

Silence
the ~~Shame~~

Mental Health Messaging

***A Toolkit Designed For
Teens and Young Adults***

Learn how to create content related to building healthy relationships, understanding mental illness, creating awareness around self-harm and suicide, and knowing how to ask for help.



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Welcome!

We are so excited that you have a passion to discuss and build awareness around mental health and wellness! This toolkit is designed to provide information on how to discuss mental health, what safe language to use, spread awareness on suicide prevention, discuss how to build healthy relationships for mental health, and provide additional resources to connect youth and young adults to mental health supports. This toolkit is simply a guide to get you started but we empower you to do more research, ask questions, and connect with us to help you expand your knowledge and tools.



You can utilize the information to create digital content, reels, TikToks, and other forms of content to share on our Social Media!

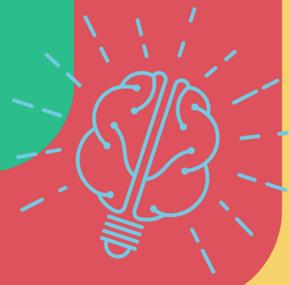
Remember, this is about sharing YOUR voice so have fun with creating something unique!

If you have questions or concerns, please connect with Niea Bullock at NB@silencetheshame.com

Mental Health Basics

What is Mental Health?

Mental Health is a combination of our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It impacts how we think, feel, and act. It can also assist in determining how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.



Why is Mental Health Important?

Mental Health is essential throughout the many stages of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Taking care of our mental health is just as important as having good physical health.

Changes in Mental Health

Mental health decline is not to be ashamed of because things can happen in life and these changes impact how we feel and how we cope with these changes.

Mental health can change over time.

A decline in mental health can potentially lead to a mental health disorder.

It's ok to have these changes, there is help available to you.

Opening up about personal thoughts and feelings can be scary, allow yourself to seek support.

Mental Health Disorders



What is a Mental Health Disorder?

A health condition that affects a person's thinking, feelings, behavior, mood, and daily functioning. It is also associated with the inability to be able to relate to others and with distress in social and family activities.

A mental disorder requires a diagnosis from a healthcare provider.

Types of Mental Health Disorders

Anxiety

Feeling worried is normal but when these worries and fears become constant and interfere with daily activities it is considered anxiety.

Depression

It's normal to feel sad sometimes, although when sadness persists for longer periods of time and the enjoyment in activities you used to like decreases and you are having feelings of hopelessness, this is considered depression.

Eating Disorders

At times we might feel worried about our appearance, but if these worries lead to unhealthy and secret eating habits these are considered to be an eating disorder.

Source: Mental Health Gov

Managing Your Mental Health



Everyone deserves to be in good mental health.



Creating a balance that can allow to cope with daily life effectively is essential.

What can you do?

Managing your mental health can involve a variety of things that can allow you to improve your circumstances.

Small improvements in....



Nutrition



Sleep



Coping Skills



Exercise

Can help your overall well-being and lead to improvements on your mental health.

Safe Language

Person-Centric Language

Mental health-related disorders can often be misunderstood which is why adjusting to the usage of **person-centered language** is essential to reducing the stigma around those affected by mental health disorders.

What is **Person-Centric Language**?

Person-Centered Language involves talking about mental illness in a way that a person is seen as a person first and not as their illness.

Guidelines and and terms

(will help you write about mental illness and about those who experience them):

- People have disorders; they do not become a disorder. Avoid referring to people as "schizophrenics" or "alcoholics. Instead, use such phrases as "people with schizophrenia."
- Avoid using words that suggest negativity, such as "problem" to describe describe an individual as mentally ill.
- Avoid descriptions that suggest pity, such as "afflicted with," "suffers from," or "victim of."
- When discussing suicide, avoid saying "committed suicide," as it implies a criminal activity or error.
- Avoid derogatory terms, such as "insane," "crazy/crazed," "nuts," or "deranged."
- Conditions and disorders should not be capitalized (exceptions are certain disorder names that include proper nouns, such as Tourette's syndrome)
- Avoid words that glamorize suicide, as as "failed suicide," "unsuccessful suicide" or "successful suicide." Instead use "took their own life" or "suicide attempt."

BE CLEAR.

BE POSITIVE.

BE RESPECTFUL.

Source: Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW)

Who Can I talk to If I'm having a tough time?

Support services are available to you in different aspects (Below is a list of resources that are here to assist you).

It's important to speak to someone you feel safe with.

01

Talk to your **Parents** about how you are feeling. Explain what you're going through. A parent can offer advice, give you support, and help you think things through.

02

Talk With Your **Doctor** or **School Counselors**. They can give you the care you need or refer you to someone else who can help.

03

Talk to another **Trusted Adult**. For example another family member like your grandparents.

