

SUPPORTING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

| a manual for Baltimore parents & guardians

PREPARED BY THE:
YOUTH PROGRAMMING ADVISORY COUNCIL AT NAMI METRO BALTIMORE



START HAVING CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER, TODAY.



nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Metropolitan
Baltimore**

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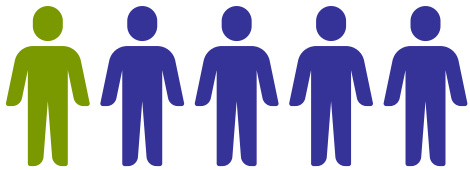
School and community-based initiatives that can help you access mental health resources.

58 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to everyone who contributed to the creation of this resource guide.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

Millions of youth and young adults are affected by mental illness each year, yet stigma and a lack of understanding around mental health conditions prevent people from speaking up and seeking help.



1 out of 5 youth experience a mental health condition in a given year.

1/2

of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.

17%

of high school students seriously consider suicide.

50%

of students 14+ with a mental health condition **drop out of high school.**



50-75%

of youth in juvenile justice systems experience a mental health condition.



Only half

of children ages 8 - 15 with a mental health condition receive treatment, and often there are long delays between onset of symptoms and treatment.

Suicide

 is the **2nd leading cause**

of death for people ages 15 - 24, and 90% of youth who die by suicide had one or more mental health conditions.

HOW MENTAL ILLNESS IMPACTS STUDENTS

A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior, or mood. These conditions deeply impact day-to-day living and may also affect the ability to relate to others.

Students experiencing mental illnesses may have more difficulty paying attention in class, completing schoolwork on time, or complying with other rules. It's important to remember that each person will have different experiences, even if people have the same diagnosis. **Early engagement and support** are critical to improving outcomes and increasing the chance of recovery.



Remember, personality and behavior changes of adolescence may mimic or mask symptoms of a mental health condition. **In general, if a student is not acting like themselves for 2 or more weeks**, it's essential to reach out.

Parents and guardians

are in a unique position to provide support to students, as they are close observers of student behavior, outside of teachers and friends.

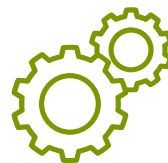
Below are the 4 Steps to early intervention.



Know the
Warning Signs



Reach out and
Respond



Work with
Teachers & School



Seek Resources
& Support

COMMON WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Since parents and guardians are close observers of their students, it's important that they become familiar with the below common warning signs of mental illness.

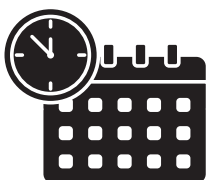
- 1 Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks
- 2 Seriously trying to harm oneself or making plans to do so
- 3 Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors
- 4 Sudden, overwhelming fear for no apparent reason
- 5 Not eating, fixating on weight loss - significant weight loss or gain
- 6 Seeing, hearing, or believing things that are not real
- 7 Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol
- 8 Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality, or sleeping habits
- 9 Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still
- 10 Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities

It's important to consider:



Intensity:

How severe are the symptoms?



Duration:

Do they last 2 or more weeks?



Level of Distress:

How much do symptoms impair daily functioning?

Students might also present symptoms differently at home and in school, so connecting with their teachers if you have concerns is key to getting a full picture.

HOW TO RESPOND WITH CARE



If you notice any of the warning signs mentioned on the prior page are persisting in your child for over 2 weeks, don't be afraid to reach out to them, teachers, or the school counselor or social worker and **share your concerns.**

1 Start the Conversation

- ✓ Open the conversation by sharing specific signs you've observed.
- ✓ If you think your child is thinking about suicide, ask the direct question "Are you thinking about suicide?". Do not leave them alone if they say yes. Depending on their level of distress, calling a crisis line might be necessary.

2 Listen Non-Judgmentally

- ✓ Focus on being understanding, caring, and non-judgmental, by saying things like:
"You're not alone, I'm here for you."
"I might not know exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions to understand how your child feels.

3 Make Student Aware of Options

- ✓ Depending on the child's age, including them in the decision-making process can help show that their thoughts and feelings matter.
- ✓ Sharing concerns with the other members of the support network and exploring IEP options with teachers to support your child in school are also an important part of this conversation.

