

**change your  
narrative**

**IF A STUDENT I KNOW STRUGGLES  
WITH DEPRESSION,  
WHAT DO I DO?**

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[www.ChangeYourNarrative.org](http://www.ChangeYourNarrative.org)

**Statistics included were taken from:**

National Institute of Mental Health  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Center for Disease Control  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Youth Risk Behaviors Survey

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**α**  
PRESS

SHIFTING INCOMPLETE  
STORIES OF DEPRESSION  
TOWARDS TRUTH



# How To Use This Book

Depending on what you are looking for, you can use this book in a variety of ways. Feel free to skim, read every line, or just check out our videos.

We believe important topics call for important conversations which is why some of our material is presented via videos. In order to access the videos, you will need to click the link if you are reading via a digital device such as Kindle. If you have a physical copy of the book, you can access the links via QR codes.

A QR Code looks like this and can be scanned using your device's camera:



On an iOS device, simply open the camera app and point your camera over the code. A notification will pop up, asking if you would like to head to YouTube.

On an Android device, you will need to download a QR code app. Our team recommends several options, all of which are free as of this printing:

- QR & Barcode Scanner
- QR Code Reader
- Free QR Scanner by Avira
- QR DROID PRIVATE
- Kaspersky QR Scanner

## **I Am Glad You Are Here...**

The world needs individuals who care for one another. If you are reading this book because you want to provide encouragement and support to students who struggle, I want to say how proud of you I am.

I also want to acknowledge its hard to know *how* to help someone. We may want to be the one to provide a solution, but often, this is out of our control.

Even so, I believe learning about the issue can help us know how to be there for others. When we match our concern and empathy, along with insightful knowledge, it can help us to be prepared to point others in the right direction.

## **I Want To Be Clear In The Beginning...**

Unless you are a professional who has been trained to know how to step in and offer solutions to those who struggle with depression and mental health, you may not be able to fix the root cause of why someone you care for struggles with depression.

This does not mean, however, that they do not need you. Having support from someone who has insight into the issues surrounding depression and who knows what professional resources are available—is key. The best thing anyone who is struggling with depression can do is seek out professional care. We can not take away the good or bad thoughts or feelings of another. But, we all can strive to be supportive influencers and role models. The fact you are reading this tells me this is who you want to be.

The things which you and I *can* do, is seek to be the most prepared we can be in order to be individuals who can point students towards getting the best possible help they can.

My goal is to help you to learn how to understand the complex topic of teen and young adult depression a little bit better, so you have insight into how to care for those who may struggle.

If you or someone you care for is in danger of harm, please contact one of the numbers below or turn to the resource section at the back of this book.

## **For Immediate Help:**

Covenant House- 1800-999-9999

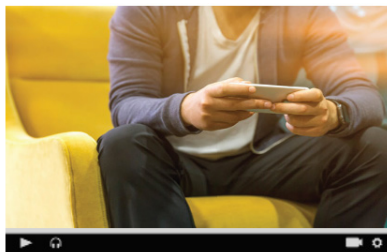
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Youth Crisis Line – 1800 Hit Home

Hopeline 1800-442-5673

<http://www.crisischat.org/chat>

**Video: What Is Like To Call A Hotline?**



<https://youtu.be/6IRGmusmp1M>



SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE  
*of lost hope*

## What Is Depression?

Depression is characterized by feeling immense sadness, a lack of energy or interest in previously enjoyed pursuits, and a loss of appetite.

There are several forms of depression which can stem from life changes or biology. It is common for students to feel sad or hopeless about a specific situation or experience. This feeling will come and go throughout their life. But when it lasts, it is important for those of us who influence their lives to pay attention and try to find out what's going on.

If a student you know is depressed—there are numerous ways to take action and help them to fight against the narrative of depression. But, how do we know if it is time to take action? The first key is to recognize where the student you care about is at.

*Check out the video below for more insight:*

### What Is Depression? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/nUxwrKoSmx8>

# How Many Young People Struggle?

1.9 million children, 3 – 17, have diagnosed depression.

- Centers for Disease Control  
“Data and Statistics on Children’s Mental Health”, 2018

13.3% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 had “at least one major depressive episode” in 2017, which equates to 3.2 million American teens.

