

How To Protect Your Child's Mental Health

Understand the different mental health challenges

DEPRESSION



What is it?

Depression is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and function. It affects up to **18%** of Singaporean youths.

People with depression may:

- **Feel hopeless**, thinking that nothing positive will happen to them
- **Believe it is not worth trying** to think or feel differently
- **Feel worthless**, as if who they are or what they do is not valuable

What are the signs?

- Extreme sadness and low mood
- Increased lethargy
- Sleep issues
- Loss of appetite

What can help?

- A balanced diet
- Relaxation techniques
- Regular exercise
- Talk to your child about their feelings
- Good sleep patterns



ANXIETY



What is it?

Anxiety is a **normal reaction** to stress, e.g. the sensation of worry or nervousness you feel before a final exam.

People with anxiety may:

- **Worry** about the immediate or long-term future
- **Have uncontrollable, negative thoughts** about something going wrong
- **Avoid situations** that may cause anxiety

What are the signs?

- Feeling restless or on-edge
- Being easily fatigued
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Difficulty controlling feelings of worry
- Sleep problems

SELF HARM



Teens resort to self-harm to **relieve painful emotions, communicate a need for support**, or to **distract themselves** from difficult situations.

Self-cutting (on the wrists and forearms) is the **most common** method of self-harm.

What can help?

- Listen to your child. Try to understand what your child might be going through
- Spend time with your child doing the things that they enjoy
- Apart from offering your love and support, seek professional help for your child so the underlying issues can be addressed



What are the signs?

- Wearing long-sleeved shirts, even on hot days
- Brushing off injuries as “accidents”
- Spending a lot of time alone
- Challenges with friendships/romantic relationships
- Withdrawing from once-enjoyed activities

SUICIDE



Suicide is the **leading cause of death** for those **aged 10-29 years old**.

22% of the victims of suicide in 2020 were below 30 years old.

For every suicide, **at least 6 suicide survivors** are left behind.

What are the signs?

Talk

- Expressions of being a burden to others: “My family will be better off without me”
- Expressions of meaninglessness: “There’s no point in living anymore”

Actions

- Giving away treasured possessions
- Saying goodbye
- Researching suicide methods
- Writing suicide notes

Mood

- Extreme emotional outbursts (anger, sadness, impulsiveness)
- Withdrawn
- Shame or anxiety

Do's

- ✓ Do be an active participant in your child's recovery journey
- ✓ Do cooperate with your child's mental health practitioner
- ✓ Do provide a stable, secure, and safe family environment
- ✓ Do exercise patience as recovery is often a long and uneven journey
- ✓ Do attend to your own personal issues by seeking help

Don'ts

- ✗ Don't use stigmatising language ("weak", "hopeless") or criticise your child
- ✗ Don't place unnecessary focus on the child or make him/her feel abnormal or different
- ✗ Don't tell your child to "just snap out of it"

AVENUES FOR HELP



CHAT (*Scape)

www.chat.mentalhealth.sg
6493-6500

SOS (Samaritans of Singapore)

www.sos.org.sg
1800-221-4444 (24-hr)

IMH (Institute of Mental Health)

www.imh.com.sg
6389-2222 (24-hr)

SAMH (Singapore Association of Mental Health)

www.samhealth.org.sg
1800-283-7019

Tinkle Friend

www.tinklefriend.sg
1800-274-4788

National Care Hotline

1800-202-6868

Fei Yue's Online Counselling Service

eC2.sg

Silver Ribbon Singapore

6386-1928 / 6509-0271

TOUCHline (Counselling)

1800-377-2252

Care Corner Counselling Centre (Mandarin)

1800-353-5800