4 Know What to Do in a Crisis

- ✓ Knowing the contact points in your community to turn to in the event of a mental health crisis is essential to being prepared to respond.
- ✓ **Remember:** Don't leave your child alone, be sure to know where to turn for help, and keep mental health resources in your back pocket in case of a crisis.

NUMBERS TO CALL IN A CRISIS



Baltimore County

Baltimore County Crisis Response

24/7, Year Round Mental Health Crisis Hotline | The Mobile Crisis Team provides health services to persons in mental, behavioral or emotional crisis. They provide an on-site, emergency police response to persons in need of crisis intervention, assess individuals in need of services, offer resources and referrals, and complete emergency petitions when warranted. Specially-trained police officers are paired with licensed mental health clinicians in an unmarked police car and wear plain clothes (khaki pants and black polo shirts).

(410) 931 - 2214

Baltimore City

Here2Help Hotline & Baltimore Crisis Response Inc.

24/7, Year Round Mental Health Crisis Hotline | The Here2Help Hotline is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Call now to get connected to mental health services, talk to a supportive listener or have a mental health specialist come to you. If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health emergency, you can call the hotline instead of 911 to have a mental health specialist, rather than law enforcement, come to you and connect you to the support you need.

(410) 433 - 5175

State and Nationwide Numbers

Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline

State-wide 24-hour crisis intervention and supportive counseling hotline for suicide, family and relationship problems, shelter needs, violent or threatening domestic situations, loneliness, depression, chemical dependency issues and others.

1 (800) 422-0009

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

1 (800) 273-8255

211

211 connects you to expert, caring help. Every call is completely confidential.

WORKING WITH YOUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

You and the teachers at your child's school are their closest observers, and mental health issues can look different at home and at school. If you are concerned about how your child is performing in class, reaching out to their teacher can be a great first step to understanding the full picture of how your child's mental health might be affecting their daily life. There are also several accommodations and steps you and your child's teachers can take to make sure that your child has expectations and lesson plans that are more aligned with their needs.

What is an IEP?

IEP stands for "Individualized Lesson Plan," and they are very common in Pre-K - 12 settings. IEP's are actually covered by a special education law and are tailored plans that are formulated to specifically meet a student where they are in their educational and mental development journey. If you are interested in exploring how you can help your child get an IEP, reach out to your student's teachers and or guidance counselor to discuss their challenges and strengths, and determine whether further evaluation and creation of an IEP plan is right for them.



Advocate for Your Child

Learning that your child has a mental health condition, or that they are falling behind in class can be an emotional experience for you as a parent, as well as your child. Remember, it is no one's fault when this begins to happen, and mental health conditions are common. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) protects students' and their families' rights to 'a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation.'



Speak with a pediatrician and get referrals to mental health specialist



Work with the school and help teachers understand your child's challenges and needs



Connect with other families who can relate.

MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS



The following section includes educational courses specifically for parents and guardians looking to learn more about their child's mental health condition.

NAMI ENDING THE SILENCE



NAMI Ending the Silence Presentations

NAMI Ending the Silence is an hour-long presentation led by two leaders: one who shares an informative presentation with key statistics and facts on mental health conditions, and a young adult with a mental health condition who shares their journey of recovery.

Audience members can ask questions and gain understanding of an often-misunderstood topic. Through dialogue, we can help grow the movement to end stigma so people seek support, sooner.

Learn more about the impact at bit.ly/etsstats

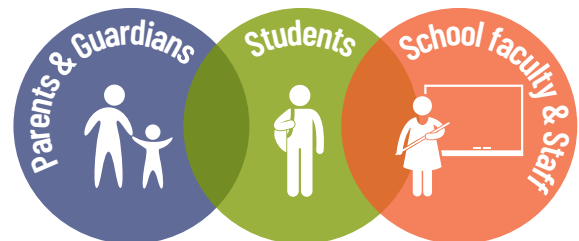
What does it cover?



- Warning signs and symptoms
- How to reach out and support a student in distress
- Where to seek mental health support
- Healthy coping strategies
- Mental health resources
- A young adult's lived experience

Who is it for?