- National Institute of Mental Health

60.1% of depressed adolescents received no treatment; 19.6% received treatment from a health professional; 2.4% were treated with medication alone; 17.6% received treatment from both a health professional and medication,

- National Institute of Mental Health

7.4 percent of youth in grades 9-12 reported that they had made at least one suicide attempt in the past 12 months.

- 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Summary



WHEN YOU  
**FEEL LIKE**  
**GIVING UP** JUST  
REMEMBER THE REASON  
**WHY YOU**  
HELD ON FOR SO  
**LONG.** -UNKNOWN  
AUTHOR

## **Is It Okay To Bring Up The Topic Of Depression With A Student?**

If you are wondering if a student you know is fighting depression, and you question if you should bring it up, it is likely time to talk about it.

This being said, it is vital to broach the topic with care and consideration for the family.

Parents and guardians are the first line of defense.

Any advice or counsel we offer must be done with the attempt of being in line with the family.

Yet, even saying this, I am aware of numerous cases in which families do not take an active role in their child's mental health. This does not abdicate our responsibility to include the family or seek to bring them in as advocates for the child's well-being.

At the same time, there will be many times in which this is not possible due to relational dynamics.

It is advised to use good judgment and follow the protocol within your organization about students and family reporting.

The use of incident reports is encouraged.

Additionally, you are advised to know your local and state laws on mandated reporting when it comes to any situation in which you believe harm (whether self-inflicted or induced by others) are part of the student's life.

While it is ideal for a student to come to you and open up, there are times in which it is critical for you to bring up the topic of depression with them.

The reason, cause, or longevity behind each student affected by depression is valid—and we acknowledge depression can create major hurdles on the path to seeking wholeness.

Even with that being said, it does not mean the student you know can not fight—and fight well.

One of the ways we start to do that—is to talk about it.

When you open the door for them to share their story, it provides an outlet for them to discover the help, tools, and resources which can positively influence their life.

### **Is It Okay To Bring Up The Topic? - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/dsYnzGr071U>

# Ways To Begin A Conversation About Depression

You may have noticed some slight or significant changes in the lifestyle of a student you know.

The question you might have is, “How do I ask them if they are okay?” On top of this, you might wonder what to do if they say they are not. What is helpful to say? What should not be said? What are the next steps?

It might feel overwhelming, and yet you know something needs to be done. So, where do you begin?

To start, I would encourage you to learn a little bit about mental health from individuals who have professional insight in the topic. In the next section, we will provide links to helpful articles which can help you know the best way to bring up an important conversation.

## Ways To Begin A Conversation - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/ooxTAj3z6al>

**BeyondBlue.org** offers a list of talking points and how each one can provide assurance of your support.

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/have-the-conversation/talking-to-someone-you-are-worried-about>

**HelpGuide.org** provides a comprehensive overview of what the person you care for may be feeling or thinking, with links to various additional resources, including what questions to ask and what to say.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/helping-someone-with-depression.htm>

## **Ways To Begin A Conversation With A Child Or Teenager**

**NBC News** created a check in with 14 questions to ask a child, in order to support and guide them if you wonder if they are anxious, depressed, or being bullied.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/mental-health-check-14-questions-ask-your-child-ncna1006936>

## Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

When working with minors, it is vital to the safety and well-being of the child, the family, your organization, and the role you have for appropriate boundaries to be in place at all times.

At times, as youth workers, we will initiate important conversations with students we are concerned about. This can have a lasting, positive impact on them, as well as be a starting point to them receiving the support, guidance, tools, resources, and care they need.

Other times, a student may approach us—unsolicited—and share about a crisis or trauma in their life.

In both incidents, it is imperative for you to ask yourself:

1. Does the conversation need a third party?
2. Does the conversation need an authority figure?
3. Does the conversation need to be followed up by bringing others into the conversation?

### Healthy Boundaries - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/Lb7wIEjaV3Y>

## Learning To Point

In all of the years I worked with students, the most valuable lesson for me to learn was “how to point.”

Often, I wanted to be the one to fix it, to change their life circumstances. But, I did not have the power to do that. I was a youth worker, a support individual. I was not the prime influencer. This was something I had to learn to respect, amidst my own frustrations.

But the thing I did have full control over, was the power of pointing. It became my job to become acquainted with local and national resources so I knew exactly where to point students who were seeking help on their own and family members who wanted to find tools and resources for themselves and their students.

