Youth Lead Mental Health Fact Sheet

Introduction:
The USAID Mental Health and Psychosocial Support taskforce has created this mental health toolkit, so that youth can understand what mental health is, what a lack of mental health can look like, what mental illness looks like in various populations, and, lastly, how to best ensure you, your friends, your family, and your community can maintain, be aware, and understand mental health and its various faces.

What is mental health?

"Mental health is an important part of overall health and well-being. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood" (Center for Disease Control).

There are a variety of issues that can impact one's mental health and well-being, including environmental, biological, and social factors. One may experience a range of normal responses to these abnormal situations, including difficulty in coping with daily stressors, responsibilities, and activities at home and school, difficulty sleeping, concentrating and experiencing positive emotions, change in eating habits, experience of fear and anger, and engaging less with family or friends. When these reactions impact important areas of functioning, such as relationships with family and peers or attending school, then one may be experiencing a mental illness.

Mental illnesses are conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood or behavior, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia. Such conditions may be occasional or long-lasting (chronic) and affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day. (CDC definition to keep it consistent with the definition that was written here).

According to WHO's presentation on their QualityRights Initiative at the UN in June, there is a new prioritized emphasis on person-centered, human rights-based, community approaches to bettering mental health. See additional information here.

Self-Identifying with a Mental Health Condition, Illness, or Disorder

There is a diversity of approaches in ways people may or may not choose to self-identify.
- Some people may identify as *having a mental health condition, illness, or disorder* - other people may feel this is overly medical in approach.
- Some people may identify as *having a mental or psychosocial disability* - other people do not (in some cases because of stigma associated with disability).
- Some people would describe their condition *in negative terms*, or as *something that they "suffer"*
- Some people may choose to *celebrate their condition as part of their identity* and what *makes them a unique individual*.

The key is to:
1. Respect how people choose to self-identify
2. Combat stigma and discrimination
3. Promote enjoyment of human rights on an equal basis with others

4. Strive to provide person-centered supports in people's communities,
5. Recognize that nobody is "abnormal" and we are all part of the rich tapestry of human diversity.

Youth Interventions & intersections of Mental Health with Race, LGBTI, etc.

Youth are playing a huge role in the mental health sphere -- <u>check it out</u>!
Mental health is nuanced, and needs, stigma, and discrimination are different based on population - those with HIV, chronic illnesses, other disabilities, cisgender gay and lesbian youth, trans youth, and those who have been survivors of trauma or GBV. Based on health burden of trans and G/L youth, it is interesting to see how suicide, homelessness, HIV, and poverty can affect certain communities within the youth cohort disproportionately. These youth <u>bring to light</u> these complex, stigmatized, compounded plights/situations and add a depth and awareness that is incredibly necessary to decreasing the stigma surrounding the aforementioned populations.

6 potential risk factors that may contribute to poor mental health (from CDC):

1. Early adverse life experiences, such as physical or psychological trauma, like history of physical, mental, or sexual abuse, child abuse, witnessing violence, etc. Experiences related to ongoing (chronic) medical condition, such as cancer or diabetes
2. Biological factors, such as genes or chemical imbalance in the brain
3. Use of alcohol or recreational drugs
4. Having few friends
5. Experiencing feelings of loneliness or isolation

6 things you can do to promote better mental health in your community (backbone from CDC but elaborated on):

1. **Care for your elders!** Ensure better social involvement and counseling with elderly members in your community, e.g. organize a weekly community elders game night that is run by the youth in the community where elders can mingle, laugh, bridge the inter-generational divide, and feel young and integrated into the community again.
2. **Start intervening early!** If you experience/notice a community member with an indicator of abuse, neglect, or any type of childhood trauma, consider talking about it or refer them to someone with whom they can talk about it. Early childhood interventions (for example, home visits for pregnant women and programs that help young children build social and emotional skills) are crucial to preventing long-term mental illness.
3. **Come together as a community!** When a traumatic event happens, you do not want to act immediately and revisit the event for some, as this could be triggering and could reinforce the memory (coupled with fear) in the brain, which can reinforce acute stress symptoms. Instead, we should be encouraging youth to come together after a traumatic event to reinforce social support, which has been shown to be mitigating the effects of trauma exposure. So, plan a community event in response to recent potentially traumatic events or disasters (natural disasters, genocide, disappearing persons, government torture) to provide a space for individuals experiencing acute stress symptoms to process and connect with a support system. Communities may already have their own coping strategies. Building from these strategies by brainstorming events that would give members an outlet for coping may be helpful.
4. **Be creative!** Find creative new ways for mental health interventions at home, at school, and at work, e.g. stress prevention programs

