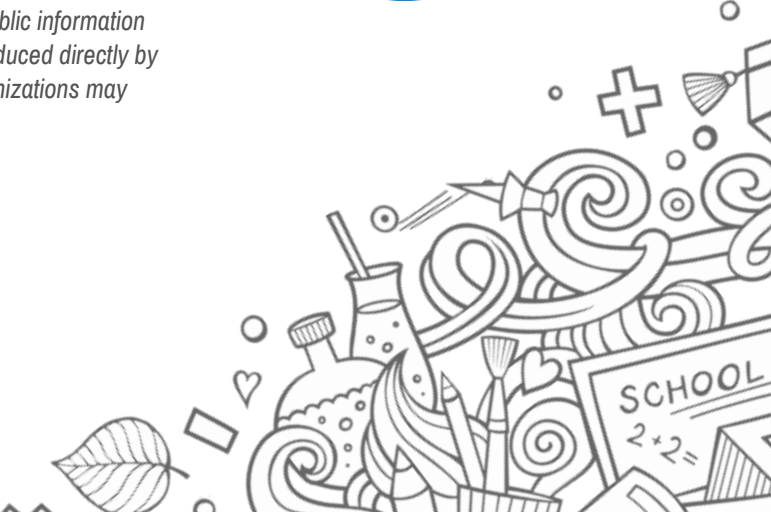
Once you've identified the mental health resources that suit your child's needs, it's crucial to follow through and prioritize self-care. Make appointments, attend support groups, and actively engage in the recovery process. Remember that mental health is an ongoing journey, and it's essential to take care of yourself consistently. Lean on the resources you've found and utilize the strategies provided by professionals to support you and your child's overall well-being.

Navigating all the incredible mental health resources in Calgary can feel overwhelming, but with the guidance of CMHA Calgary's Community Navigator, you're not alone. By following these four steps, you can embark on your path to recovery, accessing the support and services that are perfectly tailored to you and your child's unique needs.

Email the Community Navigator at community.navigator@cmha.calgary.ab.ca to explore available services, seek additional support, and prioritize your recovery. Remember, your mental health matters, and with the right resources, you can find impactful supports to bolster your recovery journey.



CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART does not necessarily support or endorse the listed community resources. These descriptions have been generated from public information that has been made available by these external groups, and are not produced directly by CMHA Calgary. We have reviewed each source; however external organizations may change programs without notice.



YOUTH/PARENT RESOURCES

Carya

This organization provides family counselling for children, youth, young adults, families, and parents seeking support for individuals who are 24 years old or younger. Counselling covers conflict, domestic abuse, trauma, and more. They also offer youth engagement and school-based programs.

- 403-205-5244
- <https://caryacalgary.ca/our-programs/counselling/families/family-counselling/>

Calgary Counselling Centre

This organization offers family, child, and youth counselling for any age and various concerns. They also offer child and youth (5 – 17) group programs including emotional regulation, self-esteem, and dealing with divorce.

- 833-827-4229
- <https://calgarycounselling.com/>

Children's Grief Centre

This organization provides support for children aged 19 and under to adjust when someone close to them has died, this includes individual, family, and group counselling, as well as peer support, and other helpful tools.

- 403-263-4525
- Intake Coordinator: kari.hoellwarth@hospicecalgary.ca
- <https://www.hospicecalgary.ca/childrengriefcentre/>

ConnecTeen (24-Hour)

This is a program from Distress Centre Calgary that offers a confidential peer support service where youth can speak with adults and peers to ask about any problems or concerns they may have in a non-judgmental environment.

- 403-264-8336 (TEEN)
- Text: 587-333-2724
- <https://calgaryconnecteen.com/>

Distress Centre Calgary (24-Hour)

Distress Centre Calgary provides a variety of services including 24-hour crisis support, professional counselling, youth peer support, and navigation and referrals through 211 and programs at SORCe – all at no cost.

- Call or Text: 403-266-4357 (HELP)
- <https://distresscentre.com/>

EQUIPPED - CMHA Calgary

EQUIPPED offers mental health training and tools for young adults. It provides an online platform for learning through modules and workbooks. EQUIPPED builds on the basic concepts taught in YouthSMART, but expands knowledge for a slightly older audience of emerging adults – ages 16 to 24.

- <https://equipped.youthsmart.ca/>

Hull Services

This organization provides child, youth, and family mental health and behavioural services. They offer self-referral programs including support for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, parenting courses, Indigenous healing, family initiatives, children with a parent who has a mental illness, housing supports, in-home support, as well as therapy and assessment services.

They also have a Mental Health and Addiction Navigator that helps children, youth, and parents/caregivers navigate resources and supports available to them in the community.