With that in mind, the next few pages will offer resource-based information. Much of it you will not be able to enact on behalf of a student. But you were able to point them in the direction to find it.

### Learning To Point - Video Discussion



[https://youtu.be/Hf5GpPK\\_Fpk](https://youtu.be/Hf5GpPK_Fpk)

**CREATE A**  

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**TRAINING PLACE**  

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**AND STRATEGY SPACE**

## What Kind Of Help Exists?

The National Institute of Health reported up to 80% of individuals who were treated for depression began to show positive change within 4-6 weeks of treatment, which generally included medication, therapy, support groups or a combination of these treatments.

This leaves us to ask, “What kind of help exists?”

The resources available for mental health issues and depression range from self-care suggestions to inpatient treatment facilities. The only way to know exactly what type of action you should take, the first key is to talk with a support professional.

There are a host of tools which can help you know steps to taking action. These include:

- Apps Which Offer Support
- Communities With Offer Support
- Finding A Professional

### What Kind Of Help Exists? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/A7CNzHsrg0M>



## **Apps Which Offer Support**

**TalkLife** offers online support similar to group therapy. Share anonymously or with your name.

**Moodpath** offers 14 days of check ins, providing an overview of your emotional well-being. Plus 100+ exercises.

**Happify** includes games and activities which elevate mood and build resilience through CBT, mindfulness and positivity.

**What's Up** aids individuals in discovering the cause of feelings and thoughts through guided questioning.



**Self-Help For Anxiety Management (SAM)** offers an anxiety toolkit which tracks thoughts and behaviors, while also offering tools to combat negativity.

**Panic Relief** provides coping strategies, exercise, and breathing techniques to help move through a moment of panic.

**PTSD Coach** provides ways to understand PTSD along with how to find additional help.



## **Communities Which Offer Support**

**To Write Love On Her Arms -**

<https://twloha.com/find-help/>

Offers a search for free or low cost therapy options to connect with a therapist.

**7 Cups Of Tea -**

<https://www.7cups.com/depression-help-online/>

Offers chat rooms to begin a conversation, plus educational videos and when to seek professional help.

**Lifeline Crisis Chat -**

<https://www.contact-usa.org/chat.html>

Offers free, online chatting with trained individuals.

**Love Is Respect -**

<https://www.loveisrespect.org>

Offers education, support and advocacy to those facing complicated dating issues, along with a live chat feature connecting you to trained advocates.

**Remedy Live -**

<https://www.remedylive.com/depression>

Offers a faith-based videos on mental health issues along with trained advocates who want to connect.

**Anxiety And Depression Association Of America -**

<https://adaa.org/supportgroups>

Provides a listing of support groups, including a search feature to find a group near you.

**Heads Up Guys -**

<https://headsupguys.org/take-action/>

Provides action points and support specifically for men from men.

**OK2 Talk -**

<https://ok2talk.org>

Offers online support, education, and relatable stories for teens and young adults who battle mental health.

**WHEN YOU FEEL  
LIKE GIVING  
UP, JUST**

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**REMEMBER THE  
REASON WHY**

**YOU**

**HELD ON FOR  
SO LONG.**

**-UNKNOWN AUTHOR**

## **A Conversation On Medication And Natural Remedy**

When a student thinks about sharing their story with a support professional, they may believe the first thing a therapist or doctor will do is prescribe talk therapy or medication.

This is likely to be true. If that concerns them or their family, it might help if they can do a little bit of research in order to understand what it means to take medication, the side effects, and what someone can expect when considering options.

In the video below, we have links to articles and voices which are more qualified to share. We encourage you to continue your research as you get to know what types of help are available.

### **What Is The Right Type Of Help? - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/Vnch5AvmWAM>

## Reiterating Why You Offer Support

When a student struggles with depression, they often are caught in a mental battle of wondering why they are worth your time or effort.

The question in their mind constantly is, “Why someone would want to help me?”

They may also believe help will be temporary until someone sees them as a burden or as a person who is just “too much.”

Because of these factors, It is important for those offering support to be a continual source of reassurance in why you want to support them—why you want to see them reach a place of wholeness.

