

Zen Gen

A guide to understanding your mental health



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Inner Guide

- 1** *Understanding Mental Health*
- 2** *Mental Health Disorders*
- 3** *Coping Strategies*
- 4** *Building Resilience*
- 5** *Self Care Practices*
- 6** *Digital Well-being*
- 7** *Seeking Professional Help*

Mission Statement:

Promote wellness, to bring more stability to daily lives of students as they travel through high school.

What is Mental Health?



Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we feel, think, and act in life. Mental wellness is crucial since it influences how you are able to handle stress, relate to others, and make sensible choices.

Maintaining optimum mental health helps you to build resilience, manage challenges, and develop into healthy adults. Common issues that result from not having good mental health includes stress, anxiety, and depression.

However, there are ways to improve our mental strength through our support system from friends, family, and professionals around us.

It may seem like a tedious matter, but mental health is equally as important as your physical health. For teens, this is especially important as they navigate through significant changes and pressures, such as academic demands, social dynamics, and personal identity development.

***"You are not your illness. You have an individual story to tell. You have a name, a history, a personality. Staying yourself is part of the battle."
— Julian Seifter***

Types of Mental Health Disorders

Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of intense, persistent worry or fear about everyday situations. It can manifest through symptoms such as excessive nervousness, restlessness, difficulty concentrating, rapid heartbeat, and sleep disturbances. For teens, anxiety can stem from school pressures, social interactions, family dynamics, or personal insecurities.

Depression

Depression is persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest in activities they once enjoyed. Symptoms may include changes in sleep and eating patterns, irritability, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and withdrawal from friends and family. Depression in teens is often triggered by a combination of genetic, environmental, and psychological factors.

Eating Disorder

Eating disorder is unhealthy eating habits and preoccupation with food, body weight, and shape. Common types include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. Teens with eating disorders may severely restrict food intake, overeat, or engage in purging behaviors such as vomiting or excessive exercise. These disorders can lead to severe physical health problems, emotional distress, and social isolation.



Coping Strategies

Talk about your feelings

Sharing your thoughts and emotions with friends, family, or a therapist can provide relief and support.

Stay Active

Regular physical activity, such as walking, running, or yoga, can boost mood and reduce stress.

Eat a balanced diet

Proper nutrition affects overall well-being and energy levels. Aim for a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.

Get enough sleep

Quality sleep is crucial for mental health. Establish a regular sleep routine and create a restful environment.

Practice Mindfulness and Meditation

Techniques like deep breathing, meditation, and mindfulness can help reduce stress and improve focus.

Take Breaks

Allow yourself time to relax and unwind. Engage in hobbies or activities that bring you joy.

- ***"Mental health...is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going." — Noam Shpancer, PhD***



Building Resilience



1 Cultivate a Positive Mindset:

Focus on positive thinking and reframe negative thoughts. Practice gratitude by regularly noting things you are thankful for.

3 Learn from Experiences:

Reflect on past challenges and how you overcame them. Use these experiences to develop strategies for future difficulties.

2 Practice Self-Care:

Take care of your physical and emotional needs by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep, and engaging in activities you enjoy.

4 Stay Flexible:

Be open to change and willing to adapt. Flexibility can help you navigate new situations and recover from setbacks.

Self Care Practices

Self-care is imperative for maintaining good mental health because it allows individuals to prioritize their well-being and manage stress effectively.

In today's fast-paced world, people often juggle multiple responsibilities and face constant pressures, which can take a toll on mental and emotional wellbeing. Engaging in self-care practices such as exercise, healthy eating, adequate sleep, and relaxation techniques helps to replenish energy levels, reduce anxiety, and promote a positive mindset.

By carving out time for self-care, individuals can better cope with challenges, improve their resilience to stress triggers, and prevent burnout.



Examples of what you can start with:

- **Healthy Eating:** Fuel your body with nutritious foods that support overall well-being. Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and sugar, as they can negatively impact mood and energy levels
- **Adequate Sleep:** Establish a consistent sleep schedule and prioritize getting 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Sufficient rest is crucial for mental clarity and emotional resilience.
- **Limit Screen Time:** Reduce exposure to screens, especially before bedtime. Instead, engage in activities that promote relaxation, such as reading or spending time outdoors.
- **Stress Management:** Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or progressive muscle relaxation to reduce stress levels and promote calmness.
- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Practice mindfulness exercises to stay present and aware of your thoughts and emotions. Meditation can help improve focus and reduce anxiety.
- **Hobbies and Leisure Activities:** Dedicate time to activities you enjoy, whether it's painting, gardening, playing a musical instrument, or exploring nature. Hobbies provide a sense of fulfillment and relaxation.

Digital Well Being

Digital well-being is important because it encompasses how individuals manage their interactions with digital devices and technology in a way that promotes mental and emotional health. In today's digitalized world, digital devices are important for work, education, socializing, and entertainment. However, excessive use or misuse of technology can lead to negative consequences such as digital addiction, decreased productivity, sleep disturbances, and heightened stress levels. Knowing how to battle these and maintain proper digital behavior is essential to promoting mental wellness.

✔ **Setting Boundaries:**

Establishing limits on screen time and creating tech-free zones or times during the day to promote balance.

✔ **Managing Notifications:**

Turning off non-essential notifications to reduce distractions and interruptions.

✔ **Prioritizing Real-Life Connections:**

Balancing online interactions with face-to-face socialization and nurturing meaningful relationships.

✔ **Practicing Digital Detox:**

Taking breaks from screens and engaging in offline activities to recharge and reduce mental fatigue.

✔ **Seeking Support:**

Recognizing signs of digital overuse or negative impacts on mental health and seeking help or guidance from professionals when needed.



Seeking Professional Help

Professional help is crucial for gaining better mental health because trained therapists, counselors, and psychiatrists have the expertise to provide specialized support and guidance tailored to individual needs. Sometimes the issues you may be facing, are harder to deal with on your own and family members, that's where professionals come in they will help your needs specifically to make sure that you are getting better consistently.

Illness Type	Description	Phone
Anxiety Disorder	Mental Health America Warm Line	(817) 546-7826 - TX
Depressions	National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-8255
Eating Disorders	National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders Helpline	1 (888)-375-7767
Bipolar disorder	National Alliance on Mental Illness	(800) 950-NAMI (6264)
ADHD	NRC	1-866-200-8098
OCD	Nami Helpline	1-800-950-NAMI (6264)





Website Link