- 403-251-8000
- <https://hullservices.ca/>



Bridging the Gap - Hull Services

This is a community-based program offered by Hull Services that supports aged 16 - 24 struggling with self-identified or diagnosed mental health concerns. The program provides long-term support, advocacy, information, and referrals for young adults without sufficient aid.

- 403-216-0660
- www.hullservices.ca/services/bridging-gap

Kickstand Connect

This is a virtual walk-in clinic exclusive for young Albertans aged 12 - 25. Appointments are available for any reason - no problem or question is too big or small. Clients can access free mental health and substance use counselling, peer support, employment services and register for free workshops and support groups.

- <https://mykickstand.ca/>

Lasting Impressions - Hull Services

This program of Hull Services works with families that have dependent children under the age of 18 whose parent is dealing with mental illness.

- 403-207-2504
- dthoresen@hullservices.ca
- <https://hullservices.ca/services/lasting-impressions/>

Lion Heart Foundation

This organization provides therapy and other supports for adolescents (8 – 28) experiencing anxiety-related issues as well as their families. They offer financial subsidies for those requiring assistance with treatment expenses.

- 587-900-6355
- <https://lionheartfoundation.ca/mental-health-supports/>





McMan Youth and Family Services

This organization provides professional support and resources working with children, youth, and families. These services include family and caregiver support, youth programs, adult programs, and community programs.

- 403-280-6293
- <https://mcmancalgary.ca/>

More Than Sad

This program is offered by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and is used to teach students and educators how to recognize the signs of depression and challenges stigma.

- <https://afsp.org/more-than-sad>

Peer Support - CMHA Calgary

Our Peer Support service provides the opportunity for anyone – individual, family member, or professional – to speak with someone with lived experiences of mental health or substance use concerns. By engaging with our Peer Support Workers, you can make a connection with someone with lived experience, increase your sense of engagement and belonging, and move through your recovery journey to develop skills and build resiliency.

- 403-297-1402
- peer@cmha.calgary.ab.ca
- [Schedule a Peer Support appointment](#) (Monday and Fridays online, or Tuesdays and Thursdays in-person)

Reach Out

This is a website for young people, parents/carers, and schools to connect with others and learn/discuss topics in mental health.

- <https://au.reachout.com/>



Recovery College - CMHA Calgary

Recovery College offers short-term courses and discussion groups to support participants with mental health concerns (including substance use). We focus on helping people develop their own resourcefulness in order to support themselves or their loved one's recovery.

- 403-297-1402
- recovery.college@cmha.calgary.ab.ca
- Register for a course: <https://recoverycollegecalgary.ca/>

Skills for Safer Living - Hull Services

This is a four-week group offered by Hull Services and Centre for Suicide Prevention that is for youth and young adults aged 12 - 24 who are interested in understanding the thoughts and feelings that lead to thinking about suicide and how to make safe choices. This program is free of cost.

- 403-589-1865
- bhume@hullservices.ca
- <https://hullservices.ca/services/skills-for-safer-living/>
- <https://www.suicideinfo.ca/skills-for-safer-living/>

Teen Mental Health Literacy

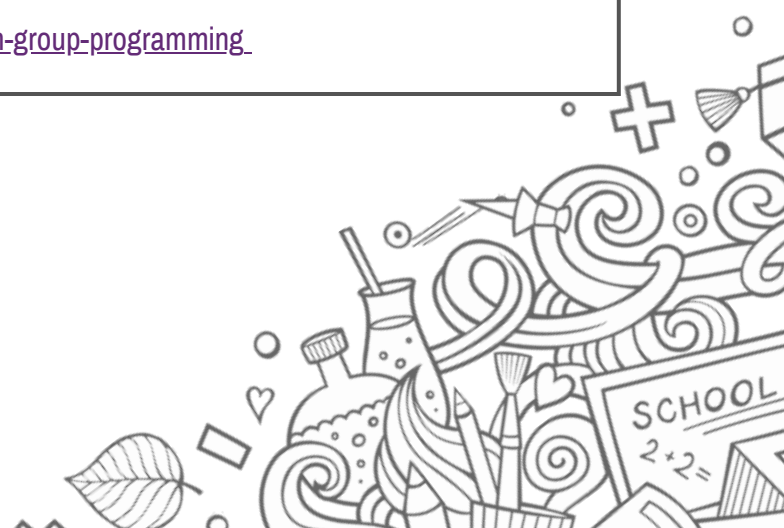
This is a website for mental health information directed towards teenagers. Information is based on the best available science and the website breaks it down to make it easy to understand.