This does not mean they dictate our lives or we cater to every whim. That is not what I am talking about. Healthy boundaries are important in every relationship, even ones which have mental health complications in the midst.

Yet, I believe one of the best things we can do for someone who is struggling with depression is to continuously and consistently reiterate the *why* behind our actions.

So, “Why would anyone want to help someone who is fighting to shift the story of depression?”

I wholeheartedly believe it is because our care for that person gives us compassion and insight into three things: their future, their pathway, and their value.

## **Their Future**

You have an intrinsic belief that as they walk a path of wholeness and healing—they have a future.

## **Their Pathway**

You may not have the professional skill to offer the treatment or healing needed, yet you want to be with them on their pathway as they seek it out. You want to offer tangible guidance and see them win in the journey.

## **Their Value**

You have a foundational belief—that the person you care for has value. When you speak with them—it is directly tied into a personal reason why you believe they matter, have importance, and that the outcome of their life is important to you.

### **Reiterating Why You Offer Support - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/fP4Xpr9jDz0>

# The Obstacles In Offering Help

It is fair to talk about the obstacles a student might face along their journey. It is incredibly tough to watch them face one or all of the following. I acknowledge the fact these moments can create tremendous setback or make it difficult for them, or maybe even you, to want to continue to fight for wholeness. I encourage you to continue to seek support and encouragement for yourself as you journey alongside of them.

- Help Seems Hopeless
- A Question Of Worth
- Lack Of Energy
- Disappointing Attempts
- Lack Of Family Support

*For a more in-depth discussion about these points, including guidance on how to overcome them, check out the video below.*

## The Obstacles In Seeking Help - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/P3DTsdnz8hA>

# What To Do When A Student Pushes Back

Getting push back when you try to help, is frustrating. As you engage with them, remember it is important to:

1. Go at their pace.
2. Own what is yours.
3. And yet, know this may not be about you.

Recognize push back is often overcome by:

- Being consistent.
- Stating why you are for them.
- Reaffirming them.
- Apologizing for previous disappointments.

Lastly, be honest. It might be good to share how their behavior made you feel.

*For a more in-depth discussion about these points, and how to overcome them, check out the video below.*

## What To Do When A Student Pushes Back - Discussion



<https://youtu.be/RZvb4ZRt6rA>

## **Building A Safety Plan**

If you are helping someone to take a stand against depression, you know it often fights back. Yet, having a pathway to fight back helps them continue to live with wholeness.

Let them know you are willing to be an active part of their plan. You are someone they can check in with. You are someone who commits to help them find professional, skilled help if they need someone more than you can offer.

Talk through what actions steps each of you can take in moments when the struggle is fierce.

One such resource which has a fantastic list of tools and resources for creating a safety plan is *Challenge The Storm*.

You can check out their advice here:

[Challengestorm.org/safety-plans-mental-health/](http://Challengestorm.org/safety-plans-mental-health/)

They even have a sample plan that any of us are able to use to help us learn how to build our own plan.

You can check that out here:

<http://www.knowresolve.org/docs/safety-plan-web.pdf>

**Please note:** Even with the best of plans, there are times in which a crisis is stronger than a plan. In those moments, seek immediate, professional help. The following ideas on a safety plan are not intended to take the place of skilled, professional help.

## Building A Safety Plan - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/tA4fZltaFnw>

## The Goal Is Wholeness

Wholeness is about a state of contentment and peace in a life. It doesn't eliminate the past or any previous pain, instead it acknowledges how that pain has affected us—all while striving to form a new narrative.

Wholeness is about freedom—and I believe it is possible for each student to discover for themselves.

Is it easy? Not at all. The pathway can be long and come with obstacles which may make us feel as if we may not make it.

But with the right support and tools—I intrinsically believe we can.

I welcome you, and those you care for, to find it.

### The Goal Is Wholeness - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/tG18UzeL26w>

## Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle

In the core of who I am—I am convinced none of us are defined by our struggles. Our identity goes far beyond what anyone stole from us, did to us, or how they disappointed us.

While it may be true a student you know has faced a deep struggle or has been treated in ways they did not deserve, I believe it does not have to be the key identifier of what makes an individual—them.

Wholeness is still available. Though it requires a journey, it's a pathway to be free of pain's influences—as if it was the only thing to define a life. I believe each of us still have life in front of us and it is filled with the ability for hope, the ability to make a difference in other's lives, and the ability to go out there and have positive and meaningful impact.

### Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle- Video



<https://youtu.be/CnMJlc8PIRE>

## Helping Students See A Future

Hidden within the battle of emotions and thoughts—is a lack of hope for the future. When a young person battles depression, mental health issues, self-harm, or a host of other challenges, it is easy for them to feel lost—uncertain of what the future will bring. When they feel trapped in a cycle of present pain—the future can slip away.

As youth workers, teachers, coaches, and concerned adults—our ability to speak hope into their future has the power to create a crack of light in a dark place. But how do we do that?

- Acknowledge The Present
- Share What You See
- Tell Them Why You Believe In Them
- Help Them Reach Their Future

*For a more in-depth discussion about these points, check out the video below.*

### Helping Students See A Future- Video



<https://youtu.be/c2MP78c-p64>

## The Invitation To Shift The Story

If you, or someone you care for, are looking for a way to walk a journey to shift an incomplete story towards truth, you are invited to change your narrative.

Come on a journey through twenty video-based pathway markers which offer guidance on how you or someone you care for can seek wholeness. Change Your Narrative believes everyone has the right to be able to take back the pen of your story.

## Come On A Journey To Find Wholeness...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThTdleKhc-CY&t=6s>

## **Please Note:**

All statements and views within this book, the **change your narrative** website, and the videos on our YouTube channel are strictly opinion based. They are not intended to be utilized as professional treatment or care. If you or someone you care for struggles with mental illness, depression, suicidal thought or destructive life choices, I highly recommend seeking out professional help.

**If you are in immediate harm or danger call 911.**

## **Additional Resources:**

24/7/365 Crisis Call Center Hotline:

1 (1800) 273-8255

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1 (1800) 273-8255

Text "Answer" to 839863

Chat with a Soul Medic:

<http://remedylive.com/soulmedics/>



## **Apps Which Offer Support**

**TalkLife** offers online support similar to group therapy. Share anonymously or with your name.

**Moodpath** offers 14 days of check ins, providing an overview of your emotional well-being. Plus 100+ exercises.

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Provides action points and support specifically for men from men.

### **OK2 Talk -**

<https://ok2talk.org>

Offers online support, education, and relatable stories for teens and young adults who battle mental health.



## Resources For Those Who Offer Support

**Healthline -**

<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-help-a-depressed-friend#be-patient>

Offers a list of action steps you can take as you continue to care for someone.

**HelpGuide.org -**

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/helping-someone-with-depression.htm>

Provides a comprehensive overview of what the person you care for may be feeling or thinking, with links to various additional resources, including what questions to ask and what to say.



## Resources for Parents

The American Depression And Anxiety Association of America has a screening tool for you to use and share with your child's doctor. It can be found here:

<https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/ask-and-learn/screenings/screening-anxiety-disorder-children>



Scan Here For Tool

Additionally, the **Mayoclinic** and **CDC** have helpful guides which can come along side of you as you find your child the support they might need.

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/mental-illness-in-children/art-20046577>

**NBC News** created a check in with 14 questions to ask your child, in order to support and guide them if you wonder if they are anxious, depressed, or being bullied.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/mental-health-check-14-questions-ask-your-child-ncna1006936>

**Helpguide.org** created a guide for parents to know how to best support their children.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/parents-guide-to-teen-depression.htm>

## Support For Families

directory of support groups for you and your family.

<https://www.nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-family-support-group>

**The Society For Adolescent Health And Medicine** has a comprehensive listing of additional support options.

<https://www.adolescenthealth.org/Resources/Clinical-Care-Resources/Mental-Health/Mental-Health-Resources-For-Parents-of-Adolescents.aspx>

**The Depression And Bipolar Alliance Support Alliance** offers connection to local chapters.

[https://secure2.convio.net/dabsa/site/SPageServer/PageServer?pagename=help\\_family\\_center\\_support](https://secure2.convio.net/dabsa/site/SPageServer/PageServer?pagename=help_family_center_support)

**Family Caregiver Alliance** provides a map of network help in your area.

<https://www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator>

## Insight For Siblings

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sibling-mental-illness\\_n\\_59aeca9ee4b0dfaafcf2df44](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sibling-mental-illness_n_59aeca9ee4b0dfaafcf2df44)

<https://www.bustle.com/articles/113804-7-signs-your-sibling-is-depressed>

# Community Training Tools

## **Mental Health First Aid**

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>

Offers intensive, 8-hour trainings worldwide on topics of mental health.

