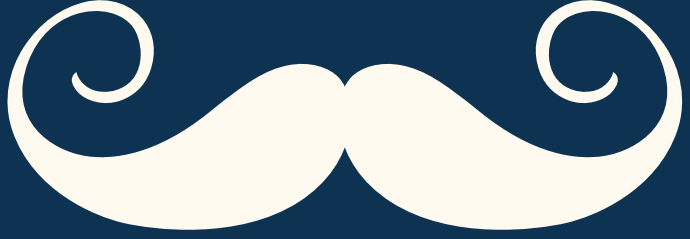


MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



A RESOURCE GUIDE TO PROMOTE MENTAL WELLNESS FOR MEN

Men's Health Month | June 2024

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH,
DEVELOPMENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION, PREVENTION & PREPAREDNESS BRANCH



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE KIT

LEARN

The resources included in this guide can help increase knowledge about mental health topics that impact men, fathers, and children.



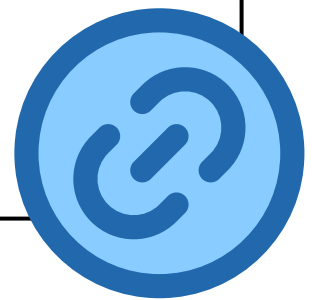
BUILD

The resources included in this guide are designed to help men and parents build the skills to improve mental wellness of themselves and their children.



PREVENT

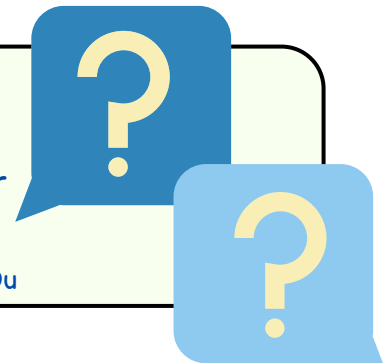
Focusing on mental wellness now can help to prevent serious mental health problems from occurring in the future.



QUESTIONS

Emily Flath
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To access more mental health resources visit <https://bit.ly/44bNJOU>



SECTION 1 Men's Mental Health

- Men's Mental Health Matters
- What is Mental Health?
- The Mental Wellness Continuum
- Signs of Mental Wellness
- Signs of Mental Distress
- Signs of a Mental Health Problem
- Signs of a Mental Health Crisis
- What is a Safety Plan?
- Stanley-Brown Safety Plan
- Becoming and Staying Mentally Well
- Life Skills & Resilience
- Building Life Skills
- Building Resilience
- 10 Ways to Build Resilience
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- Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Violence, and Stalking Among Men
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- What is Perinatal Mental Health?
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- How to Provide Support During Pregnancy
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- Ideas to Get Kids Moving
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- What Do Anxiety & Depression Look Like in Kids?
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- What Does ADHD Look Like in Kids?
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- How to Help Your Child Deal with a Mental Health Problem
- CODE RED Safety Plan
- FAQs for Adults Concerned about a Child or Teen
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- 3 Tips for Advocating for Your Child's Mental Health
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- Just Breathe
- 5-4-3-2-1 Calm
- The Feel Wheel
- Feelings Thermometer
- Make Your Own Calm Jar
- Dried Bean Stress Ball Activity
- Crisis Resources

THE CONTENT



Why do mental health conditions go untreated in men?

- a lack of knowledge or recognition of the signs
- a tendency to downplay or avoid discussing symptoms
- a tendency to avoid treatment due to fear of stigma

Tips for Managing Mental Health Problems

- learn to manage stress
- make healthy lifestyle choices
- engage in activities you enjoy
- seek support from friends and family
- seek professional help from a doctor or mental health provider

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental Health includes our overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

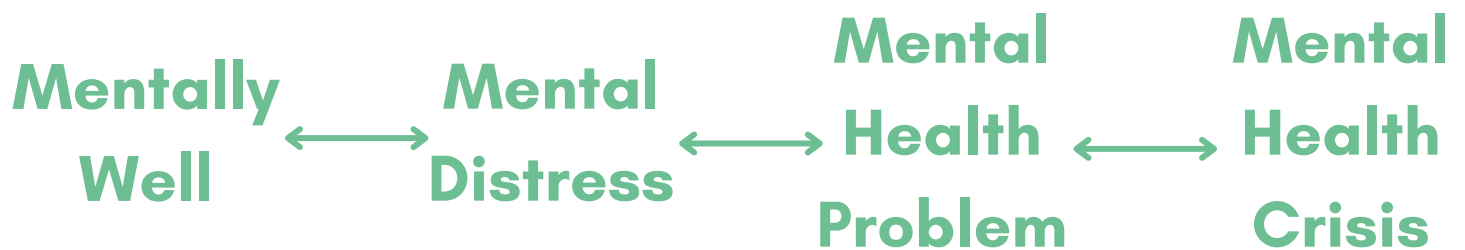
Mental Health impacts our ability to cope with stress, engage in meaningful activities, and build positive relationships.

It is not just the absence of a diagnosed mental health condition.



THE MENTAL WELLNESS *Continuum*

Mental health exists on a continuum from “mentally well” to “mental health crisis” and contains a whole range of emotions.



Based on a variety of factors including biology, genetics, and circumstances, we move along the continuum as we move through life.

Everyone has the capacity to experience mental wellness or a mental health crisis, regardless of whether or not they have a specific mental health diagnosis.

Signs of

MENTAL WELLNESS

Being mentally well means you are thriving and experiencing no major issues.

- Frequently experiencing positive emotions
- Experiencing few sleep problems
- Minimal changes in mood
- Generally feeling calm
- Maintaining optimism
- Taking challenges in stride
- Having a good sense of humor
- Performing well
- Feeling physically well
- Having a good energy level
- Being socially engaged
- Using alcohol or substances on a limited basis
- Participating in gambling infrequently
- Controlling symptoms of any mental health conditions



signs of MENTAL DISTRESS

“Mental distress” refers to common and expected discomfort in response to the stresses of everyday life. These symptoms usually go away when the stressful event ends.

- Feeling irritable or impatient
- Feeling sad or nervous
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Procrastinating
- Being forgetful
- Having trouble concentrating
- Experiencing minor sleep trouble
- Performing adequately
- Feeling muscle tension/headaches
- Experiencing lower energy level
- Decreased social engagement
- Regular but controlled alcohol or substance use
- Regular but controlled gambling
- Symptoms of mental health conditions may be increased but manageable



signs of a **MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM**

Mental health problems often occur as a reaction to major life changes or challenges, such as loss of a loved one, breakup/divorce, major problems with family/friends, moving, loss of employment, major financial stressors, etc.