- <https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/>

Trellis Society - Youth Group Programming

This programming is open to youth (12 – 24) offering a safe and welcoming place for youth after school to make friends and participate in activities that encourage positive development.

- 403-619-5139
- <https://www.growwithtrellis.ca/youth-programs/youth-group-programming>



Trellis Society - Youth Counselling

This service offers single session counselling for youth (12 - 24) virtually, by phone, or in-person. Cost is on a sliding scale starting at \$35/hour.

- 403-219-3477 extension 404
- <https://www.growwithtrellis.ca/therapy>

Trellis Society - Avenue 15

Avenue 15 provides youth (12 - 17) temporary shelter and basic needs on a drop-in basis. Individuals can call or walk in anytime 7 days a week. They can provide support with family reconnection, living arrangements, medication, school, employment support, money management, and life skill development.

- 403-543-9651
- <https://www.growwithtrellis.ca/youth-programs/housing-shelters/avenue15>

The Summit - Centre for Youth Resilience

This centre offers therapeutic support through a day hospital and community-based treatment. It also provides walk-in services for anyone under 18 years of age and their family who would like to speak with a counsellor.

- 587-534-7200
- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/summit/summit.aspx>

Wellness Together Canada – Mental Health and Substance Use Support

This 24-hour online resource offers free over the phone counselling for adults and youth.

- 1-888-668-6810 (specifically for youth)
- Text WELLNESS to 741741
- <https://www.wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>





Wood's Homes - Eastside Community Mental Health

This centre offers immediate, no-cost, mental health support from an ethnocultural team. Therapy sessions are available Monday – Saturday.

- Call: 403-299-9699 (Monday - Sunday from 8 am – 11 pm)
- Text: 587-315-5000 (9 am – 10 pm)
- <https://www.woodshomes.ca/programs/eastside-community-mental-health-services/>

Wood's Homes (Inglewood Opportunity Hub)

This is a one-stop shop for vulnerable youth (14 up to age 30) providing a combination of services in one location. Services are focused on well-being, mental and physical health, specialized employment support, and housing services and support.

- 403-510-7468
- grace.korthuis@woodshomes.ca
- <https://www.woodshomes.ca/our-services/opportunities-for-youth/>

YouthSMART - CMHA Calgary

YouthSMART (Youth Supporting Mental Health and Resiliency Together) integrates mental health learning opportunities in local junior and senior high schools, as well as youth community groups. Operating for over a decade, and reaching close to 25,000 young people each year, YouthSMART provides mental health education, proven to generate an awareness of mental health topics, combat stigma, and encourage appropriate help seeking behaviours amongst Calgary and area youth.

- 403- 297-1700
- info@cmha.calgary.ab.ca
- <https://www.youthsmart.ca>





Youth Substance Use and Mental Health Services

Provides substance use screening, assessment, individual and family counselling, and referrals to treatment programs. For ages 12 - 17.

- 403-297-4664
- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/Service.aspx?id=1060409&serviceAtFacilityID=1093780>

YWCA Calgary

Family Resource Network programs focus on supporting the whole family including parents and caregivers, teens coping with trauma, and child and youth development. Services include family virtual workshops, in-home support, pre and post-natal programs, fathers moving forward, rapid access counselling, infant/parent mental health support, youth and teen mentorship, functional family therapy, and talk programs.

- 403-263-1550
- 403-266-0707 (24-hour crisis line)
- <https://www.ywcalgary.ca/>



2SLGBTQ+ YOUTH/PARENT RESOURCES

Calgary Outlink

Community-based organization dedicated to providing support, education, outreach, and referrals for the 2SLGBTQIA+ and allied communities.

- 403-234-8973
- <https://www.calgaryoutlink.ca>

It Gets Better Canada

It Gets Better Canada is a registered charity that envisions a world where all 2SLGBTQ+ youth are free to live equally and know their worthiness and power as individuals. Its mission is to uplift, empower, and connect 2SLGBTQ+ youth across Canada.

- <https://itgetsbettercanada.org>

Centre for Sexuality

Sexual health education, training, and counseling services supporting people of all genders and sexualities.

- 403-283-5580
- <https://www.centreforsexuality.ca/>

Skipping Stone

Skipping Stone offers a welcoming, positive, and judgement-free space for anyone who identifies as trans, transgender, non-binary, or gender diverse, as well as those questioning, exploring, or looking to affirm their gender identity or expression.

- 587-333-4342
- <https://www.skippingstone.ca>

The Trevor Project

Offers information and support for young LGBTQ+ people 24/7.

- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

IMMIGRANT YOUTH / PARENT RESOURCES

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA)

This organization offers over 50 programs and services for immigrant women and their families. Rapid access counselling provides single-session 75-minute counselling appointment for caregivers with children under 18, or youth under 18 themselves. Coordination of services and referrals to help families navigate the Family Resource Network and connects families to services, programs, and resources in Calgary (must have children between aged 18 and under). One-on-one counselling, group counselling, education, and in-home support for immigrant women including seniors and youth. Gender-based violence and mental health program designed to help immigrant families by providing culturally sensitive support in conflicts and dealing with mental health issues.

- 403-444-1758
- reception@ciwa-online.com
- <https://ciwa-online.com/>

CCIS – Centre for Refugee Resilience

This organization offers a number of immigrant and refugee services including trauma focused therapy for all ages, care coordination, volunteer support, and community education.

- 403-290-5466
- <https://www.ccisab.ca/refugees/centre-for-refugee-resilience.html>

Centre for Newcomers (CFN)

Mental health settlement, non-therapeutic counselling, and crisis intervention including one-on-one needs assessment and counselling, information and referrals to community services, and more.

- Email for a referral: vpreferral@centrefornewcomers.ca
- 403-569-3325
- <https://www.centrefornewcomers.ca/>

Immigrant Services Calgary

This organization can connect newcomers to the right services and agencies.

- 403-265-1120
- <https://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca/>

ADDICTION YOUTH/PARENTS RESOURCES

Al-Anon/Alateen

Al-Anon is a support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking and allows people to share common experiences and bring positive change to their individual situations.

Alateen is a group for young people (teenagers) whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.

- 403-266-5850 (Calgary Al-Anon information 24-hour line)
- 1-888-425-2666 (for meeting information)
- <https://al-anon.org/>
- <https://al-anon.ab.ca/>

Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre (AARC)

This organization supports young people and their parents through addiction. AARC is a long-term, semi-residential program based on the 12-step program model leading to total abstinence. This program is for youth aged 12 - 21 and costs are on a sliding scale so families only pay what they can afford.

- 403-253-5250
- <https://www.aarc.ab.ca/>

Last Door Addiction Recovery Services

This organization helps youth (14 - 18) and adult males be responsible and healthy while in recovery. They provide addiction treatment programs, drug and alcohol rehab and treatment services including detox, intro programs, long-term addiction treatment, and continuing care.

- 1-855-465-2851 (drug and alcohol rehab admissions)
- 1-855-971-0486 (helpline available 7 am – 11 pm)
- <https://lastdoor.org/calgary-addiction-treatment-services/>



Nar-Anon/Narateen

Nar-Anon is a support group for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's addictions, Narateen is a support group for young people.

- <https://www.nar-anon.org/> (for further information about virtual meetings)

The Alex

This organization offers a walk-in Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic, with intake sessions Monday – Friday from 9 am – 11 am. Offers medication, counselling, group support, and peer support to help make changes regarding substance use until client is stable and then connects client with longer-term services. This service is free for all ages. They also have a Youth Health Centre to provide youth (12 - 24) health and social care from a team of doctors, nurses and social workers. Appointment and drop-in options available.

- 403-520-2260
- <https://www.thealex.ca/>

Youth Substance Use and Mental Health Services

This youth service (12 - 17) provides substance use screening, assessment, individual and family counselling, and referrals to treatment programs.

- 403-297-4664
- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/Service.aspx?id=1060409&serviceAtFacilityID=1093780>



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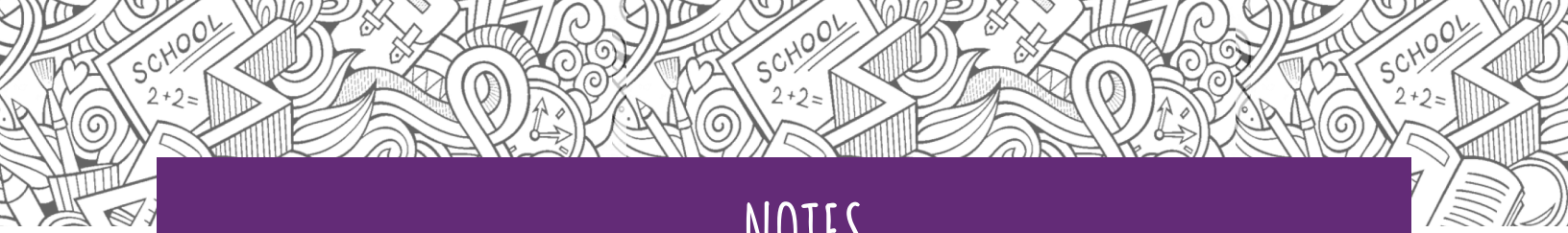


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NOTES





**Canadian Mental
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Mental health for all

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