5. **Reflect and brainstorm with others!** Come up with violence prevention strategies specific to your community, e.g. if GBV or female genital mutilation is big in your community, what are some ways you can address it effectively but safely?
6. **Make that change!** Design campaigns to change the stigmatized culture of mental health, e.g. challenge peers to come up with concrete examples in their communities of good mental health and poor mental health and have them present these to their families and friends.

<u>**Self-help tips**</u> **for coping with mental illness:**

- **Humor, spirituality, recreation, animal companionship, and work-life balance** are important for everyone, but may be of special importance to people also living with chronic health conditions and those who care for them. Finding a reason to laugh, going for a walk, meditating, playing with a pet, or working from home once a week can go a long way in making you both physically and mentally healthy. (Mental Health America**).**

- **Outlook and acceptance.** Reframing how you process your feelings, yourself and your situation can be helpful in handling stressors and other symptoms of mental illness. Be patient with yourself, let yourself feel what you're feeling, and take the necessary steps to take care of yourself and change those negative emotions (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

- **Get some Exercise!** Getting the appropriate amount of exercise benefits nearly all aspects of a person's health. Not only does exercise help control weight, it also improves mental health, and chances of living longer and healthier. Prevention and early identification for mental health conditions also includes caring for your physical health. <u>Learn more</u> about how you can take care of your "fitness" (Mental Health America).

- **Get some Sleep!**

  o Why talk about sleep during Mental Health Month? It's important to educate ourselves and others about habits and behaviors that increase the risk of developing or exacerbating mental illnesses, or how these could be signs of mental health problems themselves. <u>Learn more</u> about how you can take care of your "fitness" (Mental Health America).

  o Sleep plays a role in all aspects of our life and overall health. Getting a good night's sleep is important to having enough physical and mental energy to take on daily responsibilities. Sleep disturbances can also be a sign of a mental health condition. <u>Learn more</u> about how you can take care of your "fitness" (Mental Health America).

- **Improving your Diet**

  o What does your gut have to do with mental health? A lot, actually! <u>Studies show</u> that the bacteria found in your gastrointestinal tract can be a huge mood influencer. <u>Learn more</u> about it! (Mental Health America)

- **Seek Mental Health Treatment**

- Mental health providers will allow you to make sense of the changes to your life that occur as a result of social, environmental, or biological factors and help you learn strategies to cope and adapt.

10 ways to break down mental health stigma in your community

1. Talk Openly About Mental Health

"I fight stigma by talking about what it is like to have bipolar disorder and PTSD on Facebook. Even if this helps just one person, it is worth it for me." – Angela Christie Roach Taylor

2. Educate Yourself And Others

"I take every opportunity to educate people and share my personal story and struggles with mental illness. It doesn't matter where I am, if I over-hear a conversation or a rude remark being made about mental illness, or anything regarding a similar subject, I always try to use that as a learning opportunity and gently intervene and kindly express how this makes me feel, and how we need to stop this because it only adds to the stigma." – Sara Bean

3. Be Conscious Of Language/Be careful of the words you use

"I fight stigma by reminding people that their language matters. It is so easy to refrain from using mental health conditions as adjectives and in my experience, most people are willing to replace their usage of it with something else if I explain why their language is problematic." – Helmi Henkin

4. Encourage Equality Between Physical And Mental Illness

"I find that when people understand the true facts of what a mental illness is, being a disease, they think twice about making comments. I also remind them that they wouldn't make fun of someone with diabetes, heart disease or cancer." – Megan Dotson

