

# Parents' Guide for Youth Mental Health



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# The Purpose for This Document

The purpose of this document is to provide information for families whose youth are experiencing behavioral and/or mental health concerns.

Youth mental health is a widespread concern across the nation. For instance:

- Symptoms of depression and anxiety have doubled during the pandemic. 25% of youth are experiencing depressive symptoms and 20% are experiencing anxiety symptoms, according to U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy.
- In youth with mental health conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, there appears to also be increases in negative emotions or behaviors such as impulsivity and irritability.
- In early 2021, emergency department visits in the United States for suspected suicide attempts were 51% higher for adolescent girls and 4% higher for adolescent boys compared with the same time-period in early 2019, according to research cited in the advisory.
- In 2016, of the 7.7 million children with treatable mental health disorder, about half did not receive adequate treatment.

**There is hope.**

# How You Can Support Your Youth's Mental Health

Excerpt from *"Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory 2021"*

## Be the best role model you can be for young people by taking care of your own mental and physical health.

Young people often learn behaviors and habits from what they see around them. You can model good habits by talking to children about the importance of mental health, seeking help when you need it, and showing positive ways you deal with stress so children learn from you. Additional ways to take care of your own mental health include taking breaks, getting enough sleep, exercising, eating balanced meals, maintaining regular routines, obtaining health insurance coverage, staying connected with family and friends, and taking time to unplug from technology or social media.

## Help children and youth develop strong, safe, and stable relationships with you and other supportive adults.

Research shows that the most important thing a youth needs to be resilient is a stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult. Spend time with children on activities that are meaningful to them, show them love and acceptance, praise them for the things they do well, listen to them, and communicate openly about their feelings. Encourage children to ask for help and connect them with other adults who can serve as mentors

## Encourage children and youth to build healthy social relationships with peers.

This can be done through self-directed play and structured activities such as school, after school programs, sports, and volunteering. Since peers can play a major role (both positive and negative) in children's development, it's important to help children learn how to deal with peer pressure. Have open conversations with your youth about their values and teach them to be confident and comfortable in expressing their needs and boundaries.

## Do your best to provide children and youth with a supportive, stable, and predictable home and neighborhood environment.

A lot may be outside of your control, and there will be trial and error as you figure out what works best for your youth. That said, try to help children stick to a regular and predictable daily schedule, such as regular dinnertime and bedtime. Be thoughtful about whether and how to discuss stressful topics such as financial and marital problems. It's also important to minimize children's exposure to violence, which puts them at risk of mental health and substance use challenges.



# How You Can Support Your Youth's Mental Health

## **Try to minimize negative influences and behaviors in young people's lives.**

Talk to children early about the risks of alcohol and other drugs, both short-term (such as car crashes and other accidents) and long-term (such as reduced cognitive abilities). The earlier a youth or adolescent begins using substances, the greater their chances of developing substance use problems. Mental health and substance use problems can also occur at the same time. For example, some young people struggling with stress or difficult feelings turn to alcohol or drug use. And alcohol and other drugs can also affect mental health, for example by altering mood or energy levels.

## **Ensure children and youth have regular check-ups with a pediatrician, family doctor, or other health care professional.**

Health care professionals can help you monitor your children's health, give you advice on how to prevent problems, and diagnose and treat physical and mental illnesses. Obtaining health insurance coverage for your children can help. To learn more about enrolling in Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or a Marketplace plan, go to [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) or [InsureKidsNow.gov](https://www.insurekidsnow.gov).

## **Look out for warning signs of distress, and seek help when needed. Signs of distress in children can show up in a number of ways, such as irritability, anger, withdrawal, and other changes in their thoughts, appearance, performance at school, sleeping or eating patterns, or other behaviors.**

If you notice concerning changes in your youth, let them know you're there and ready to support them however they need. Don't be afraid to ask for help by talking to a doctor, nurse, or other professional or looking into other available resources in your community. For example, schools often have counseling services and additional accommodations (e.g., for students enrolled in special education programs).

## **Minimize children's access to means of self-harm, including firearms and prescription medications.**

Dispose of unused or expired prescriptions and keep medications out of reach for children and youth. If you choose to keep firearms in the home, ensure that they are stored safely: unloaded and locked up (e.g., in a lock box or safe). Having firearms in the home increases the likelihood of firearm-related death. In fact, firearms are by far the most lethal means of suicide: 90% of attempted suicides with a firearm result in death, compared to less than 10% of attempted suicides overall.