## **National Association Of Mental Illness, Community Presentation**

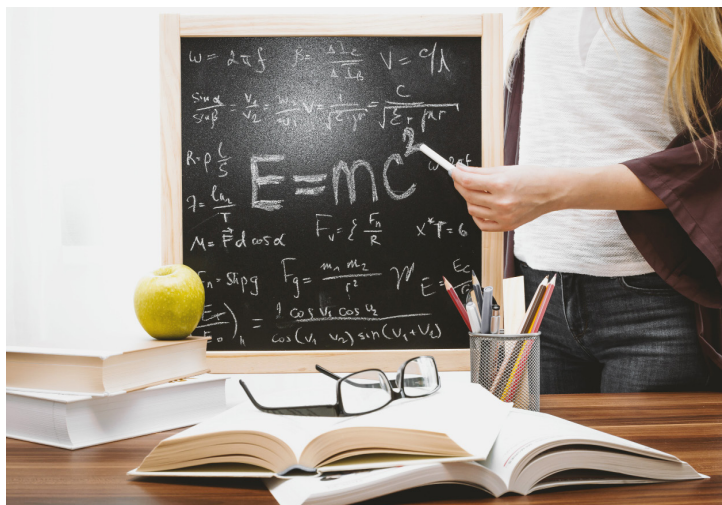
<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-Ending-the-Silence>

[From their site:] NAMI Ending the Silence presentations include two leaders: one who shares an informative presentation and a young adult with a mental health condition who shares their journey of recovery.

## **My Younger Self – Videos:**

<https://childmind.org/myyoungerself/>

The Child Mind Institute created the #MyYoungerSelf campaign which seeks to begin a conversation for children struggling with mental health. Their page hosts short video clips of actors, athletes, and influencers who share messages of their own journey to wholeness.



## Resources For Teachers

### Vantage Point Recovery

<https://vantagepointrecovery.com/students-with-mental-health-disorders/>

Guidance for teachers to help students who struggle with mental health disorders.

### Classroom Mental Health

<https://classroommentalhealth.org>

Provides insights for teachers to help guide students to navigate their mental health.

### When Something's Wrong – Strategies For Teachers

<https://www.cmho.org/documents/res-cprf-teachers-2007.pdf>

A Free PDF handbook for teachers

## **Resources For Ministry Leaders**

### **Helping Young People Know How To Talk With Parents**

<https://childmind.org/article/how-to-talk-to-your-parents-about-getting-help-if-you-think-you-need-it/>

### **Integrate Mental Health Awareness Into Your Programs:**

<http://orangeblogs.org/orangeleaders/2018/09/20/mental-health-suicide/>

<https://youthministry.com/helping-students-with-mental-health-issues/>

### **Crisis Conversation Guides High School.**

[http://orangeblogs.org/orangeleaders/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/09/CrisisCG\\_HS.pdf](http://orangeblogs.org/orangeleaders/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/09/CrisisCG_HS.pdf)

### **Rethinking Youth Ministry Podcast: Navigating Mental Health And Suicide In Your Ministry**

<http://orangeblogs.org/xp3students/rym-012-navigating-mental-health-and-suicide-in-your-ministry/>

### **Helping Parents And Youth Workers Understand The Basics Of Mental Health Illness. Free PDF.**

<https://www.downloadyouthministry.com/mental-illness-handbook>

### **How To Help A Student Struggling With Mental Health**

<https://www.youthworker.com/articles/ministry-to-youth-with-mental-illness/>

## **7 Reasons Why Young People With Depression & Anxiety Don't Go To Church**

<https://mentalhealthgracealliance.org/christian-mental-health-and-mental-illness/what-keeps-teens-with-mental-illness-from-coming-to-church52018>

### **A Letter To Youth Pastors About Mental Health.**

<https://themighty.com/2016/05/letter-to-youth-pastors-about-mental-health/>

Additionally, those within teaching roles inside of ministry positions may find some of the resources within the “Teachers” section of use for their roles.

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