

# 4 Ways You Can Stop Mental Health Myths & Misperceptions

## Stop using mental health disorders as adjectives.

Using mental health disorders in place of adjectives diminishes the seriousness of mental illnesses, further contributing to stigma and spreading misinformation as to what it really means to be mentally ill. **Examples:** Referring to a meticulous person as OCD or the changing weather as Bipolar.

### *What You Can Do:*

Educate yourself and others so we do not use diagnoses as **buzzwords**.



NFFCMH

National Federation of Families  
for Children's Mental Health

## Stop using phrases like, "Just snap out of it!"

Not only does this delegitimize someone's mental illness, it also places the blame on the person by making it seem like a choice. Asking someone to "stop" or "snap out of it" is like asking someone with, say, a broken arm, to stop feeling pain by thinking positively. Physical health doesn't work that way and neither does mental health.

### *What You Can Do:*

Ask how someone is feeling and listen. Sometimes, just knowing that someone else is **listening can make all the difference** in the world.



## Stop treating psychiatric medication differently than medication prescribed for a physical illness.

Medication is often viewed as a crutch, or something only "crazy" people need. We invalidate those with mental health challenges with beliefs like this. If it were possible to just "pull ourselves out of it," suicide wouldn't be the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common cause of death for youth ages 15 to 24.

### *What You Can Do:*

Help others understand that medication to improve **mental health is no different** than medication needed for a physical condition.



## Stop leaving mental health out of the conversation.

We aren't taught language to discuss mental health the way we are for physical health.

### *What You Can Do:*

If you are someone who struggles with a mental health challenge, share your experience. If not, don't be afraid to educate yourself, and ask questions. Approach the topic with sensitivity and without judgement. Also, talk with children and youth about their feelings. Make mental health part of the conversation in your home.



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

# Self-Care for Families

## TIPS TO HELP FUEL YOUR FAMILY'S SELF-CARE JOURNEY

### EMOTIONAL

- Write positive notes
- Verbalize & talk about feelings
- Draw self portraits
- Practice positive self-talk

### PHYSICAL

- Dance party
- Go for a walk
- Free yoga (Cosmic Kids)
- Good sleep
- Eat a balanced diet

### SPIRITUAL

- A gratitude list
- Write thank you's
- Spend time outside
- Talk about forgiveness

### MENTAL

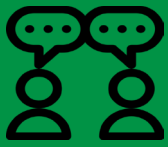
- Read together
- Draw or write stories
- Practice belly breaths
- Make vision boards
- Make mindfulness jars

### PRACTICAL

- Clean up/declutter
- Assign chores
- Learn about money
- Homework/study
- Have a daily routine
- Create a budget

### SOCIAL

- Play in the park
- Call friends/family
- Have family dinner
- Talk about friendship
- Take a break from media



## TALK

Talk with your children about their mental health. Make topics around mental health, stress, anxiety, fear and feelings common in your home and in your child's life.

#weALLhaventmentalhealth



## TRUST

Trust your gut; you know your child best! If you believe your child is struggling or needs help, trust that feeling.

#NoHealthWithoutMentalHealth



## ROLE MODEL

Show your children it is ok to talk about and care for their mental health by taking care of yourself.

#ChildrensMentalHealthMatters

# MENTAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN

## *What Parents Can Do*

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH, [FFCMH.ORG](http://FFCMH.ORG) • THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT, [YMHPROJECT.ORG](http://YMHPROJECT.ORG)



## ASK FOR HELP

Get a referral to a mental health specialist, if needed. Provide your child with every opportunity to receive treatment and support – just as you would for a broken arm or a fever.



## CONNECT

You are not alone; 1 in 5 children experiences a mental health condition. Connect with other families who can offer support, help and resources.



## TEAM UP

Build a team with the professionals and child-serving systems involved in your child's life. An open and honest dialogue with teachers, coaches, doctors and others will give them the information they need to support your child.

## Help our organization be a Children's Mental Health Matters! Community Champion!

Friday, May 7, 2021 is Children's Mental Health Matters! Green Day

You are encouraged to wear something **green** to raise awareness of the importance of children's mental health.

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### Fast Facts about Children's Mental Health

Mental health impacts:

- How we feel about ourselves
- How we relate to others
- How we handle new, stressful, and challenging situations

One of every five children experience a mental emotional or behavioral health problem before age 18.

Up to 70% of school-aged children with a diagnosable mental illness do not receive treatment.

Early intervention is the best way to prevent long-term or severe conditions into adulthood.

Mental health is something everyone has, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, income, or education. Mental health awareness helps all children have opportunities to be successful in school, at home, in the community, and in their future adult lives.



Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is a great time to learn ways to support children's mental health and how to recognize signs of mental health problems.

**Sunday May 2:** Watch for our Children's Mental Health Coloring Champions on social media.

**Monday May 3:** Inside Out Activity – Watch the Pixar movie Inside Out and talk about the emotions characters with your family.

**Tuesday May 4:** Today I Feel... Talk to your students or family about what today was like for you.

**Wednesday May 5:** Family Dinner – have a family discussion about diversity and inclusion around the dinner table.

**Thursday May 6:** Honor Teachers and Parents Day – How do you manage stress and wellbeing?

**Friday May 7:** Go GREEN Day – Wear green today to raise awareness of the importance of children's mental health.