5. Show Compassion For Those With Mental Illness

"I offer free hugs to people living outdoors, and sit right there and talk with them about their lives. I do this in public, and model compassion for others. Since so many of our homeless population are also struggling with mental illness, the simple act of showing affection can make their day but also remind passersby of something so easily forgotten: the humanity of those who are suffering." – Rachel Wagner

6. Choose Empowerment Over Shame

"I fight stigma by choosing to live an empowered life. To me, that means owning my life and my story and refusing to allow others to dictate how I view myself or how I feel about myself." – Val Fletcher

7. Be Honest About Treatment

"I fight stigma by saying that I see a therapist and a psychiatrist. Why can people say they have an appointment with their primary care doctor without fear of being judged, but this lack of fear does not apply when it comes to mental health professionals?" – Ysabel Garcia

8. Let The Media Know When They're Being Stigmatizing

"If I watch a program on TV that has any negative comments, story lines or characters with a mental illness, I write to the broadcasting company and to the program itself. If Facebook has any stories where people make ignorant comments about mental health, then I write back and fill them in on my son's journey with schizoaffective disorder." – Kathy Smith

9. Don't Harbor Self-Stigma

"I fight stigma by not having stigma for myself—not hiding from this world in shame, but being a productive member of society. I volunteer at church, have friends, and I'm a peer mentor and a mom. I take my treatment seriously. I'm purpose driven and want to show others they can live a meaningful life even while battling [mental illness]." – Jamie Brown

10. Stop labeling people.

Read more about these steps (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

Why should others invest in mental health? Why is it a Global Development Priority?

Out of the Shadows: Making Mental Health a Global Development Priority

Designed for the World Bank/World Health Organization event "Out of the shadows: Making Mental Health a Global Development Priority" held on 13-14 April 2016 in Washington DC.
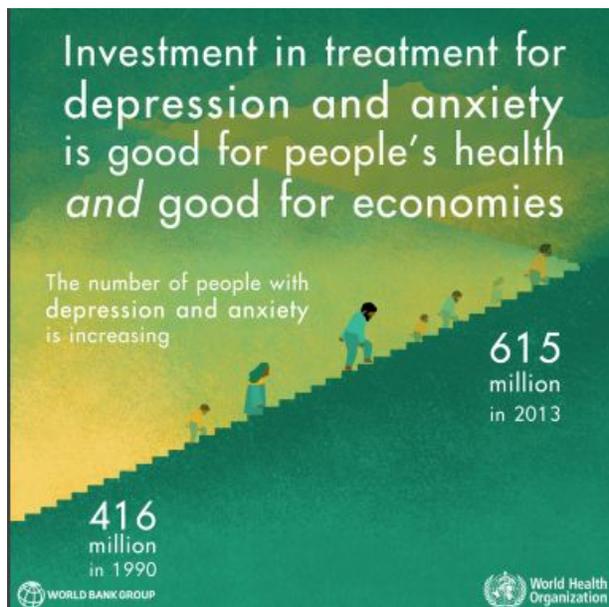
The cost of lost productivity in the workplace due to **depression and anxiety** is very high: **US$ 1 trillion/year**

That's more than **US$ 130** for every person on the planet

Most people suffering from depression and anxiety don't receive treatment.

This has economic consequences

▼ For people with disorders: unable to work

▼ Employers: lower productivity and employee absence

▼ Governments: fewer tax receipts and higher health and welfare expenditures

WORLD BANK GROUP

World Health Organization

Just 3% of total government spending worldwide is for **mental health**

From less than 1% in low-income countries to 5% in high-income countries

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World Health Organization

Graphics on Mental Health and Wellbeing:

