

TEENS DEALING WITH ADVERSITY

TEENS DEALING WITH
MENTAL ILLNESS

by Philip Wolny



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AT A GLANCE

- Emotions and thoughts can be intense during the teen years.
- Situational depression and anxiety are normal. Depression, anxiety, and other issues that stick around can be signs of mental illness.
- Genetics, someone's environment, trauma, and other factors can lead to symptoms of a mental health disorder.
- Teens may struggle privately with their mental health. Mental illness can lead to serious symptoms such as considering suicide.
- Teens with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and other anxiety disorders might isolate from friends and family and fixate on certain behaviors and routines.

LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Teens cope with mental disorders in many ways. Each young person's path toward mental wellness is a personal one. Therapy, medication, or other techniques can all help teens cope.

Most mental illnesses do not have a cure. Healing does not work the way it does for physical issues like a broken arm. But people can find helpful ways to manage and minimize their symptoms.

There are many ways for teens to cope with their mental illness.

TALKING IT THROUGH

A first step in treating mental illness is finding someone to talk to and getting a diagnosis. Therapists and psychologists are two kinds of professionals who help with mental health issues. One of their main healing tools is psychotherapy, also known as talk therapy. School counselors and social workers can also help.

Different kinds of therapy work for different patients and situations. Many patients see a therapist once a week. Other people might need more frequent sessions when they are going through a rough time. Their caregiver might plan out a mix of individual and group therapy sessions.

Tobias J. Atkins told his story to the Anxiety & Depression Association



Group therapy gives patients an opportunity to meet with other people who may be struggling with similar issues.

of America (ADAA). Atkins suffered throughout childhood with social anxiety, generalized anxiety, depression, and OCD.

didn't even try. . . . I was raised to believe it was weak to talk about feelings. . . . I have since come to realize that admitting you need help and talking about your feelings is one of the bravest things you can do.”⁵

Atkins's life changed after he went to a psychologist. He learned to stop thinking of himself negatively. He learned self-acceptance. He did not have to

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a common type of talk therapy. Patients are shown how to change their self-image. Therapists help them fight negative and unhelpful ways of thinking. Patients gain confidence in dealing with their issues. They learn how to change their behavior.

WHAT DOES SELF-CARE LOOK LIKE?



Speak with a health care specialist if mental health does not improve.

Practicing self-care can help improve overall mental wellness.

GLOSSARY

delusions

thoughts or beliefs that are not grounded in reality, and which are a symptom of serious mental disorders

diagnosed

when a medical or mental health professional decides the likely cause of symptoms a patient is experiencing

hyperactivity

the state of being more active than is appropriate for a particular time, place, or situation

impulsive

prone to taking action without thinking about the consequences

manic

having large feelings of excitement or energy above the typical amount, which can be difficult to manage

psychosis

a mental health symptom in which the mind loses connection with reality

purging

getting rid of something all at once

stigma

negative views that people hold against others who are seen as different

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