- Frequently experiencing negative emotions
- Experiencing anxiety or panic
- Sporadic attendance
- Poor performance
- Poor concentration
- Increased aches and pains
- Increased fatigue
- Consistent sleep problems (restless/disturbed sleep or sleeping too much)
- Social withdrawal or avoidance
- Difficulty controlling alcohol or substance use
- Difficulty controlling gambling
- Symptoms of mental health conditions are difficult to manage



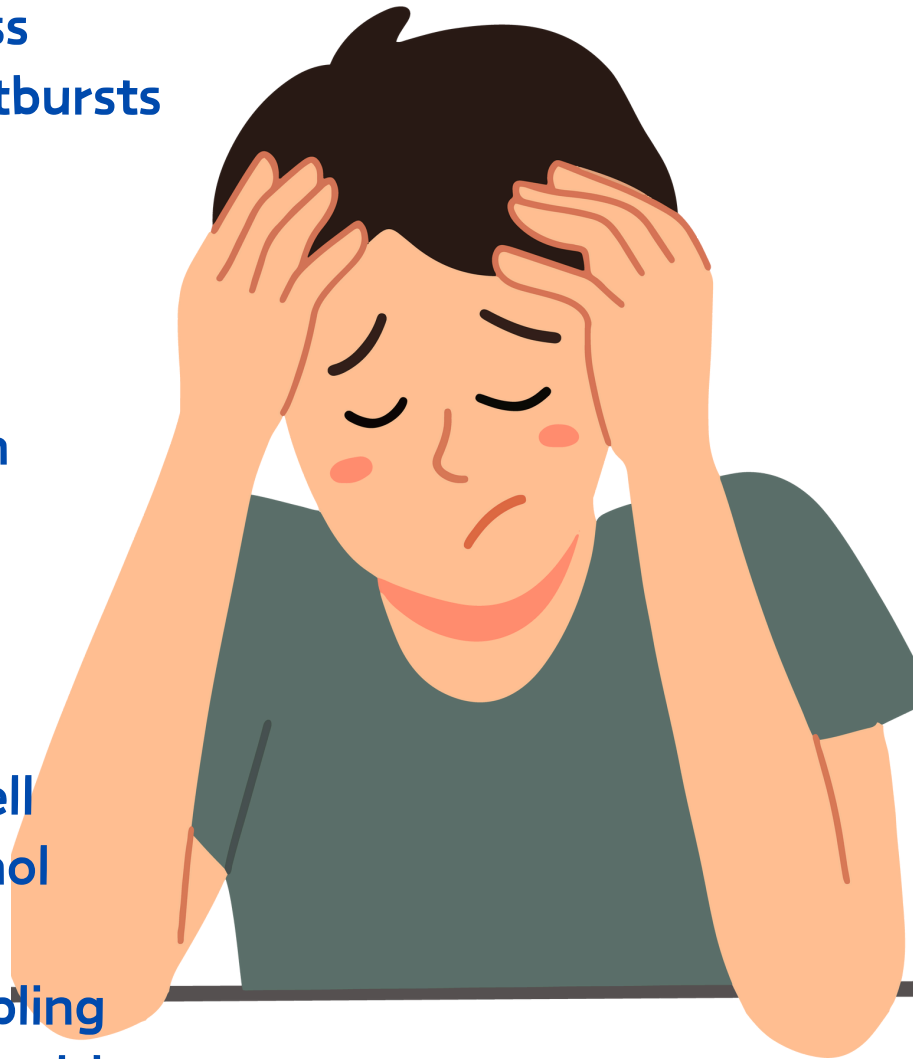

Call-Text-Chat 988



signs of a **MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

A mental health crisis refers to extreme or intense symptoms that severely impact ability to function. Symptoms may be sudden and resolve quickly or may persist for a long period of time.

- Consistent negative emotions
- Excessive anxiety/panic
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Angry or emotional outbursts
- Severe sleep problems (insomnia, nightmares, or sleeping too much)
- Unable to perform
- Consistent absenteeism
- Socially unresponsive (not going out, not answering calls or messages)
- Feeling physically unwell
- Unable to control alcohol or substance use
- Unable to control gambling
- Symptoms of mental health conditions are uncontrolled



Call-Text-Chat 988



WHAT IS A SAFETY PLAN?

A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan that provides a set of concrete steps to take while experiencing a crisis. Preparing a safety plan in advance can help you to navigate the difficult emotions of a mental health crisis.

You can make a safety plan on your own, with the help of loved ones, or with the help of your medical or mental health provider. The best time to make a safety plan is when you are feeling mentally well so that your plan is ready before you experience a crisis.



WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING A SAFETY PLAN:

How will you know when your safety plan will be needed?

List warning signs (thoughts, images, moods, and/or behaviors) that may be a sign you are struggling.

What can you do on your own to help yourself to feel better?

List activities or items that may be helpful when you are struggling. Examples include music, safe locations, hobbies, etc.

Who can you contact to help you when you are struggling?

List friends, family, and professionals who can offer support. Also consider the types of actions that would be helpful to ask each individual listed to assist you in doing.

What do you need to do to make your environment safe?

Consider ways to reduce your access to “lethal means” such as firearms, medications, or other items that may be dangerous.

STANLEY - BROWN SAFETY PLAN

STEP 1: WARNING SIGNS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 2: INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES

THINGS I CAN DO TO TAKE MY MIND OFF MY PROBLEMS WITHOUT CONTACTING ANOTHER PERSON:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 3: PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE DISTRACTION:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1.Name: _____ | Contact: _____ |
| 2.Name: _____ | Contact: _____ |
| 3.Place: _____ | 4. Place: _____ |

STEP 4: PEOPLE WHOM I CAN ASK FOR HELP DURING A CRISIS:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1.Name: _____ | Contact: _____ |
| 2.Name: _____ | Contact: _____ |
| 3.Place: _____ | 4. Place: _____ |

STEP 5: PROFESSIONALS OR AGENCIES I CAN CONTACT DURING A CRISIS:

- 1.Clinician/Agency Name: _____ Phone: _____
Emergency Contact : _____
- 2.Clinician/Agency Name: _____ Phone: _____
Emergency Contact : _____
- 3.Local Emergency Department: _____
Emergency Department Address _____
Emergency Department Phone : _____
- 4.Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 988

STEP 6: MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER (PLAN FOR LETHAL MEANS SAFETY):

1. _____
2. _____

The Stanley-Brown Safety Plan is copyrighted by Barbara Stanley, PhD & Gregory K. Brown, PhD (2008, 2021). Individual use of the Stanley-Brown Safety Plan form is permitted. Written permission from the authors is required for any changes to this form or use of this form in the electronic medical record. Additional resources are available from www.suicidesafetyplan.com.

Stanley-Brown
Safety Planning Intervention

BECOMING AND STAYING MENTALLY WELL

The keys to mental wellness are



LIFE SKILLS

RESILIENCE

SELF-CARE

SOCIAL CONNECTION



LIFE SKILLS & RESILIENCE

Life skills and resilience help us to manage the distressing circumstances that can sometimes lead to a crisis.

Together, they help to offset factors that increase the risk of mental health problems.

It is important to focus on learning life skills and building resilience

BEFORE

a crisis occurs.

building **LIFE SKILLS**

Life skills are a group of skills that are important for dealing with stressors. They include:

PROBLEM SOLVING

STRESS MANAGEMENT

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

CRITICAL THINKING

COMMUNICATION

SELF-REGULATION



Adults can improve their life skills through self-help resources like workshops or books or by seeking the guidance of a professional like a life coach or mental health counselor.

building

RESILIENCE

“Resilience” refers to the ability to adapt to difficult or challenging experiences. Common traits of resilient people include:



SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-EFFICACY

SELF-COMPASSION

PERSEVERANCE

HEALTHY OPTIMISM

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Adults can build resilience through self-help resources like workshops or books or by seeking the guidance of a professional like a life coach or mental health counselor.

10 ways to build RESILIENCE



Connect with others



Volunteer in your community



Stay active

Eat healthy meals



Engage in hobbies that bring you joy



Take care of your spiritual side

Maintain healthy optimism



Build coping skills
to help you deal with difficult
emotions and situations



Seek professional help when you need it.

Practicing **SELF-CARE**

Self-care means taking the time to engage in activities that help you live well.



Self-care includes any activities that improve:

PHYSICAL WELLNESS

MENTAL WELLNESS

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

SOCIAL WELLNESS

getting started with self-care

Starting a new self-care routine can feel overwhelming.

Start by choosing one simple activity that has the fewest barriers.

Once you have achieved a small level of self-care, you may feel inspired to keep going.