(https://www.magzter.com/news/1009/2587/042017/rthn6) by Sonaksha Iyenger

Symptoms of
ANXIETY and DEPRESSION

> **Feeling on edge** or restless

> **Thinking negatively** about situations and things

> **Difficulty concentrating** and forgetfulness

> A persistent **sad mood**

> Feelings of **hopelessness**

> Feelings of **guilt and worthlessness**

> **Difficulty with carrying out tasks,** and decision making

> **Muscle tension** and soreness

> **Fatigue easily**

> **Sleep disturbances** such as not being able to fall asleep

> **Loss of interest** in pleasurable activities

> **Decreased energy** and tiredness

> **Insomnia** or oversleeping

> **Difficulty concentrating** and making decisions

> **Persistent worry** about situations or things

> **Feelings of panic** or fear or uneasiness

> **Low appetite** or increased appetite

> **Physical symptoms** such as body and head aches, digestive issues, back pain, chest pain

> **Irritability**

> **Shortness of breath**

> **Irritability**

> **Thoughts of suicide** or self-harm

SOURCE:
Anxiety and Depression Association of America - www.adaa.org

50 STRATEGIES TO MANAGE YOUR ANXIETY

@BELIEVEPHQ

- TAKE A BREAK FROM TECHNOLOGY
- ENGAGE IN SOMETHING PLEASURABLE
- ACCEPT THAT YOU HAVE ANXIETY
- WHY NOT TRY DOING SOME YOGA
- COME UP WITH AN ALTERNATIVE THOUGHT
- PRACTICE IMAGERY TO REDUCE AROUSAL
- ENGAGE IN SOME EXERCISE
- TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT YOUR ANXIETY
- JOIN AN EXERCISE GROUP
- BUILD A MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT NETWORK
- LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL YOU DRINK
- FOCUS ON THE PRESENT MOMENT
- BUY A MINDFULNESS COLOURING BOOK
- TRY TO KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE
- DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP
- CHALLENGE YOUR THOUGHTS
- LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF CAFFEINE YOU HAVE
- LEARN WHAT YOUR TRIGGERS ARE
- FOCUS ON THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL
- LOOK AFTER YOURSELF
- JOURNAL YOUR WORRIES
- HAVE A BATH
- LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR ANXIETY AFFECTS YOU
- TAKE A BREAK
- DISTRACT YOURSELF
- WORK ON YOUR PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
- DOWNLOAD AN APP
- COUNT TO TEN SLOWLY
- EXPLORE SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME YOUR WORRIES
- SLOW DOWN WHAT YOU ARE DOING
- TAKE A DEEP BREATHE AND COUNT BACKWARDS
- MAKE SURE YOU ARE EATING A BALANCED DIET
- TEST OUT THE VALIDITY OF YOUR THOUGHTS
- PRACTICE SOME DEEP BREATHING
- TRY SINGING
- UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU START CATASTROPHIZING
- LEARN SOME PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION
- SET ASIDE SOME TIME TO WORRY
- VISUALISE A SAFE PLACE
- PRACTICE SOME SELF CARE
- PRACTICE SOME MINDFULNESS
- RECOGNISE THE SIGNS OF YOUR ANXIETY
- TRY ENGAGING IN RATIO BREATHING
- CALL A FRIEND
- LISTEN TO RELAXING MUSIC
- MAKE SURE YOU ARE GETTING PLENTY OF SLEEP
- IDENTIFY THINKING ERRORS
- ASK YOURSELF: WHAT'S THE WORST THAT CAN HEPPEN
- REDUCE YOUR STRESS LEVELS
- MANAGE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY

I feel...

unfocused   excited   distracted   silly   hyper   antsy

sad   tired   disappointed   hurt   sick   bored

angry   out of control   scared   aggressive

worried   confused   embarrassed   unsafe   anxious   stress

To help me feel...

calm   focused   ready to learn   safe   better

I will...

