



Mental Health Guide for Teens

Because being human is hard—and teens are doing it in real time

What Mental Health Really Means

Mental health isn't just about feeling happy—it's about how we handle stress, relate to others, make choices, and bounce back from tough moments. It's emotional fitness, and like physical health, it needs care, attention, and support.

Common Challenges Teens Face

- Anxiety and worry
- Mood swings and irritability
- Academic pressure and burnout
- Social stress and peer comparison
- Identity questions and self-esteem dips
- Loneliness—even when surrounded by people
- Sleep struggles and screen fatigue

 **Reminder:** These are normal experiences. What matters is how we respond and support each other through them.

Coping Skills That Help

Emotional Regulation

- Deep breathing ("Smell the flower, blow out the candle")
- Grounding exercises (5-4-3-2-1 sensory check-in)
- Journaling or doodling feelings
- Listening to music that matches or shifts your mood

Thought Management

- Challenge negative self-talk: "Would I say this to a friend?"
- Use affirmations: "I can do hard things," "I am enough"

- Break big problems into small, doable steps



Body-Based Tools

- Movement: walk, stretch, dance, jump
- Sleep hygiene: consistent bedtime, screen-free wind-down
- Nutrition: balanced meals, hydration, snack breaks



How Parents Can Support

- Validate feelings: "That sounds really hard. I'm here."
- Avoid quick fixes—listen first, solve second
- Model your own coping strategies
- Create space for quiet connection (car rides, bedtime chats, shared hobbies)
- Know when to seek extra help (counselors, therapists, school support)



Printable Ideas to Pair With This Guide

- "Mood Tracker" with emoji check-ins and coping strategy suggestions
- "My Mental Health Toolkit" worksheet
- "Affirmation Scrolls" for tough days
- "Stress Decoder" chart: What triggered it, how it felt, what helped
- "Brain Break Bingo" for movement, creativity, and calm

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