5

ideas for

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE



**Physical self-care ensures
that your body functions properly**

Eat regular, healthy meals



**Find a hobby that gets
you moving**



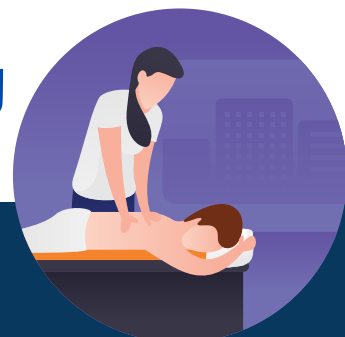
Get good sleep



**Spend time outside,
especially in the sunshine**



**Try a massage or stretching
to relieve muscle tension**



5

ideas for

MENTAL SELF-CARE

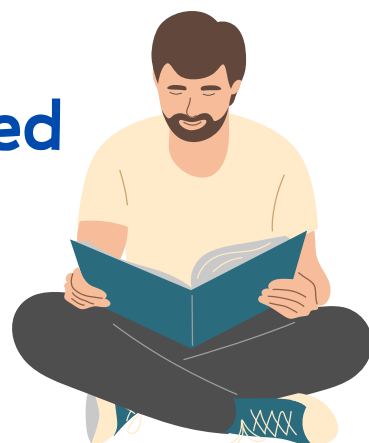


**Mental self-care helps to declutter
your mind and reduce stress.**



Find a fun and creative hobby
(cooking, gardening, art, music, writing, etc.)

**Read books about topics unrelated
to work or other stressors**



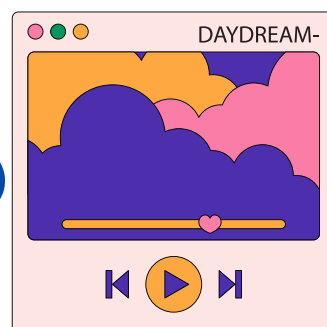
**Play strategy
and puzzle games**

(chess, Sudoku, crosswords, etc.)



Create an inspiration kit

(include songs, positive quotes, podcasts, etc.)



**Detach from electronic
devices periodically**

5

ideas for

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE



**Emotional self-care helps you
to be aware of and manage your feelings**



**Physically experience emotions
through laughter or crying**



**Channel frustration or anger into action
like movement or journaling**



Schedule time for rest



Meditate on emotions



Practice gratitude



5

ideas for

SOCIAL SELF-CARE



Social self-care helps you to feel connected to others



Spend time with family or friends who are supportive

Spend time with pets



Volunteer in your community



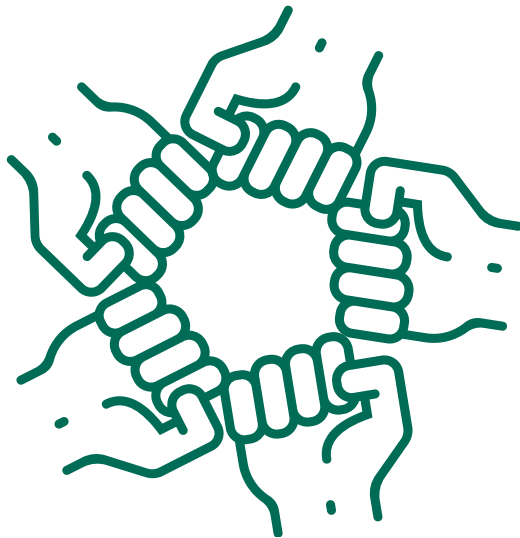
Invite a friend or family member to join you in your favorite hobby



Engage in a group activity
(concerts, sporting events, game nights, etc.)

building **CONNECTEDNESS**

Positive relationships and community connections help to buffer us from the difficult parts of life by providing support and feelings of belonging.



We can make connections within

INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS

(friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.)

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

(parents, partners, children, extended relatives)

ORGANIZATIONS

(schools, churches/religious organizations, social/sports clubs, etc.)

SHARED COMMUNITIES

(geographic location, shared culture, LGBTQ+, veterans, etc.)



4 *types of* SOCIAL SUPPORT



Asking for help can be difficult. It can be useful to consider what type of support you want or need before asking for support. The type of support you need may vary based on the circumstances.

Emotional Support

Listening, showing empathy, telling you they care, offering comfort

Sharing Information

Assisting in problem solving by providing useful facts or personal experience

Practical Support

Providing tangible help such as gifts of food or money or offering assistance with tasks like cooking, cleaning, or child-care

Sharing Points of View

Providing encouragement by expressing confidence in you and reminding you of your strengths and successes



ask for help



how to build **SOCIAL SUPPORT**



ASSESSING CURRENT SUPPORT

Do you have a few people in your life who...

- Make you feel comfortable when they are around?
- Make you feel valued?
- Take your concerns seriously?
- Give you a sense that you could tell them anything?
- Can help you solve problems?

MAKING FRIENDS

If you feel that your current connections don't provide enough support, try making new connections by:

- Enrolling in a class.
- Joining a book club, hiking group, or other social club that matches your interests.
- Volunteering for a cause that is meaningful to you.
- Reaching out to others often.



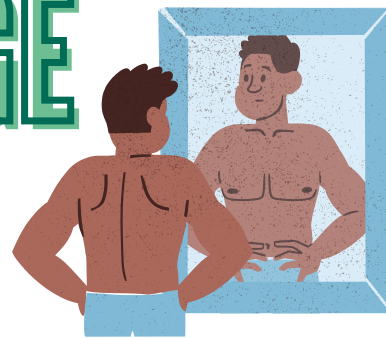
STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS

To get the most out of your relationships:

- Add reminders to reach out to the people you value.
- Commit a specific amount of time to each other.
- Listen well.
- Ask for specific kinds of help.
- Find ways to show your respect, appreciation, and support.



HOW CAN BODY IMAGE IMPACT MEN?



Body image includes what you think and feel about what you see in the mirror. It can include any of your physical attributes, such as height, weight, shape, and skin color or appearance.

A negative body image or body dissatisfaction may lead to:



- excessive dieting, including fasting or eliminating food groups
- engaging in periods of binge eating
- engaging in behaviors to compensate for food intake, including self-induced vomiting, laxative or diuretic use
- excessive or compulsive exercise
- steroid misuse to manipulate body size and shape
- use of performance and image-enhancing drugs to promote muscle growth or reduce body fat

WHAT CAUSES NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE?

- appearance or weight-related teasing or bullying
- pressure to appear physically 'tough' and 'strong'
- a cultural tendency to judge people on their appearance
- societal messages that emphasize a particular ideal body for men (elite sports, television, social media, advertising)
 - usually lean and muscular

10 *steps to* POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

A list cannot magically turn negative body thoughts into positive body image, but it can introduce you to healthier ways of looking at yourself and your body.

The more you practice these new thought patterns, the better you will feel about who you are and the body you have.



- 1** Celebrate all of the amazing things your body does for you: running, breathing, laughing, etc.
- 2** Keep a top-10 list of things you like about yourself that aren't related to how much you weigh or how you look.
- 3** Remember when you feel good about yourself and who you are, you carry yourself with a sense of confidence, self-acceptance, and openness that makes you attractive.

4

Look at yourself as a whole person. When you see yourself in a mirror or in your mind, choose not to focus on specific body parts.



5

Surround yourself with positive people who make you feel good about who you are.

6

Shut down those voices in your head that tell you your body is not “right.” The next time you start to tear yourself down, build yourself back up with a few affirmations.

7

Wear clothes that are comfortable and that make you feel good about your body.

8

Become a critical viewer of social and media messages. Pay attention to images, slogans, or attitudes that make you feel bad about yourself or your body. Protest these messages: write to the advertiser or talk back to the image or message.

9

Do something nice for yourself--something that lets your body know you appreciate it. Make time for a nap, find a peaceful place outside to relax.

10

Use the time and energy that you might have spent worrying about food, calories, and your weight to do something to help others.

HOW CAN TRAUMA & ABUSE IMPACT MENTAL HEALTH?