# How You Can Support Your Youth's Mental Health

## Be attentive to how children and youth spend time online.

Digital technology can help young people connect with friends and family, learn about current events, express themselves, and access telehealth and other resources. At the same time, children can have negative experiences online, such as being bullied, finding harmful information, and negatively comparing themselves to others.

## Be a voice for mental health in your community.

There are many ways to do this, from talking openly with friends and family about the importance of mental health, to going to school board meetings or a town hall, to volunteering with an advocacy group, to promoting greater funding and awareness of mental health programs in schools and local organizations, such as churches, libraries, parks and recreation, or sports teams.





# How You Can Support Your Youth When They Experience Mental Health Concerns

You may have a youth who you are concerned about. Here are some options that may help:

## Immediate Crisis Resources

*If your youth is experiencing immediate or crisis needs.*



### Children's Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)

MCRT supports youth and families who want help for any mental health/behavioral health situation or crisis with a youth or adolescent in any community in Nevada. ***knowcrisis.com; 702-486-7865***



### Crisis Hotline: Crisis Support Services of Nevada

The Crisis Hotline is for individuals in Nevada who are in need of an empathetic ear, a caring heart and a helping hand to anyone in need. Help is available through hotline, text line and in-person advocacy services.

***cssnv.org; 1-800-273-8255***



### SafeVoice

This anonymous reporting system can be used to report threats to the safety or well-being of students. You can make a report in both English and Spanish by using any of the following options:

- Through the SafeVoice Nevada app, available from the Apple Store or Google Play
- ***Online at: [safevoicenv.org](https://safevoicenv.org)***
- ***Or call: 1-833-216-SAFE (7233)***

## Trained Peer Support and Advocacy Services

*If you face barriers or struggles to access mental health support that your family needs.*

### Youth M.O.V.E Nevada

Youth M.O.V.E. Nevada (YMNV) is a chapter of Youth M.O.V.E. (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) National. YMNV is a youth driven organization dedicated to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by uniting the voices of individuals who have lived experience in various systems including mental health, juvenile justice, education, and child welfare. YMNV works as a diverse collective to unite the voices and causes of youth while raising awareness around youth issues. YMNV holds peer to peer meetings each month and advocates for youth rights and voice in mental health and/or other systems that serve them, for the purpose of empowering youth to be equal partner in the process of change.

***Statewide toll-free 1-800-216-5188***

***Southern Nevada 702-388-8899***

***Northern Nevada 775-418-9950***

***For more information go to: [nvpep.org](https://nvpep.org)***



### National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) NAMI Warmline

The NAMI Warmline is a non-crisis, peer support line. Peer Wellness Operators support individuals impacted by mental health concerns through a shared lived experience. The

Nevada Warmline's hours of operation are 8 am to 10 pm, Monday through Friday and 8 am to 9 pm, Saturday and Sunday.

***Call 775-241-4212 to speak to a Peer Wellness Operator.***

***For more information go to: [naminevada.org](https://naminevada.org)***



### Nevada PEP (Parents Empowering Parents)

Nevada PEP offers family peer support services to families of children with behavioral health care needs. Family Specialists are family members who have lived experience raising children with behavioral health care needs. With compassion and understanding, our Family Specialists can help you find information, support, and resources. We can assist you to advocate for your youth and family to access support and services to help at home, in the community and at school.

***Statewide toll-free 1-800-216-5188***

***Southern Nevada 702-388-8899***

***Northern Nevada 775-448-9950***

***For more information go to: [nvpep.org](https://nvpep.org)***

# How You Can Support Your Youth When They Experience Mental Health Concerns

You may have a youth who you are concerned about. Here are some options that may help:

## How to Find Mental Health Resources if You May Need Them for Your Youth:



Talk to a social worker or a counselor at your youth's school.

Contact your insurance company for list of covered providers who work with children and youth.



**Nevada 211 Youth**  
[nevada211.org/youth-services/](https://nevada211.org/youth-services/)  
Find a mental health professional at Nevada 211.

Nevada 211 is a free and easy way to locate and get connected to thousands of resources near you, including assistance with food, utilities, housing, mental health providers, and health care, plus much, much more.

- **ONLINE AT:** [nevada211.org](https://nevada211.org)
- **DIAL:** 211
- **OR CALL:** 1-866-535-5654
- **TEXT YOUR ZIP CODE TO:** 898211

## Need Additional Information about Behavioral Health Providers?



**Behavioral Health Nevada:** Find and access quality behavioral healthcare providers in Nevada.  
[behavioralhealthnv.org](https://behavioralhealthnv.org)

## Disability Resources

*If you need more information about your rights and how to advocate for them.*



### Nevada Disability Center

The Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center (NDALC) is a private, statewide non-profit organization that serves as Nevada's federally-mandated protection and advocacy system for human, legal, and service rights for individuals with disabilities.