The presentation is tailored to 3 audiences to ensure that the information shared is relevant and helpful for the participants.



Want to schedule a presentation or want to learn more?

Get in touch!



Sarah Arndt at sarndt@namibaltimore.org



HelpLine at (410) 435 - 2600

NAMI BASICS



A free, 6-week education program for parents, family, and caregivers of children and teens who are experiencing symptoms of a mental illness or whom have already been diagnosed.

NAMI Basics is offered on demand on the NAMI National website so that participants can take the class and gain knowledge at their convenience from the comfort of their own home.

What does NAMI Basics cover?

- The impact mental health conditions can have on your entire family
- Types of mental health care providers, available treatment options and therapies
- An overview of the public mental health care, school and juvenile justice systems and resources to help you navigate these systems
- How to advocate for your child's rights at school and in health care settings
- How to prepare for and respond to crises (self-harm, suicide attempts, etc.)
- The importance of taking care of yourself

Visit <https://www.nami.org/Videos/NAMI-Basics-OnDemand>

To Take NAMI Basics:

or

Email info@namibaltimore.org to learn about available classes.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



It's been well-established that all life guards must know CPR to be able to ensure the safety of pool-goers. But what is the mental health equivalent?

The National Council for Mental Wellness has developed curricula for people who work closely with teens, as well as family members and teenagers themselves, so that they can learn about brain development, ways to identify early symptoms of mental illness, and how to be prepared to respond to a mental health crises.

What to expect from a Mental Health First Aid Course

The courses are typically about 8-hours long and may be split up over two days. At the conclusion of the course, participants will receive a certification indicating that they have completed this training and will walk away with a deeper understanding of how mental health conditions impact cognition, and how to respond during a mental health crisis.

You can learn more about the training at:

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/population-focused-modules/youth/>

NAMI Metro Baltimore also routinely has access to free Mental Health First Aid courses for community members through its relationships with local hospitals.

Contact us at info@namibaltimore.org to see if a course is available.

NAMI FAMILY-TO-FAMILY



A free, 8-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of adults living with mental illness. It is a designated evidenced-based program. Research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to an individual living with a mental health condition.

NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who have been there, and includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises.

What does NAMI Family-to-Family cover?

- How to solve problems and communicate effectively
- Taking care of yourself and managing your stress
- Supporting your loved one with compassion
- Finding and using local supports and services
- Up-to-date information on mental health conditions and how they affect the brain
- How to handle a crisis
- Current treatments and therapies
- The impact of mental health conditions on the entire family

To Take NAMI Family-to-Family:

Email info@namibaltimore.org or
visit www.namibaltimore.org

NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP



NAMI Family Support Group is a peer-led support group for family members, caregivers and loved ones of individuals living with mental health conditions.

Led by family members of people with mental health conditions, participants gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar circumstances. Support groups meet weekly.

How will this support group help you?

- Learn about new coping skills
- Find strength in sharing experiences
- Not judge anyone's pain
- Forgive ourselves and reject guilt
- Embrace humor as healthy
- Accept that we cannot solve every problem
- Understand mental health conditions are no one's fault and can be traumatic experiences

To join a NAMI Family Support Group in Baltimore:

Visit

www.namibaltimore.org/find-support/support-groups/

BCPS PARENT UNIVERSITY



Educating & Empowering Families

Baltimore County Public School's Parent University is an online platform that offers a suite of helpful resources, updates, and workshops that help support parents and guardians of BCPS students. Workshop topics can range from social-emotional learning, to financial literacy, and engage various community organizations to ensure that families have access to the many resources available in the community.



Stay up to date
with the BCPS
Bi-Weekly
Newsletter



Check out the
community
calendar to see
upcoming events.



Check out the
community
calendar to see
upcoming events.