Trauma is a response that can occur after any event that is highly distressing. Situations that often result in trauma include abuse, war, an accident or natural disaster, the sudden or violent death of a loved one, or a serious medical problem.



Abuse - whether physical, emotional, verbal or sexual - is a specific type of traumatic event. Abuse can happen during childhood or as an adult, and can have long-term impacts on your wellbeing.

Those who have experienced trauma or abuse are at a higher risk of developing mental health conditions such as anxiety disorders, depression, PTSD, borderline personality disorder, or substance use disorder.

The long-term impacts of trauma and abuse can include:

- Severe anxiety, stress, or fear
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Suicide

TRAUMA AND ABUSE ARE NEVER YOUR FAULT

You can get help to heal the physical, mental, and emotional scars of trauma and abuse.

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, 988 can help



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, AND STALKING AMONG MEN



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) refers to any physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, psychological aggression, and control of reproductive or sexual health by a current or former intimate partner.

Sexual Violence (SV) refers to sexual activity when consent is not obtained or given freely.

Contact Sexual Violence includes rape (penetration of the victim), being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion, and/or unwanted sexual contact.

Stalking occurs when someone repeatedly harasses or threatens someone else, causing fear or safety concerns.



ABUSE IS NEVER YOUR FAULT

About 1 in 3 men experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime. Nearly 56% of men who were victims of some form of intimate partner violence (IPV) experienced these events before age 25.

Both men and women can be perpetrators of stalking, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence against men.

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, 988 can help



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988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

Intimate partner violence is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. It includes any physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, psychological aggression, and control of reproductive or sexual health by a current or former intimate partner.



97% of men who experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner had only female perpetrators.

COMMON SIGNS OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR IN A PARTNER

Even one or two of these behaviors in a relationship is a red flag that abuse may be present.

- Telling you that you never do anything right.
- Showing extreme jealousy of your friends.
- Showing extreme jealousy of time spent away from them.
- Preventing or discouraging you from spending time with others, particularly friends, family members, or peers.
- Insulting, demeaning, or shaming you, especially in front of other people.
- Preventing you from making your own decisions, including about working or attending school.
- Controlling finances in the household without discussion, such as taking your money or refusing to provide money for necessary expenses.
- Pressuring you to have sex or perform sexual acts with which you're not comfortable.
- Pressuring you to use drugs or alcohol.
- Intimidating you through threatening looks or actions.
- Insulting your parenting or threatening to harm or take away your children or pets.
- Intimidating you with weapons such as guns, knives, bats, or mace.
- Destroying your belongings or your home.

WHAT DO I DO IF I AM CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING ABUSE?

Many men may hesitate to seek help for issues related to intimate partner violence due to:

- Shame that they've been abused.
- Feeling they somehow failed in their role as a male, husband, or father.
- Lack of resources for men who have experienced IPV.
- Fear that they will not be believed.
- Fear that their partner will harm or prevent access to their children.
- Fear that their partner will harm or prevent access to their pets.

If you are experiencing intimate partner violence, the most important consideration is safety. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. You may also reach out to your mental health or healthcare provider, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline for assistance with making a safety plan.


Call
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)
TTY 1.800.787.3224


Chat
Chat live


Text
Text "START" to
88788

**NATIONAL
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
HOTLINE**

RESOURCES FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT

National Sexual Assault Hotline
Phone Number: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, 988 can help




Call-Text-Chat 988

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE



3 *tips for* HEALING FROM TRAUMA & ABUSE

It is possible to heal from trauma and abuse so that they do not take over your life. This does not mean that you “get over it” but rather that you learn to process the emotions of the abuse and discover a path forward.



1 Seek professional help. The sooner you can get professional help, the sooner you will begin to feel better. Visit <https://findtreatment.gov/> for help locating treatment options near you.

2 Practice self-care. It is important to care for your physical, mental, emotional, and social needs while you are healing from trauma or abuse.



3 Practice mindfulness or meditation. Mindfulness helps to keep you grounded in the present moment, which can be helpful for those struggling to overcome past trauma.

10 *ways to* PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a state of being that can be applied to any activity. Practicing mindfulness is to stay grounded in the present, which can help relieve stress and improve mood. Here are some ideas for building mindfulness into your routine.



1 Breathing Exercises: focusing on your breathing, intentionally taking long breaths to relax the body or short breaths to refocus the mind.

2 Stretching and Yoga: focus on how your body feels as you stretch and release tension and stiffness. Stretching and yoga can also help to relieve heavy emotions and stress.



3 Walking Meditation: walk slowly through your neighborhood or a park with no destination. Focus on the immediate sensations like the ground beneath your feet or the sun on your skin. If your mind wanders, bring it back to focusing on what you are experiencing in the moment.

4

Mindful Eating: instead of eating lunch while working on your computer or watching TV while you eat your dinner, eliminate distractions and focus on the sensations of eating: the smell, the taste, how your body feels, etc. Mindful eating can also help you reach your weight loss goals.



5

Single-tasking: multitasking has become the norm but often leads to stress. Dedicate your full attention to one task at a time and keep your mind focused on the task if you notice your thoughts beginning to wander.

6

Journaling: writing down your thoughts and emotions as you are experiencing them can help you process them. Don't forget to journal about your positive emotions in addition to the difficult ones.

7

Writing a Gratitude List: making a list of a few things for which you are grateful each day can help you focus on the small and big blessings that enrich your life, fostering feelings of happiness and contentment.

8

Reading: focusing your attention on the book you are reading and getting lost in the story is a great way to relieve stress. Reading can also help improve memory and increase empathy.



9

Physical Care: massages and hair, nail, or skin care, are all great ways to relax while practicing focusing on the present moment. Notice how you feel when you engage in these activities.

10

Using Visual Reminders: place notes in spaces you will see regularly, such as on your mirror or inside cabinet doors to remind you of your intention to be more mindful.

PARENTAL *MENTAL HEALTH* AWARENESS

Parents don't have
to **always**
know the answer.

PROMOTING
AND SUPPORTING
MENTAL WELLNESS
OF NEW AND
EXPECTING PARENTS



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH,
DEVELOPMENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

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MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION, PREVENTION & PREPAREDNESS BRANCH

IN THIS SECTION...

You will find resources to help dads and dads-to-be understand the mental health challenges that come with pregnancy and the first year after birth, and tips for supporting the mental health and wellness of moms and moms-to-be as well as your own.

WHY IS BEING MENTALLY WELL IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS?

Poor parental mental health can lead to:

- Less attention to baby's health and well-check visits
- Higher risk of behavioral problems in preschool-age children
- Children with more physical and mental health problems
- Poor family and marital relationships



WHAT IS PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH?

Having a baby is a big life event. It's natural for both parents to experience a range of emotions during pregnancy and after birth.



Mental health problems can arise at any point in the pregnancy, including after birth.



What is the difference between “perinatal,” “prenatal,” and “postpartum” ?

Perinatal = the start of the pregnancy through one year after birth

Prenatal = the time before birth

Postpartum = the time period from birth up to one year

If difficult feelings start to have an effect on your, or your partner’s day-to-day life, you or your partner may be experiencing a mental health problem.

It is important to talk to your doctor about any mental health symptoms that you may be experiencing.



If you or a loved one are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, 988 can help



WHAT IS MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH?

The most common mental health conditions that occur around pregnancy include:

- Perinatal depression
- Perinatal anxiety
- Perinatal OCD
- Postpartum psychosis
- Postpartum PTSD
- Eating disorders



Signs that your partner may be struggling:



- Trouble sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Changes in appetite – eating much more or much less
- Feeling irritable, angry, or nervous
- Feeling exhausted
- Not enjoying life as much as in the past
- Low or no sex drive
- Feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless
- Crying uncontrollably
- Feelings of being a bad mother
- Trouble concentrating
- Low energy
- Lack of interest in baby, friends, family
- Thoughts of harming the baby or herself


Call-Text-Chat 988



If you are concerned about your partner's immediate safety, 988 can help





WHAT IS PATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH?