04

Talk to **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 Suicide** and **Crisis Lifeline** at anytime. Especially during a crisis.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Daily Reminders: Mental Health Edition

**You don't have to
have
it all together.**

**Better Days
Will Soon
Come.**

**It's OK to feel
“not OK.”**

**Don't be afraid to
ask for help. There are
many resources
available.**

**Mental health
challenges are not
something to be
ashamed of!**

**There is
always
someone
to talk to.**

**It's OK not to
be happy
all of the time.**

YOU ARE ENOUGH.

**Life doesn't
always work out
the way we want
it to but that
doesn't mean it
won't be OK, don't
give up.**

Did you know?

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34.

Some factors contributing to thoughts of suicide include mental health and substance use problems, low self-esteem, peer and parental relationship problems, and academic difficulties.

Attempted suicides are even more common. Four out of five teens that attempt suicide give clear warnings.

Suicide can be prevented!

If you or someone you know is in crisis now, call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).



How to Talk About Suicide

Language suggested to use when discussing suicide.

If you need immediate assistance call, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988

Problematic

Preferred

"Committed suicide"

"Died by suicide"

The word "committed" is associated with criminal behavior or error. Changing the phrase decriminalizes the act.

"Failed suicide"

"Suicide attempt"

Words that glamorize suicide attempts, like "failed" or "unsuccessful" should be avoided.

"Successful suicide"

"Took their own life"

The word "successful" suggests that suicide is the desired outcome.

"Suicide epidemic"

"Increasing or concerning rates"

It's best to avoid dramatic and sensational language when describing suicide rates.

"Suffering from" or
victim of mental illness"

"Living with" or "experiencing
a mental health condition"

Derogatory language can alienate or belittle those with mental health challenges.

Source: Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW)



Warning Signs Of Youth Suicide



Talking about or making plans for suicide



Expressing hopelessness about the future



Displaying serious emotional pain or distress

Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above. This includes significant:



Withdrawal from or change in social situations



Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)



Anger that seems out of character or context

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is suicide?

Suicide is a death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.



What is a suicide attempt?

A suicide attempt is a non-fatal, self-directed, and potentially injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.



What is suicidal ideation?

Suicidal ideation refers to thinking about or planning suicide. The thoughts lie on a continuum of severity from a wish to die with no method, plan, intent, or behavior, to active suicidal ideation with a specific plan and intent.



What is self-harm?

Self-harm is behavior that is self-directed & deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself.



5 Steps to help your friend who may be suicidal

1

ASK: Asking the question “Are you thinking about suicide?” communicates that you’re open to speaking about suicide in a non-judgmental and supportive way.

2

BE THERE: This could mean being physically present for someone, speaking with them on the phone when you can, or any other way that shows support.

3

HELP KEEP THEM SAFE: Have they already done anything to try to kill themselves before talking with you? Do they have a specific plan? What’s the timing for their plan?

4

HELP THEM CONNECT: Helping someone with thoughts of suicide connect with existing supports (like the 988 Lifeline) can help them establish a safety plan.

5

FOLLOW-UP: Make sure to follow-up with your friend after all the above steps, to see how they’re doing. Leave a message, send a text, or give them a call.

BE THE ONE TO SAVE A LIFE.

Source: [Bethelto](#)



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



What are Healthy Relationships?



A **healthy relationship** involves common shared characteristics that include honesty, trust, respect, and open communication between people.



Healthy relationships involve a balance of power, meaning power is shared equally and effectively.



Power within Healthy Relationships



Independence in Healthy Relationships



In healthy relationships there is respect for each other's independence, meaning each person can make their own decisions without fear of judgement or punishment.

Types of Relationships

Relationships involve various connections from romantic to those with peers.

One thing to note is that these types of relationships are essential and important to one's emotional wellbeing and provide fulfillment for certain parts of one's life.

Family

Siblings, Parents,
Extended Family

Friends

Peers that you
spend time together
with often,
Peers whom you
met in school



Romantic

Boyfriend
Girlfriend

Community

Teachers, coaches, medical
professionals
(and your doctor),
Acquaintances

Listed are the many important relationships
that one may have in one's life.



Characteristics of Healthy Relationships

RESPECT

To respect someone means to care about them and treat them in a way that honors their feelings, needs, and rights.

1

TRUST

The confidence within each other to be honest and have each other's back.

2

HONESTY

Truthfulness that helps build trust and strengthens the relationship.

3

COMMUNNICATION

Allows one another to share their feelings, even when you cannot agree, but in a way that allows for both people to feel safe and heard.

4

SUPPORT

Encouraging each other in your interests and goals and being able to rely on one another.

5

Signs of A Healthy Relationship

You feel comfortable sharing your thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

You feel good about yourself when you are around the other person.

