

mental health

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF & YOUR KIDS

According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, In any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians experiences a mental illness or addiction problem.¹ This means you, or your peers, may notice changes in your behavior and/or thinking. When these changes occur, it is important that you reach out and seek appropriate help.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH²

There are many kinds of mental illnesses. Although mental illnesses have a lot in common with each other, each type is quite different. Symptoms of mental illness can look different from person to person. Just like physical illness, symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe and you don't have to show every possible symptom to have the illness. Probably the best way to know if you might have a mental illness is if you speak with your family doctor, you're not feeling, thinking or acting like yourself—or if people you care about notice changes in you like some of the following:

WHEN TO SEEK HELP²

- You suddenly no longer have interest in activities you used to enjoy
- You find yourself feeling angry or sad for little or no reason
- You have strange thoughts or voices that you can't seem to get rid of
- You used to be healthy, but now you always feel a bit sick
- You eat a lot more or less than you used to
- Your sleep patterns have changed
- You feel fear, worry and terror about things in life that people around you seem to cope well with
- You have been missing more and more time from work or school
- You have a constant fear that someone is going to hurt you
- You have been drinking heavily or using drugs to cope
- You find yourself avoiding people
- You sometimes have suicidal considerations

"70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence."

- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health ¹

TAKING CARE OF YOUR KIDS' MENTAL HEALTH

STARTING A DIALOGUE

The most important part of helping your kids with mental health is opening up an effective channel of communication with them. When listening, pause and pay attention to what they are telling you. Try to put yourselves in their shoes. Not only will this increase the trust your child has in you, but it will allow you to provide better support.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR ³

It is often hard to distinguish between normal teenage behaviour and early warning signs of mental illness. You may want to speak with your child and seek help for them if they begin to exhibit or are exhibiting any of the following signs and symptoms:

- Decrease in enjoyment and time spent with friends and family
- Significant decrease in school performance
- Strong resistance to attending school or absenteeism
- Problems with memory, attention or concentration
- Big changes in energy levels, eating or sleeping patterns
- Physical symptoms (stomach aches, headaches, backaches)
- Feelings of hopelessness, sadness, anxiety, crying often
- Frequent aggression, disobedience or lashing out verbally

HOW TO SAY SOMETHING ⁴

It is not always easy to speak with your children about issues regarding their mental health. However, conversation is important and you can start the conversation by doing the following:

- Know the warning signs. It can be difficult to tell whether or not your teen has a mental illness, but there are certain nonverbal cues and signs you can watch out for. Look for patterns, frequency, and duration.
- Educate yourself about mental illnesses. Learning everything you can about mental illness is the first step in knowing how to help someone struggling.
- Talk openly about mental illness. This is the first strategy for most parents, and oftentimes it can be one of the most effective. If your teen is struggling with a mental health illness, you most definitely want to address it.
- Have a conversation about drug abuse. Many teens choose to experiment with drugs and alcohol to escape the weight of a mental disorder.
- Learning the difference between confrontation and conversation is crucial in knowing how to approach the situation.

WHERE TO SEEK HELP

1. Guidance Office

Support is available to students at the Guidance Office, located in Rm 105. Guidance counsellors can help students and their families identify options for seeking support, and work with them to aid in the follow-through of that support. Simply book an appointment through TeachAssist or just walk in.

2. Family Doctor

Talking to your doctor about a mental illness is a very important first step. It is often the beginning of your/your child's journey to wellness. As there are different kinds of training and different services and supports, once you've received a diagnosis, you and your doctor can help determine a treatment plan that works best.

3. Family and Friends

Speaking to your family or friends is another way to find support for mental illness. Talking to the people closest to you may allow them to help support some of the work you have been doing with a professional, and also allows you to openly talk about your feelings.

4. Crisis Lines

Crisis lines are available to you on a 24 hour basis and can be accessed via telephone or internet.

310-COPE⁵

Phone Number: 1-855-310-COPE (2673)

Website: <http://www.yssn.ca/310-COPE>

York Support Services Network offers Community Crisis Response Service for persons living in York Region or South Simcoe who are having a mental health crisis, and their family or friends.

ConnexOntario⁶

Phone Number: 1-866-531-2600

Website: <http://www.connexontario.ca/>

ConnexOntario provides free and confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs, mental illness or gambling.

5. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

- **Mood and Anxiety Service**⁷

The Mood and Anxiety Service offers assessment and treatment for children and youth aged 6-17 years (and their parents/caregivers) who are experiencing mood and/or anxiety difficulties.

Website: <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/mood--anxiety-for-children--youth-service>

- **Youth Addiction and Concurrent Disorders Service**⁸

The Youth Addiction and Concurrent Disorders Service (YACDS) offers treatment to young people (14-24 years) who have substance use challenges/concerns, with or without concurrent mental health concerns.

Website: <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/youth-addiction--concurrent-disorders-service>

- **Concurrent Youth Unit**⁹

This program offers clinical care to youth, 14 to 18 years old, who require voluntary or involuntary inpatient treatment for a moderate to severe addiction to substances with an accompanying mental health challenge.

Website: <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/concurrent-youth-inpatient-unit>

6. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) York Region Branch

- **Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) control**¹⁰

Provides intensive treatment, rehabilitation and support services for individuals with serious mental illness and complex needs who find it difficult to engage in other mental health services.

Website: <https://toronto.cmha.ca/programs-services/assertive-community-treatment-act-teams/>

- **MOBYSS (Mobile York South Simcoe)**¹¹

Travels around York Region and South Simcoe to meet your confidential health care needs in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

Website: <http://www.mobyss.ca>

sources

1. <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/the-crisis-is-real/mental-health-statistics>
2. <https://cmha.bc.ca/documents/getting-help-for-mental-illnesses-2/>
3. <http://www.asmfmh.org/resources/publications/normal-teenage-behaviour-vs-early-warning-signs-of-mental-illness/>
4. <https://www.columbusrecoverycenter.com/help-teen-with-mental-health-issues/>
5. <http://www.yssn.ca/310-COPE>
6. <http://www.connexontario.ca/>
7. <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/mood--anxiety-for-children--youth-service>
8. <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/youth-addiction--concurrent-disorders-service>
9. <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/concurrent-youth-inpatient-unit>
10. <https://toronto.cmha.ca/programs-services/assertive-community-treatment-act-teams/>
11. <http://www.mobyss.ca>