- Draw or Color
- Use a Breathing Board
- Try Wave Breathing
- Read a Book
- Treat Myself with Kindness and Just Breathe
- Ask Permission to Quietly Exercise for a Minute or Two
- Build Something or Do a Puzzle
- Look at Feel-Good Pictures
- Give Myself or a Stuffed Animal a Big Hug
- Ask for Help
- Squeeze Then Relax My Muscles (Try Rocks Clocks?)
- Think of 3 (or more) Things I Am Grateful For
- Tell Myself a Positive Affirmation or Mantra
- Journal or Write a Letter
- Use a Tool from the Calm Box
- Get a Drink of Water
- Push Against the Wall and Then Relax
- Stretch or Do Yoga
- Help Someone or Ask to Do a Classroom Chore
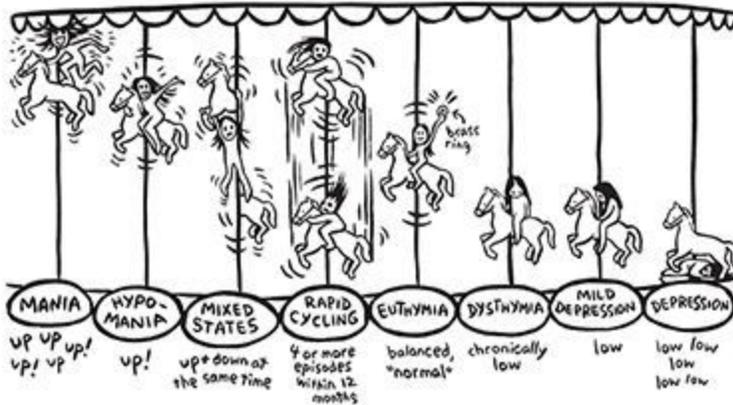- Try 5 Finger Breathing

WHOLEHearted
SCHOOL COUNSELING

What is a "MOOD DISORDER" anyway?

BASICALLY, IT'S A CONDITION WHERE EMOTIONS ARE DERAILED FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. THE MAIN TYPES ARE:

☆ **BIPOLAR I:** ←(that's me)
ALTERNATING MANIC & DEPRESSIVE EPISODES

☆ **BIPOLAR II:**
ALTERNATING HYPOMANIC & DEPRESSIVE EPISODES
↳ "HYPOMANIA" = MILD MANIA

☆ **CYCLOTHYMIA:**
ALTERNATING HYPOMANIC & MILD DEPRESSIVE EPISODES

☆ **UNIPOLAR DEPRESSION:**
SINGLE OR RECURRENT EPISODES WITH NO MANIA

☆ **DYSTHYMIA:**
CHRONIC, LOW-GRADE DEPRESSION

... WHICH REFER TO THESE **MOOD STATES:**

MANIA	HYPO-MANIA	MIXED STATES	RAPID CYCLING	EUTHYMIA	DYSTHYMIA	MILD DEPRESSION	DEPRESSION
UP UP UP! UP! UP	UP!	up + down at the same time	4 or more episodes within 12 months	balanced, "normal"	chronically low	low	low low low low low

NOTE: "BIPOLAR DISORDER" & "MANIC DEPRESSION" ARE THE SAME THING.

TYPES OF SELF-CARE

PHYSICAL
Sleep
Stretching
Walking
Physical release
Healthy food
Yoga
Rest

EMOTIONAL
Stress managment
Emotional maturity
Forgiveness
Compassion
Kindness

SOCIAL
Boundaries
Support systems
Positive social media
Communication
Time together
Ask for help

SPIRITUAL
Time alone
Meditation
Yoga
Connection
Nature
Journaling
Sacred space

PERSONAL
Hobbies
Knowing yourself
Personal identity
Honoring your true self

SPACE
Safety
Healthy living environment
Security and stability
Organized space

FINANCIAL
Saving
Budgeting
Money management
Splurging
Paying bills

WORK
Time management
Work boundaries
Positive workplace
More learning
Break time

How to nurture a child's mental health

Actively listen before offering your advice

Be patient

Share your feelings and validate theirs

Tell the truth

Model healthy behavior

Surround them with healthy adults

Mental Fills

Be consistent and follow through with what you promise

Teach them how to be safe

Believe them and in them

Use open ended questions

Have scheduled family time

Limit electronic time for everyone

Reach out and hug them

Practice relaxation exercises together

Model forgiveness

Respond calmly when their emotions are elevated

View their behavior as a window to their needs and feelings

Make play and exercise a requirement

Recognize positive choices

Be present

Set and respect boundaries