

**Protecting Youth Mental Health**

**WE CAN TAKE ACTION**

**What Young People Can Do**

* Remember that mental health challenges are real, common, and treatable.
* Ask for help.
* Invest in healthy relationships.
* Find ways to serve.
* Learn and practice techniques to manage stress and other difficult emotions.
* Take care of your body and mind.
* Be intentional about your use of social media, video games, and other technologies.
* Be a source of support for others.

 *Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory*

**A - Approach**

**L - Listen**

**G - Give**

**E - Encourage (Professional help)**

**E - Encourage - Self Help**



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**What Family Members and Caregivers Can Do**

* Be the best role model you can be for young people by taking care of your own mental and physical health.
* Help children and youth develop strong, safe, and stable relationships with you and other supportive adults.
* Encourage children and youth to build healthy social relationships with peers.
* Do your best to provide children and youth with a supportive, stable, and predictable home and neighborhood environment.
* Try to minimize negative influences and behaviors in young people’s lives.
* Ensure children and youth have regular check-ups with a pediatrician, family doctor, or other health care professional.
* Look out for warning signs of distress and seek help when needed.
* Minimize children’s access to means of self-harm, including firearms and prescription medications.
* Be attentive to how children and youth spend time online.
* Be a voice for mental health in your community.

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**What Educators, School Staff, and School Districts Can Do**

* Create positive, safe, and affirming school environments.
* Expand social and emotional learning programs and other evidence-based approaches that promote healthy development.
* Learn how to recognize signs of changes in mental and physical health among students, including trauma and behavior changes. Take appropriate action when needed.
* Provide a continuum of supports to meet student mental health needs, including evidence-based prevention practices and trauma-informed mental health care.
* Expand the school-based mental health workforce.
* Support the mental health of all school personnel.
* Promote enrolling and retaining eligible children in Medicaid, CHIP, or a Marketplace plan, so that children have health coverage that includes behavioral health services.
* Protect and prioritize students with higher needs and those at higher risk of mental health challenges.

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**What Community Organizations Can Do**

* Educate the public about the importance of mental health, and reduce negative stereotypes, bias, and stigma around mental illness.
* Implement evidence-based programs that promote healthy development, support children, youth, and their families, and increase their resilience.
* Ensure that programs rigorously evaluate mental health-related outcomes.
* Address the unique mental health needs of at-risk youth, such as racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ youth, and youth with disabilities.
* Elevate the voices of children, young people, and their families.

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