

# Mental Health Toolkit for Parents & Caregivers

75% of mental illnesses begin by age 25, yet most people do not start treatment until 8-11 years after their symptoms begin. How can you help support your kids' mental health?



## Warning Signs



**Warning signs your child may need mental health treatment:**

- Change in sleep or appetite
- Irritability
- Lack of interest or pleasure
- Fatigue, difficulty concentrating
- Unexplained physical symptoms
- Actively or passively talking about wanting to die
  - Ask "Are you thinking of harming yourself?" and do NOT leave them alone if the answer is yes. Call 988.

## Conversation Starters



- Share observations: **"I notice..."**
- Ask non-judgmental questions: **"Tell me more..."**
- Validate & encourage vulnerability: **"It sounds like you're feeling..."**
- Provide hope: **"There are things we can do to help you."**
- Ask how to help & create an action plan: **"What can I do to support you? Our next step..."**

## Grounding Techniques



- Box breathing
- Mindfulness meditation
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Journaling
- 5-4-3-2-1: list 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you feel, etc.

## Resources



- 988 (national suicide hotline)
- psychologytoday.com (find a therapist)
- www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov (resource for low-cost care)
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
  - Treatment locator: 1-617-704-NAMI
  - NAMI info helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI

**Building resilient communities through mental health education & awareness.** Mental Health Collaborative is a 501c3 nonprofit that provides evidence-based mental health literacy education to schools, organizations, and communities.



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[www.mentalhealthcollaborative.org](http://www.mentalhealthcollaborative.org)