Depression can set in before or after birth, but is highest among men when the baby is 3- to 6-months-old.

Up to 18% of dads develop an anxiety disorder such as generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder during the pregnancy or the first year postpartum.

WHAT PUTS DADS AT RISK FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES?

- Experiencing hormonal changes, particularly declines in testosterone - during and after their partner's pregnancy
- Having a partner who is experiencing depression
- Wanting to be part of the newborn experience, but often feeling that they're on the "outside"
- Having a personal or family history of depression
- Difficulty adjusting to parenthood
- Experiencing sleep issues

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF PATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES?

- Anger, sudden outbursts, or violent behavior
- Increase in impulsive or risk-taking behavior, including turning to substances such as alcohol or prescription drugs
- Irritability
- Low motivation
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle aches, stomach, or digestion issues
- Poor concentration
- Suicidal thoughts
- Withdrawing from relationships
- Working a lot more or a lot less

HOW TO PROVIDE SUPPORT DURING PREGNANCY

Pregnancy can present many changes and challenges, whether its your first child or you are adding to your growing family. It is important to strengthen your relationship with your partner and your support system.



STRENGTHENING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

- Take time to share what you each are feeling
- Go to doctor visits together
- Make time for fun
- Make healthy lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise together



SUPPORTING YOUR PARTNER

- Read about what to expect during each trimester
- Talk about decisions related to pregnancy and family planning
- Decide together what role you will play in labor and delivery
- Give your partner space to rest
- Share in household tasks such as cleaning, making meals, and caring for the family
- Encourage your partner to reach out to others, such as family, friends, or support groups



TIPS FOR GOOD SLEEP

Establish a routine.

Try to go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every day. When you have a new baby, also establish a regular naptime routine.

Try a relaxing activity

- Relaxing music
- A calming bath
- Breathing exercises
- Muscle relaxation
- Visualization
- Meditation

Think about your diet and mealtime.

Some foods, like those that contain caffeine or sugar, can impact your sleep. Try to avoid eating two to three hours before bed.

Think about your screen habits

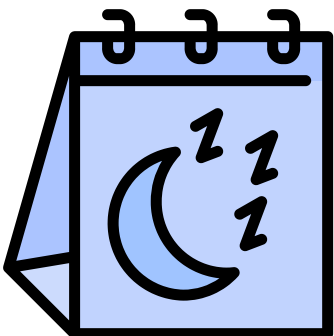
- Avoid screens an hour or two before bed
- Use a blue light filter, dark mode, or night mode after dark
- Adjust notification settings to avoid disruptions

Use a sleep diary to record:

- Your bedtime
- Your sleep duration
- Your sleep quality (ranked 1-5)
- How often you wake during the night
- How long you're awake
- Any sleep issues like nightmares

Stay active.

Engaging in physical activity during the day can help you sleep better at night. Some people find that they need to avoid too much activity 2 to 3 hours before bed. Make sure you check in with your doctor before changing your exercise routine.



Talk to your doctor about ongoing sleep problems. There may be additional health issues impacting your sleep.





**BEST
DAD
EVER**

**PROMOTING AND
SUPPORTING MENTAL
WELLNESS IN KIDS**

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH,
DEVELOPMENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION, PREVENTION & PREPAREDNESS BRANCH



IN THIS SECTION...

You will find resources to help parents understand the mental health challenges that children experience, handouts to help kids and parents communicate about mental health, and activities for healthy coping for parents and kids to do together.

• MENTAL •
Health
♥ MATTERS ♥



a recipe for

MENTAL WELLNESS

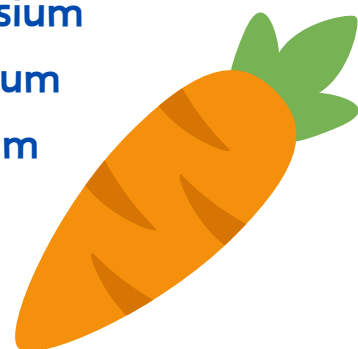


Did you know?

What we **EAT**
greatly impacts
how we **FEEL**

Foods rich in these vitamins and nutrients can help to support better mental health:*

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin B1
- Vitamin B6
- Folate (B9)
- Vitamin B 12
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin D
- Magnesium
- Potassium
- Selenium



Foods to Consider:

- Turkey
- Chicken
- Eggs
- Salmon
- Cheeses (cheddar, feta, goat)
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Citrus fruits
- Oatmeal
- Whole grains
- Almonds
- Peanuts
- Yogurt
- Brussel sprouts
- Strawberries
- Avocados
- Spinach
- Bananas
- Sweet potatoes
- Peas
- Cucumbers
- Brazil nuts
- Cauliflower
- Black beans

get moving for

MENTAL WELLNESS



Did you know?

EXERCISE
can improve
MOOD

We all know about the physical health benefits of exercise, but other benefits include:

- Better sleep
- Better school performance
- Better mood
- Lower risk of depression
- Better outlook on life

HOW MUCH EXERCISE IS ENOUGH?



KIDS AGES 6-17:
60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily



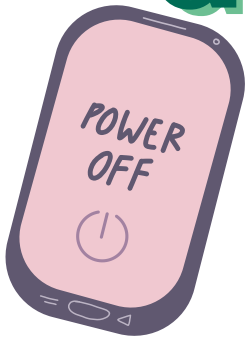
KIDS UNDER 6:
3 hours of light activity, active play, and energetic movement, like hopping, running, and jumping daily

HOW TO ENCOURAGE EXERCISE

- Set a regular schedule for physical activity
- Choose a variety of fun age-appropriate activities
- Be active together as a family
- Make being active a part of daily life, like taking the stairs
- Keep it fun

ideas to

GET KIDS MOVING



An important step in getting kids moving is to limit sedentary activities like screen time. Consider setting limits for watching TV, using the computer, using the phone, using social media, and playing video games.

ENDURANCE ACTIVITIES

Endurance or aerobic exercises are those that increase heart rate and make us breathe harder.

- walking
- jogging
- running
- biking
- basketball
- tennis
- ice skating
- inline skating
- soccer
- swimming



STRENGTH ACTIVITIES

Strengthening activities are those that build muscles and improve strength

- climbing
- handstands
- wrestling
- monkey bars
- push-ups
- pull-ups
- weight lifting (make sure to instruct kids on proper form and provide supervision)



STRETCHING ACTIVITIES

Stretching exercises help improve flexibility, allowing muscles and joints to bend and move.

- yoga
- dance
- martial arts (like karate)
- gymnastics



Tips for talking about

MENTAL HEALTH

WITH KIDS



Children can struggle with the same mental health problems as adults.

Mental health problems can cause issues at home, at school, and in social settings.

"It is never too early to talk to your child about their mental health."

SIGNS A CHILD MAY BE STRUGGLING

- Sleeping too much or too little
- Struggling academically
- Changes in eating habits or weight
- Withdrawals from social interactions
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches
- Involvement in fights
- Big changes in mood
- Having emotional outbursts
- An extended period of sadness (2+ weeks)
- Sudden overwhelming fear with no cause
- Trouble concentrating

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



- Use straightforward, age-appropriate language.
- Incorporate visual aids.
- Watch for reactions and be ready to slow down or back up if your child appears confused or upset.
- Answer questions directly and honestly.
- Listen and validate their feelings and experiences.
- Reassure your child that you are there for them.
- Have conversations about feelings often and include the whole range of emotions - positive and negative.

