Encouraging Young People to Seek Help

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Meridian Behavioral Health Care, Inc.
Table of Contents

01 Defining Young Person
02 Intro and Reflection
03 Education
04 Starting the Conversation
05 What is “Help”? 
06 Modeling Self-Care
Learning Objectives

• Differentiate between natural youth behaviors and signs or symptoms of a mental health challenge
• Learn skills to have a dialogue with young people about their mental health
• Identify and list age-appropriate resources
01

Young People
Defining a “Young Person”

Adolescence: 12-18
Transitioning Adult: 18-22
Emerging Adult: 18-26
Why Focus on Young People?
Young People and Mental Health

Importance of Early Intervention

3 out of 4 people with mental health challenges had signs and symptoms before they were 24-years-old

Suicide is a leading cause of death for adolescents 15-19

https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/how-to-talk/young-people-looking-for-help
Intro and Reflection
Intro and Reflection

Chat Box:

• City where you live/work
• Your Role (e.g., parent/caregiver, behavioral healthcare worker, researcher, law enforcement, youth services, etc.)
Private Reflection

Think back to when you were in middle or high school...

• What was that like?
• How did it feel?
• How was it similar or different to your current life?
• What kinds of things shaped your decision-making?
• What kind of role models did you have or wish to have?
03
Early Education
Regulating the Nervous System (Self-Regulating)

- Emotional Control
- Aggression/Violence
- Defiance
- Mental Health
- Physical Wellness
Regulating the Nervous System (Self-Regulating)

- Academic Performance
- Positive Social Interaction
- Responsibility
- Discipline
- Athletic Performance
Self-Regulating & Coping Strategies

Practice identifying emotions → self-regulation during fight, flight, or freeze (stress responses)

• Breathing techniques such as
  Box Breathing or Double-Inhale
• Physical movement
• Stretching/ Yoga/ Tai Chi
• Joining a sports team
• Meditating
• Walking barefoot outside/
  Sunshine
• Technology-free blocks of time
Self-Regulating & Coping Strategies

Practice identifying emotions → self-regulation during fight, flight, or freeze (stress responses)

- Epsom salt baths
- Essential oils on pressure points
- Massage
- Music
- Hobbies
- Good nutrition and sleep
- Time with animals
- Movie night
Coping Skills
POSITIVE Self-Reflection
Healthy Relationships & Boundaries

Provide practical information and examples to help young people develop boundaries

• It’s okay to spend time apart or spend time with friends without having to ask permission from a partner
• Set boundaries around sex and intimacy
• How to communicate boundaries
• Managing difficulties in a relationship
• Identifying red flags and unhealthy relationships

• 1-800-RESPECT

More articles are available in my reference slides
Social Media
Social Media

Education

• Social media safety
• Self-esteem
• Internal vs external validation
Early Intervention

1) Recognize
2) Respond
1) Recognize: Natural Behavior vs. Warning Signs
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<td>Changes in physical appearance to indicate stages of</td>
<td>Evidence of bruises or cuts in any stages of healing</td>
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Signs and Symptoms of a Mental Health or Substance Use Challenge:

- Physical Appearance
- Behaviors
- Thoughts
- Feelings
Signs and Symptoms: Physical Appearance

• Unkempt appearance compared to their baseline
• Bags under eyes
• Cuts, bruises, scratches, or burn marks of any kind
• Slow speech or movement
• Jumpy or flinches at slight movements
Signs and Symptoms: Behavior

- Crying
- Yelling
- Bad behavior/acting out
- Zoning out/trouble concentrating
- Skipping school/work
Signs and Symptoms: Behavior

• Using drugs or alcohol
• Withdrawing from friends and family
• Changes in eating
• Sleeping too much or too little
• Avoiding places, activities, or people
Signs and Symptoms: Thoughts

- Self-blame or criticism
- Self-hatred
- Pattern of hatred of others
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- Thoughts of self-harming
Signs and Symptoms: Feelings

- Hopeless
- Helpless
- Worthless
- No sense of purpose
- Worried
- Enraged
- Scared
- Anxious
2) Respond: Starting the Conversation
04

Starting the Conversation
If we want our young people to reach out, we need to reach in
Language Matters

- Be an effective *listener* before rushing in to offer advice or solutions
  - Both verbal and non-verbal cues are important; non-judgmental listeners do not interrupt and keep a neutral face

- Do not pass judgment onto them or what they are telling you
  - Do not belittle or brush off their concerns, no matter how small it may seem to you
Language Matters

- Convey respect and genuine interest in their stories
- Be present, limit distractions
- WORDS MATTER!
  - Concrete examples in upcoming clips
Encouraging Young People to Seek Help: Example Clip

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfSCAVcyzbk
Takeaways

As you watch this next video, think about:

- What are your thoughts or feelings about this video?
- What are some words or phrases you can take from this video to use in your future conversations?
How Adults Can Help or Hurt: Listening to Young People

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_oQqYTmW8w
Takeaways

Optional Chat Box Activity:

- What were your thoughts or feelings about this video?
- What are some words or phrases you can take from this video to use in your future conversations?
Takeaways

- State observations directly
- Express concern
- Express willingness to help
- Have resources on hand
- Use “I” statements
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<th>Statements to Avoid or Use</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AVOID</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• I know exactly how you feel....</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ....That happened to me when I was your age</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Oh there’s plenty of fish in the sea!</td>
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<tr>
<td>• You’re young, there’s still so much to enjoy, or you’re young, what could you possibly have to be concerned about?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>USE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Thank you for telling me that,</td>
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<td>• Thank you for trusting me enough to tell/show me that.</td>
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<td>• That must be really _____ for you</td>
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<td>• I can see why that’s ______ for you</td>
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<td>Grow up, man up, get over it</td>
<td>I am always here if you ever want to talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>You are so dramatic</td>
<td>You can text/call me if you ever want to talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t take it so personally</td>
<td>I noticed ....</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not everything revolves around you</td>
<td>Is there anything you’d like to talk about?</td>
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<td>Once you graduate, these little things won’t matter</td>
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<tr>
<td>You won’t even remember this in 5 years</td>
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Empowering Our Young People

Helping young people recognize, manage, and cope with difficult, intense emotions and feelings

Empowering them to make the decision to reach out to us
05

Who/What is Help?

You Are Not Alone
Professional Help

Need Help?
• If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

To learn how to get support for mental health, drug, and alcohol issues, visit FindSupport.gov.

For substance abuse and mental health services in Florida, please visit https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/substance-abuse-and-mental-health

For location specific resources in Florida, visit Get Help - Find Local Services | Florida DCF (myflfamilies.com)
Self-Help

- Stretching/Yoga
- Physical exercise/movement
- Journaling
- Voice memo journaling
- Gratitude apps
- Healthy meal and hydration trackers
Other Support Strategies

- Ala-Teen
- Boys and Girls Club
- NAMI
- School: clubs, extracurriculars, sports, teams
- Spending time with YOU
- Youth Group
06
Modeling Self-Care
It Starts with You
Self Regulation → Co-Regulation
Importance of *modeling* behaviors and proactively practicing self-care

We need to act as models for the youth in our lives.

This also teaches them how to apply these skills in real-life situations.
Opening the door for conversations at every opportunity, not just because signs are present.
Opening the door for conversations at every opportunity, not just because signs are present.

YOU have the power to encourage a young person to ask for help TODAY.
Thanks

Do you have any questions?

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Charlie Waller Trust. (2023, April 14). Encouraging young people to seek help [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfSCAVcyzbk


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