To Access BCPS Parent University:

Visit

bit.ly/pubcps

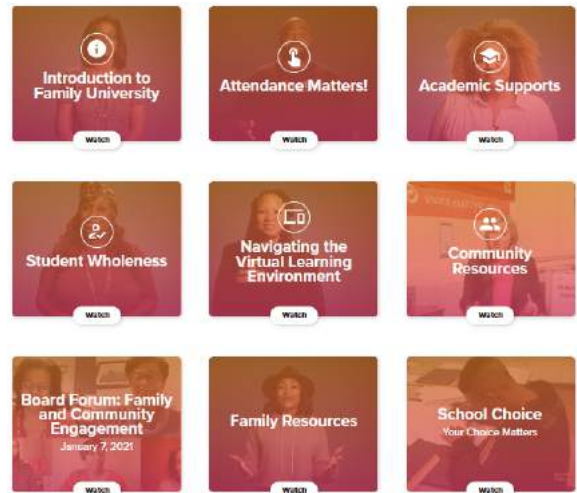
CITY SCHOOLS FAMILY UNIVERSITY



Baltimore City Public Schools also has a website with resources, helpful videos, and information that can help parents and guardians support their child's needs. Important updates, who to reach out to report a bullying incident, and community calendars are also easily accessible on this website.



Student Support Team helps navigate social emotional and learning disability related topics.



Videos from school faculty are available to answer questions families might have.

To Access the Family University:

Visit

bit.ly/famubc

COMMUNITY PEER MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES



We know that knowing the first step to take when navigating the mental health care system can be difficult, and you do not have to do this alone. There are several free resources available to help you catch your bearings, and many people who have been in your shoes who are willing to share advice and support you along you and your child's journey.

From finding affordable care options, to coming up with a plan to make sure your child is supported at school, the below are just a few groups that can help you feel confident as you care for your child.

Lay Mental Health Advocates

The National Institute on Mental Health has begun a Lay Mental Health Advocate program, which pairs individuals seeking mental health support with someone who has personal experience navigating the mental health system. Reach out to NAMI Metro Baltimore (410) 435-2600 or info@namibaltimore.org to connect.

NAMI Metropolitan Baltimore

The Baltimore chapter of the country-wide National Alliance on Mental Illness. We help offer free mental health support through our peer-led support group and education classes, and can offer empathy and connect individuals to local resources when you call our HelpLine at (410) 435-2600 or email info@namibaltimore.org

You are not alone. Support is available.

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS



Helplines:

24/7 Crisis Text Line

Text "NAMI" to 741-741

NAMI Metropolitan Baltimore Helpline

Monday - Friday, 9AM to 5PM, 410-435-2600

Baltimore City Crisis Response

410-433-5175

Baltimore County Crisis Response

410-931-2214

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

24/7 hotline with skilled, trained counselors at a local crisis center, 1-800-273-8255

Spanish Suicide Prevention Hotline

24/7 hotline; will be connected to a skilled trained counselor, 1-800-784-2432

Maryland Crisis Hotline

24/7 hotline for an emergency situation concerning an adult or child's mental health, 1-800-422-0009

Youth Support:

Help4MDYouth Chat

Confidential talk with experts about thoughts, feelings, and suicide before exploring positive next steps. 1-800-422-0009 Crisis Chat Link: www.help4mdyouth.org/chat

Child Mind Institute

Counseling & therapies designed for family and caregivers. General inquiries- 212-308-3118 <https://childmind.org/>

Baltimore Child and Adolescent Response System

BCARS provides brief and intensive community-based services for children in psychiatric crisis to divert or shorten in-patient hospitalization and to link clients to community providers that will serve them for ongoing care. <https://www.catholiccharities-md.org/services/bcars-baltimore-child-adolescent-response-system/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This resource guide was made possible by the contributions of school counselors and social workers, mental health advocates, and community partners local to Baltimore, Maryland. We wish to give a special thanks to Courtney Blair, Tiamo Johnson, Bria Robinson, Brandon Johnson, Stephanie Perez, and Niamh McQuillan for their participation on the NAMI Metropolitan Baltimore Youth Programming Advisory Council, and for the insights and guidance they shared as we navigated how we could best lend our resources to support youth mental health during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We aim to continue to use these insights to further support the mental health of youth, and this includes educating and supporting their support networks. This resource guide, as well as a resource guide for school staff and students, will live on our website at www.namibaltimore.org. For any questions, please reach out to us at info@namibaltimore.org or (410) 435-2600.