WHAT DO ANXIETY & DEPRESSION LOOK LIKE IN KIDS?



Just like adults, children have worries and fears and feel sad from time to time.

When these feelings are extreme or last a long time, it may be a sign that your child is struggling with anxiety or depression.



SIGNS OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN

- Being very afraid when away from parents (separation anxiety)
- Having extreme fear about a specific thing or situation, such as dogs, insects, or going to the doctor (phobias)
- Being very afraid of school and other places where there are people (social anxiety)
- Being very worried about the future and about bad things happening (general anxiety)
- Having repeated episodes of sudden, unexpected, intense fear that come with symptoms like heart pounding, trouble breathing, or feeling dizzy, shaky, or sweaty (panic disorder)

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN

- Feeling sad, hopeless, or irritable a lot of the time
- Not wanting to do or enjoy doing fun things
- Changes in eating patterns (eating a lot more or a lot less)
- Showing changes in sleep patterns (sleeping too much or not enough)
- Showing changes in energy (being tired and sluggish or tense and restless a lot of the time)
- Trouble paying attention
- Feeling worthless, useless, or guilty
- Showing self-injury and self-destructive behavior

WHAT DOES DEPRESSION LOOK LIKE IN BOYS?



Many people recognize some symptoms of depression such as being sad, being tearful or crying, and not eating or losing weight.



However, depression may look different in boys and men. You notice some of these other signs or behaviors that indicate depression in boys:

- Irritability or anger that gets out of control
- Problems getting along with others
- Escapist behavior such as spending a lot of time on sports or video games
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems, and pain

HOW TO HELP BOYS MANAGE DEPRESSION

- Listen calmly, even during verbal outbursts
- Help boys to express their thoughts and emotions in a safe environment
- Encourage social connection with healthy peer groups
- Seek professional help

WHAT DOES ADHD LOOK LIKE IN KIDS?



ADHD is one of the most common mental health conditions for children. The symptoms of ADHD often last into adulthood.



SIGNS OF ADHD IN CHILDREN

- daydreaming a lot
- forgetting or losing things a lot
- squirming or fidgeting
- talking too much
- having difficulty getting along with others
- making careless mistakes
- taking unnecessary risks
- having a hard time resisting temptation
- having trouble taking turns

TYPES OF ADHD

Predominantly Inattentive:

- difficulty organizing or finishing tasks
- difficulty paying attention to details
- difficulty following instructions
- difficulty listening during conversations
- easily distracted
- forgets details of daily routines

Predominantly Hyperactive:

- fidgeting and talking a lot
- difficulty sitting still for long
- often feeling restless
- difficulty with impulsivity
- often interrupts or grabs things from others
- difficulty waiting their turn
- difficulty listening to directions
- may have more accidents and injuries than others

Combined:

experiences the symptoms of inattentive and hyperactive types equally

WHAT DOES PTSD LOOK LIKE IN KIDS?



Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can occur as the result of a severely stressful event. Children can develop PTSD as the result of something they experience themselves or something they witness.

EXPERIENCES THAT CAN LEAD TO PTSD

- physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment or abuse
- being a victim or witness to violence or crime
- Car accidents
- Serious illness or death of a close family member or friend
- Natural or manmade disasters

SIGNS OF PTSD IN CHILDREN

- Reliving the event in thought or in play
- Nightmares and sleep problems
- Becoming very upset when something causes memories of the event
- Lack of positive emotions
- Intense ongoing fear or sadness
- Irritability and angry outbursts
- Constantly looking for possible threats
- Being easily startled
- Acting helpless, hopeless or withdrawn
- Denying that the event happened or feeling numb
- Avoiding places or people associated with the event

Children who have experienced traumatic stress may seem restless or fidgety and may have trouble paying attention. As a result, the signs of PTSD may be confused with ADHD so it is important to let your child's healthcare provider know of any major events that have occurred.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD DEAL WITH A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

Mental health conditions in children are diagnosed and treated based on how the symptoms impact the child's daily life.



If you are worried about your child's mental health, the first step is to talk to your child's teachers, your child's close friends and their parents, relatives, or other caregivers to see what they may have noticed. Next, talk to your child's healthcare provider about all of the behaviors that you and others have noticed.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD?

- Learn about the condition.
- Consider family counseling which includes all members as partners in the treatment plan.
- Ask your child's mental health professional for advice on how to respond to your child and handle tough behavior.
- Enroll in parent training programs designed for parents of children with a mental health condition.
- Look for ways to handle stress and help you respond calmly.
- Seek ways to relax and have fun with your child.
- Praise your child's strengths and skills.
- Work with your child's school to get the support your child needs.
- Stay positive and remind your child that everything will be okay.



Suicide is among the leading causes of death for youth ages 10-24 years. If you have immediate concerns that your child may be at risk of self-harm or suicide, call, text, or message 988 for support.



Call-Text-Chat 988



Make a **CODE RED** Safety Plan

A safety plan is designed to be a safety net when you are in crisis or having your worst day. It is important to plan ahead and be prepared by making a safety plan before you are in crisis or having your worst day. Keep your plan easily accessible so that if/when the day comes, you will have a plan to keep yourself safe and connected to help.

Instructions: Take time to fill in each block of your safety plan. Draw, write or stick pictures from a magazine inside each block of your safety plan. This is **YOUR** plan and unique to you. Your plan may change and that's okay, you can update it any time you want to!

Note: If you have made your contact, done your delay decisions, relax and distract and you are still needing help please call, text or chat 988 where someone is there to help 24/7.

CONTACT

Who is a trusted adult I can reach out to, to help me?
i.e: teacher, coach, youth pastor, mentor

CODE RED

DELAY DECISIONS

What are my reasons for living? What are the things that will help delay me from making any decisions that could harm myself?
i.e: goals, dreams, pets, people in my life

Always call 911 if you are in immediate danger of harming yourself.

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988
dial 2 for Spanish speakers
dial 3 for LGBTQIA+ specific support

Crisis Text Line: text "KY" to 741-741

Kentucky School STOP tip line (to report bullying, violence, or other school issues, anonymously if desired): 866-393-6659

What helps me calm down? What will slow my breathing and relax my body?
i.e: yoga, walking, nap, bath, music.....

RELAX

What can keep my mind off things upsetting me? What can I do in 30 seconds, 3 minutes, 30 minutes, or longer that will help?
i.e.: watch a silly video, listen to a song, organize, play outside, read a book, play with a pet

DISTRACT



FAQS FOR ADULTS

concerned about a child or teen

WHAT IS 988?

988 is the three-digit dialing code connecting people to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, where compassionate, accessible care and support are available for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress—whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. **People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CALL 988?

When calling 988, callers first hear a greeting message while their call is routed to the local Lifeline network crisis center (based on the caller's area code). A trained crisis counselor will answer the phone, listen to the caller, understand how their problem affects them, provide support, and share resources if needed.

WILL 988 CALLS BE REFERRED TO 911?

The primary goal of the Lifeline is to support people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress in the moments they most need it. While some safety and health issues may warrant a response from law enforcement and/or Emergency Medical Services, the 988 coordinated response is intended to promote stabilization and care in the least restrictive manner. Currently, a very small percentage of Lifeline calls require activation of the 911 system, and only when there is an imminent risk to someone's life that cannot be reduced during the Lifeline call. In these cases, the crisis counselor shares information with 911, which is crucial to saving the caller's life.

ADVOCATING FOR YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH



Being an effective advocate for your child may mean acting as your child's voice, amplifying your child's voice, or a mix of both.

WHY PARENTS MAKE GREAT ADVOCATES

No one is more fiercely committed to your child's wellbeing than you!

Other than your child themselves, no one is a better expert when it comes to knowing what is "normal" or "not normal" for your child.