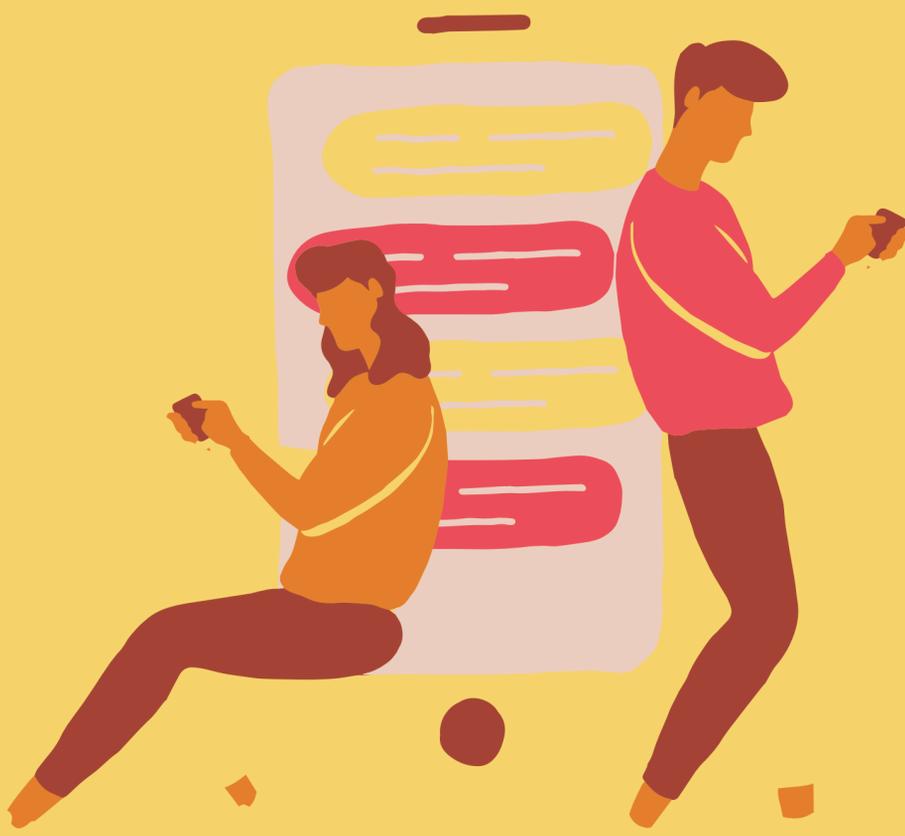
You do not try to restrict or control each other.

It is easy to be yourself when you are with the other person.

You respect each other's opinion.

You trust that the other person will support you through good times and bad.

You respect each other's opinion.



You like to spend time together but also enjoy doing things apart.

You listen & try to understand their point of view even if you disagree.

Healthy Relationships Include Boundaries

What Are Boundaries?

Respecting each other's personal limits including what makes you feel comfortable and safe.

Things to Note

- Boundaries are setting a clear line. It can be personal boundaries or boundaries in relationships.
- Boundaries can apply to the relationships you have with family, friends, partner, or anyone else in your life.
- Boundaries can look different for the various relationships you are in, some boundaries work well for some relationships but may not for other types of relationships.

Types of Boundaries

Emotional

These boundaries are about your feelings, moods, trust, and security.

Physical

These boundaries are about your body, privacy, and personal space.

Digital

These boundaries are based on your phone, computer, or online activities.

How to Set Boundaries in Relationships

Steps to Setting Boundaries

Step 1

Understanding your own limits

What makes you feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed vs. what makes you feel hurt, uncomfortable, or disrespected when around a certain person (ex: friend or partner).

Step 2

Communicating your boundaries

Communicate your thoughts and feelings clearly with the other person.

Step 3

Noting Importance

Let the other person know the importance of these boundaries to you and that they must be respected.

Step 4

Checking in Often

Boundaries can change over time. At this moment you may be comfortable with something but in the future, you may not feel the same way.

Healthy Relationships

Checklist

Listed are some of the important aspects that a healthy relationship should include and can serve as a reminder when evaluating your certain relationships or for relationships in the future.



Comfortable Place



Trust



Independence



Respect



Equality



Kindness



Fun



Boundaries





RESOURCES FOR CONTENT



SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Provides research and information on substance use and mental disorders

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>



NIMH

(National Institute of Mental Health): The lead federal agency for research on mental disorders.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>



NAMI

National Alliance on Mental Illness: the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization

<https://nami.org/Home>



MHA

Mental Health America: promotes mental health and preventing mental illness through advocacy, education, and research

<https://mhanational.org/>



Free your Feels

Mental health awareness campaign encouraging Georgia's young people to explore their real feelings and share them fearlessly

<https://www.freeyourfeels.org/>



VOX ATL

Organization offering uncensored teen publishing and self-expression

<https://voxatl.org/>