#### LAS VEGAS

2820 West Charleston Boulevard, #11  
Las Vegas, NV 89102

**PHONE:** 702-257-8150  
**TOLL-FREE:** 1-888-349-3843  
**NEVADA RELAY:** 711  
**FAX:** 702-257-8170  
[lasvegas@ndalc.org](mailto:lasvegas@ndalc.org)

#### RENO

1875 Plumas Street, #1, Reno, NV 89509

**PHONE:** 775-333-7878  
**TOLL-FREE:** 1-800-992-5715  
**NEVADA RELAY:** 711  
**FAX:** 775-786-2520  
[reno@ndalc.org](mailto:reno@ndalc.org)

### Nevada Legal Services

530 South 6th Street  
Las Vegas, NV 89101  
702-386-0404

### Legal Aid of Southern Nevada

725 East Charleston Boulevard  
Las Vegas, NV 89104  
702-386-1070



CHILDREN'S  
MOBILE  
**CRISIS**  
RESPONSE TEAM

**Hotline Telephone**  
**702-486-7865**  
**Available 24/7**

**Mental health response and stabilization for youth and their families seeking immediate support for behavioral health concerns.**

**WHAT WE DO:**

Children's Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) supports youth and families who want help for any mental health/behavioral health situation or crisis with a youth or adolescent in any community in Nevada. Crisis is different and unique for every youth and family, and may include concerns such as suicidal thoughts, self-harming behaviors, anxiety, depressed mood, anger and aggression, bullying, drug and alcohol, or any other presenting concerns for which a youth or family wants a crisis assessment, supports and interventions.

MCRT uses a team approach of a clinician and case manager who will complete an assessment, provide support and crisis interventions, short-term stabilization, and case management services. Responses and stabilization services are provided in the family's location of choice when possible and may be in community settings, home and/or through phone/video telehealth. In rural Nevada, services are provided via phone/video through telehealth.

**Visit our website at:**  
**KNOWCRISIS.COM**



**PARTNERSHIP WITH DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
AND DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**



# Frequently Asked Questions

Below are commonly asked questions that you may have. For more information on youth and mental health go to National Institute of Mental Health's website on youth and mental health: [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/children-and-mental-health](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/children-and-mental-health)

## 1) I'm worried about my youth's school performance, withdrawal from friends and activities, sleeping problems, or excessive fears or worries...what should I do?

Talk to your youth's doctor or health care provider. Ask questions and learn everything you can about the behavior that worry you. Keep in mind that every youth is different. Even normal development varies from youth to youth. Ask if your youth needs further evaluation by a specialist with experience in youth behavioral problems. Specialists may include psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, social workers, psychiatric nurses. You can work with your

youth's doctor and make decisions that feel right for you, your youth, and your family. For more information go to: [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org).



## 2) Is it my fault that my youth is experiencing mental health issues?

Things like anxiety, depression, autism, ADHD, and learning disorders are thought to have biological causes. Parenting isn't to blame. But parents play a central role by providing support and care that is crucial to their youth's recovery.

## 3) What if I'm worried about my youth using medications to treat their mental health symptoms?

There is information about medications to treat youth mental health here: [www.parentsmedguide.org](http://www.parentsmedguide.org).



## 4) Is my youth seeking attention when they are self-harming or cutting?

Engaging in self-harm is an outward indicator of mental health distress being experienced by your youth or teen. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for kids and teens. Help is just a phone call away... call Nevada's Children's Mobile Crisis Response Team at 702-486-7865.

## 5) What are common suicide warning signs that parents and school personnel should be aware of?

These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has recently increased in frequency or intensity, and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated, or behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings



# Frequently Asked Questions

# FAQ

## 6) Will talking about suicide or asking my youth if they feel suicidal encourage suicide attempts?

Talking about suicide provides the opportunity for communication. Fears shared are more likely to diminish. The first step in encouraging a person with thoughts of suicide to live comes from talking about those feelings. A simple inquiry about whether or not the person is intending to end their life can start the conversation. However, talking about suicide should be carefully managed. For more information go to: [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)



## 7) What are some safety concerns I should consider?

- If you suspect your youth may be having thoughts of harming self or others, suicidal thoughts, or suicidal ideation, it is important to make your home safer to reduce the risk of harm.
- For more information go to: <https://nvpep.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Suicide-Proofing-Your-Home-trifold.pdf>
- For more information on gun safes and locks go to Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention at: <https://suicideprevention.nv.gov/SP/RALMP/>