WHEN TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH

There are many situations in which you may need to be your child's advocate. The most common are when seeking a diagnosis and/or treatment and when seeking assistance or accommodations from your child's school.

It can be frustrating to find solutions to these complex problems, so it is important to remember that you and your child are the experts. If you or your child feel something is wrong, keep trying until you find a solution.

3

tips for **ADVOCATING FOR YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH**



1

Connect with other parents. It is easy to feel like you are alone or that you are failing your child. Connecting with other parents will help you see that many families experience the same difficulties with mental health. You can meet parents in-person at support groups or your child's activities or online via Facebook and other social media platforms. Be sure to ask:

- Who did they talk to?
- What did they say to that person?
- What is their best advice to you as you embark on your own advocacy journey?

2

Educate yourself. Learn as much as you can about the mental healthcare and education systems.

Be sure that you understand:

1. Your child's rights within each system
2. The treatment options available for your child's condition
3. The resources available to support children with your child's condition.



3

Stay Organized. You may have a lot of information to keep track of related to your child's mental health.

Things that it may be helpful to track include:

- a directory of key contacts
- symptom and treatment notes
- copies of your child's medical history
- meeting and phone call notes
- copies of report cards and education plans
- research notes
- your child's crisis plan



How To Have A Healthy Brain



Read



Reading engages your brain and helps you learn.
Take time as often as you can to read.

What are some of your favorite books?



Play



Playing or enjoying an activity with friends or family
can help make your brain healthy.

What is your favorite activity to play or do?



Sleep



Sleep gives your brain a chance for some time off.
You should have 9 hours of sleep a night.

What is your favorite part of your night time routine?



Think



Challenging your brain to think in new ways
helps make it stronger.

**What is your favorite school subject to learn
about at school?**

Eat Healthy



Eating healthy and staying hydrated make your
body and brain feel better.

What is your favorite healthy snack or meal?

Laugh



Laughing increases the brain's production of endorphins.
Endorphins are the body's natural mood booster.

**What is one way you could bring laughter into
your day today?**

Exercise



When you exercise, you not only take care
of your physical health, but also your mental health.

What are ways you can be active and exercise?

Socialize



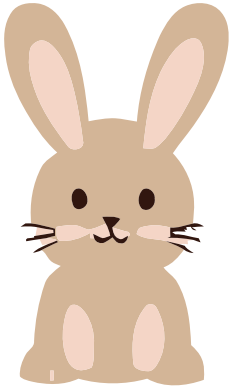
Socializing helps our brains be healthy by
interacting with positive friends and family.

**What are fun ways you can socialize
with your friends or family?**



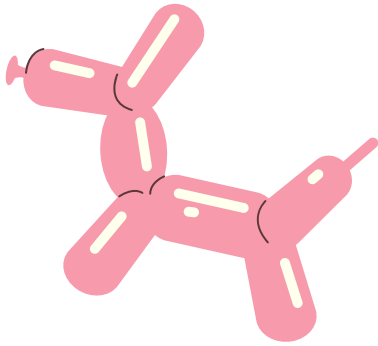
JUST BREATHE

Try these breathing exercises to relax when you are feeling overwhelmed.



BUNNY BREATHING

Sniff in 3 times like a bunny.
Hold your breath for 3 seconds.
Breathe out through your mouth slowly.



BALLOON BREATHING

Take a BIG DEEP breath in.
Pretend you are blowing up a big balloon by exhaling slowly.



BUMBLE BEE BREATHING

Take a BIG DEEP breath in.
Exhale slowly while making a buzzing sound.



BELLY BREATHING

Place one hand on your belly.
Place one hand on your chest.
Slowly take a deep breath in through your nose.
Slowly breathe out through your mouth.
Feel how your belly moves as you breathe.

5-4-3-2-1 CALM

Grounding is a self-soothing skill to use when you are having a bad day or feeling strong emotions. Try this:



the Feel Wheel

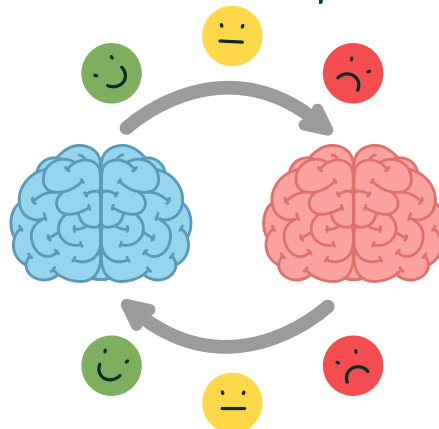
ages 5-12

How to use the Feel Wheel:

A feelings wheel can be used to help you identify and communicate your emotions. You can use the wheel to identify a core emotion, then follow the color of the emotion to see options for more specific feelings and figure out which one best fits your current mood.

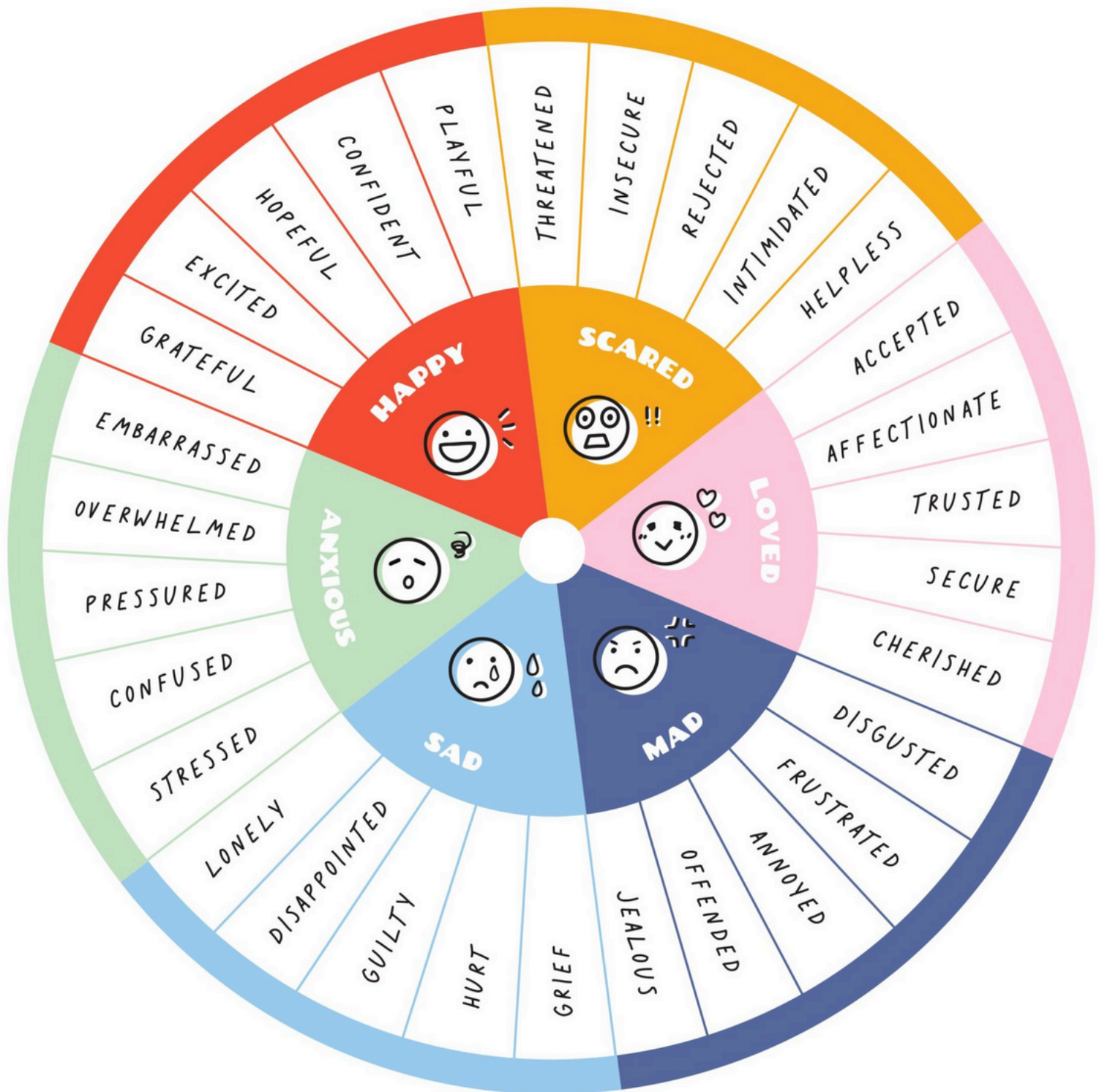
The core emotions are in the center -happy, scared, loved, mad, sad, and anxious. After choosing the core emotion that best fits your feelings, you can use your finger to identify more specific emotions with which you connect on the outer edges of the wheel.

