

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



**Good mental health helps you enjoy life and cope with problems. Just as you take care of your body by eating right and exercising, you can do things to help maintain good mental health habits, including accessing needed services.**

The transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency can be challenging for any young person. These years are a time of rapid physical and personal growth. It is also a confusing time.

On top of that, many youth transitioning out of foster care or juvenile detention facilities, youth who have run away from home or dropped out of school, and youth with disabilities, are much more

likely to be exposed to adverse childhood experiences and to struggle with overwhelming life stressors and/or severe mental health challenges.

Traumatic events experienced in a person's youth including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and family instability such as homelessness or substance abuse have been linked to negative mental health consequences in adulthood.



*"I am living proof that healing is possible. I know there are many 'rafts in the river' to offer help and support to youth who have gone through trauma and abuse. Relationships like friends, service providers, and recovery groups are out there." Reena, Former Foster Youth*

Mental health is hard to talk about. Although it is easy to talk to a doctor or friend when you are sick or hurt, some people prefer to keep mental health problems a secret. It isn't hard to see why.

There is still shame associated with mental illness. Many of us fear what we do not understand.

**The good news is that there is information and resources available to help you.**

Only in recent years has mental health issues lost some of its taboo status.

Today, a wider range of mental health resources are available than ever before, with services aimed at helping transition age youth experiencing mental health symptoms.

Many of California's college campuses have mental health services and environments that are welcoming to students coping with mental illness, such as [Active Minds](#) an organization committed to mental health advocacy. They provide information and resources about mental health and illness on and off campus.



# GETTING HELP

## Transition Age Youth Services

Mental health problems can cover a broad range of disorders, but the common characteristic is that they all affect the affected person's personality, thought processes or social interactions.



### Don't self-medicate

[The danger with regard to mental health is you may try to self-medicate anxiety, depression or other problems with alcohol and drugs.](#) This just doesn't work.

Find positive ways for coping with stress and outlets for dealing with problems.

### Know when it's time to ask for help

If you suspect mental health symptoms, it's essential that you know when it's time to reach out for help. It is much better to seek help as soon as possible.

If stress and anxiety are interfering with memory and concentration (these are often early symptoms), get help immediately, before your grades are affected.

### Getting Help for a Mental Health Issue

It's important that you should seek help to treat a mental health issue. First, a physical checkup can rule out physical illnesses.

An appointment with a mental health professional will usually include an interview and evaluation to determine the most obvious symptoms and to determine the type and severity of mental disorder, if any.

In certain cases, an intervention may be required from family, caregiver, social worker or friends.

Read the "Students with Special Needs" section of this guide for more resources

### Remember...

Your mental health is important. You will not have a healthy body if you don't also take care of your mind!

- Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask for help. Everyone needs help at some point.
- Explore [positive ways to reduce stress](#), including yoga, meditation, and exercise.
- Understand the [risks associated with substance use and abuse](#) for you if biological family members struggled with addiction issues.
- Recognize the [signs and symptoms of mental illnesses](#) and the impact of life experiences and family histories of mental health problems on a your mental health.
- Know when to seek medical attention and how to find [affordable health and mental health services](#).

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS RESOURCES

- [Best College Resources: Mental Health](#)
- [NAMI – Urban Los Angeles](#)
- [Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services](#)
- [Penny Lane Centers](#)
- [Los Angeles County DMH](#)
- [Safe Place for Youth](#)
- [Mental Health America \(Los Angeles\)](#)
- [Stars Behavioral Health Group](#)
- [Mental Health in College](#)
- [Step Up on Second Street](#)
- [MHA TAY Village](#)
- [Southern California Health and Rehabilitation Programs \(SCHARP\)](#)

## CRISIS RESOURCES

If you or a loved one is in immediate danger, call 911 and ask for an officer trained in crisis intervention for a psychiatric emergency.

If you are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Hotline:  
1-800-273 TALK (8255)

Text to 741-741 to connect to a free, trained crisis counselor on the Crisis Text Line

Click [here](#) to use the National Suicide Hotline's online Lifeline Crisis Chat feature