

Supporting Teens' Mental Health

A guide to recognizing mental health issues in teenagers and the appropriate steps to take in assisting them, including seeking professional help.

Step 1: **Observation**

Consistently monitor the teen's behavior and emotional state, looking for warning signs such as withdrawal from social activities, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, declining academic performance, or expressiveness of hopelessness or worthlessness.

Step 2: **Open Dialogue**

Engage in open and non-judgmental conversations with the teen. Show empathy and ask how they are feeling to encourage them to share their experiences and emotions.

Step 3: **Education**

Educate yourself about mental health issues by reading credible resources or attending workshops. This will help you understand potential challenges and the best ways to support the teen.

Step 4: **Professional Help**

Seek assistance from school counselors, pediatricians, or mental health professionals who specialize in adolescent mental health, to discuss observed behaviors and get advice or referrals for therapy.

Step 5: **Develop Plan**

Work with mental health professionals to develop a comprehensive support plan tailored to the specific needs of the teen, including therapeutic interventions and strategies to support them at home and school.

Step 6: **Offer Support**

Provide consistent support and understanding. Ensure the teen knows that they can trust you and that you are there to help them navigate their mental health challenges.

General Notes

Confidentiality

Respect the teen's privacy by keeping conversations confidential, unless there is a risk of harm to themselves or others, in which case it is essential to seek immediate help.

Self-Care

Monitor your own well-being and consider seeking support for yourself if necessary. Supporting someone with mental health issues can be demanding, and looking after your own mental health is crucial.