These more specific emotions help you explain to others how you are feeling and can help you and others learn how to best respond to your emotions.



the Feel Wheel

ages 5-12



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Feelings Thermometer

Kids need to understand what they are feeling, and those feelings can be small or big. Identifying how big their feelings are can also help them recognize when they are getting more and more activated. If they know when activated feelings are escalating, they can intervene and use a coping skill to manage those feelings.



How to Use A Feelings Thermometer

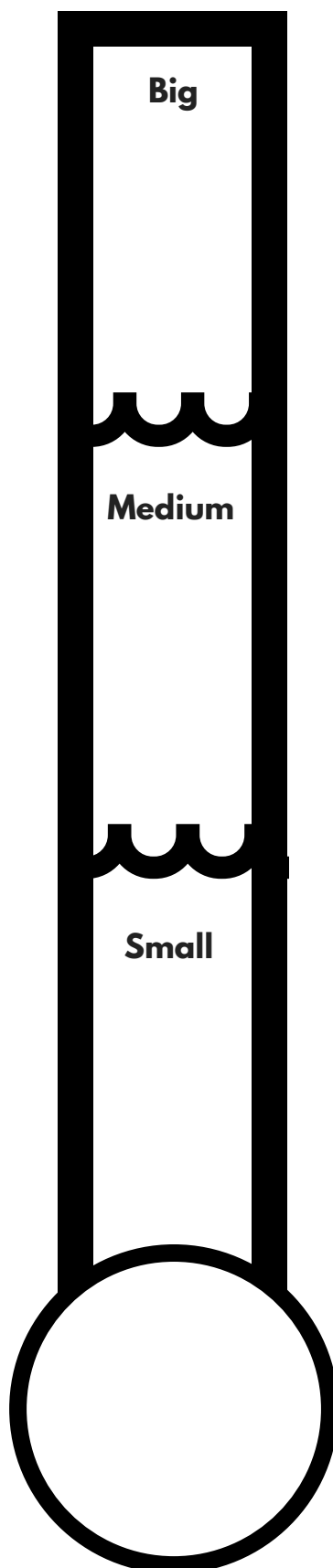
1. **PICK A FEELING:** When creating a thermometer, focus on one feeling at a time.
2. **COLOR IT IN:** Have the child pick out three colors, one for each section of the thermometer, and color it in. You can laminate it to make it sturdier!
3. **CUT OUT THE ARROW:** Laminate it to make it more durable, and place a piece of Velcro on the back. Then, place Velcro on each section of the thermometer.
4. **TALK ABOUT IT:** Let's say you are making an anger thermometer. Ask what their anger looks like when they are at the bottom of the thermometer. Do they stomp their feet, sigh loudly, growl, etc.? Then move on to the next section - if they are really angry, what does that look like? Does their voice get louder? Do they start invading other people's space? Then we talk about very angry - what does that look like? Is it yelling, throwing things, running away?
5. **IDENTIFY COPING:** Once we identify behaviors on the thermometer, we work on identifying coping skills they can use to calm down. Some examples include drinking water, taking deep breaths, counting to a certain number, or taking a walk. Make sure they have coping skills that will help them at each level. It's important to have a variety of coping skills for each level because not all coping skills will work all the time.

**The next time they experience that feeling,
have them move the arrow to show the size
of their feeling and pick a way to cope.**

My _____ Thermometer

What I look like

What I can do



Make Your Own Calm Jar!



Materials Needed:

- Glass or plastic jars with lids, 16-ounce
- 1/2 cup glitter glue or clear glue
- Distilled water
- High-temperature hot glue gun, optional
- 1–2 teaspoons glitter

Instructions:

- Pour 1/2 cup of distilled water into the jar.
- Pour 1/2 cup of glitter glue or clear glue into the jar.
- Add 1–2 teaspoons of extra glitter to the jar.
- Fill up the remainder of the jar with distilled water.
- If desired, use a hot glue gun to squeeze a ring of glue around the lid of the jar. Press the lid onto the jar and secure with the metal ring.
- Shake the jar well to distribute the glitter.
- Your very own calm jar is complete!



What Does The Calm Jar Do?

When kids are stressed, sad or angry, it is natural for them to have a fight, flight or freeze response.

This makes it difficult for them to make rational decisions. Encouraging mindfulness through activities like the calm jar. Practicing mindfulness regularly helps reduce stress and increase mental wellness and self-control. Have fun making a glitter calm jar together to use at home or school.



- Invite the child to sit down comfortably.
- Encourage them to shift their gaze to the swirling glitter, breathing deeply in and out as they watch it sink to the bottom of the jar.
- Next, invite them to notice the calm feeling moving through their body as they breathe.
- Perhaps their feet feel heavy and warm, and that feeling is moving up towards their shoulders.
- As they breathe, ask them to notice how their heartbeat feels steady, and their body temperature feels just right. All the while breathing in...and out.
- As the glitter settles and the water clears, so will their thoughts, feelings, and body.



Dried Bean Stress Ball Activity

Materials Needed:

- Any type of dried bean or rice
- 3-4 latex balloons
- Water bottle
- Scissors



Instructions:

- Cut off the bottom of the water bottle to make a funnel.
- Blow up **ONE** balloon to stretch it out.
- Place the balloon around the neck of the bottle.
- Use the bottle as a funnel to pour beans inside. Go ahead and stuff the balloon full, smashing them in with your finger or a wooden spoon handle.
- Snip the balloon **OFF** the bottle.
- Cut the neck off 2 or 3 more balloons.
- Place a balloon over the bean ball, making sure the opening of the first balloon is centered in the **BOTTOM** of the balloon.
- Layer one or two more balloons, always making sure the openings do not overlap.

Note: Three layers of balloons should be good enough, but four is sturdier.

How Stress Balls Can Support Emotional Well-being

Stress balls can help support self-regulation when someone is experiencing strong emotions.

Reflection after the activity is complete can help support learning for emotional well-being.

Consider asking the child the following questions and have a conversation about each one together.



Reflection Questions:

1. What different emotions do you think your stress ball can help you with?
2. What other things can you do to calm down when you are feeling strong emotions?



Crisis Resources

**Crisis Text Line:
Text KY to 741741**

**Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:
988 (call & text)**

**Suicide & Crisis Lifeline chat:
988lifeline.org**

**Trevor Lifeline:
Call 866-488-7386**

(Provides 24/7 free and confidential crisis support services to LGBTQ young people)

**Trevor Text Line:
Text START to 678-678**

**Kentucky School STOP tip line:
866-393-6659**

(For anonymous online reporting of unsafe situations in a school; tip is passed to school personnel)

**TEAM
KENTUCKY**

TEAM KENTUCKY[®]

CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

Developed by

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Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

Division of Mental Health