

September 2022



Digital Life Newsletter For Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the 2022-2023 school year. September is Suicide Prevention Month. Following are some apps and websites to help with children's mental health.

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Kids' Mental Health Apps and Websites for Anxiety, Depression, Coping Skills, and Professional Support

Apps, sites, and text hotlines help children cope with issues from stress to suicide.

Growing up has always been a challenge, but it seems today's children are having an especially rough time. Anxiety, depression, and the youth suicide rate have been on the rise for the last decade, especially for girls and children of color. It's safe to say that the need for easily accessible mental health tools that children can use privately and safely is more critical than ever.

Everyone's mental health journey is different. Talking with your child and getting professional help is the first and best course of action if you think they need it. But digital

tools can be an added boost to get your child through a tough time. They're particularly helpful for children who find it hard to reach out and ask for help.

Depending on your family's needs, you can find apps and sites designed for immediate help, ongoing support, information, and positive mental health habits. If your child is going to use any of these tools, it's a good idea to review them yourself to see how they work and to check their privacy policies to learn how they handle sensitive information.

The Basics: Free and Confidential Support

Make sure your child has access to immediate help in case they ever need it. Consider sitting down with them and adding these resources to their contacts.

Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741, or message them on WhatsApp. Young people of color can text "STEVE" to 741741 to reach culturally trained counselors.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988. They offer translation services in over 250 languages.

For Parents and Caregivers

These organizations offer guidance for families, whether you need app recommendations or more comprehensive services.

Child Mind Institute. This independent, nonprofit agency provides advice for parents and caregivers, research, and professional referrals for a wide range of mental health issues.

PsyberGuide. Expert-recommended apps for coping with anxiety, depression, stress, and more.

Immediate Help for Kids in Crisis

Calm Harm – Manages Self Harm. For children who feel compelled to harm themselves in times of distress, this app offers proven methods to derail those impulses. After they choose a method, they set a timer so they can move on when the urge passes. Over time, they might be able to internalize these strategies.

It Gets Better. LGBTQ+ youth face specific challenges around mental health. This site offers tons of video stories with messages of hope and encouragement for LGBTQ+ youth. And if you're not sure how to approach these issues, you and your child can take a look at the resources together.

My3. Though no one wants to think about their child feeling suicidal, it's important to talk about it if that's what's happening. This is a powerful tool for children during those critical moments. It includes a contact list to call for help if they're in despair (911 and the National Suicide Hotline are automatically included), and a self-created safety plan. The app also uses strategies created by mental health professionals to help children avoid suicidal thoughts and suggests actions to take when they need more support.

The Trevor Project. Geared toward LGBTQ+ children, the Trevor Project offers a range of ways to connect, so children can find some support using whatever means are available at the moment. They can call, instant-message, text, or use the Trevor Project social channels to connect with a trained counselor or other teens.

For Ongoing Support

AAKOMA Project: The nonprofit helps children of color seek professional help and learn how to maintain their mental health. Their website has advice on managing social media, self-care, and other ways for children to find support.

HappiMe for Young People. Using a kid-friendly approach, this app walks participants through four steps: Learn, Recognize, Deal with Your Emotions, and Replace. It helps them picture their thoughts as something separate from themselves -- a psychological method that allows people to deal with negative thoughts.

Sanvello. Created with mental health professionals, this app offers an array of therapeutic tools and services. Children can set goals, schedule time each day to focus on mental health, join community forums, access a new therapist or their own (if their therapist works with the app), and more.

Virtual Hope Box. This tool uses three modes -- Remind Me, Distract Me, and Relax Me -- to help kids stay connected during stressful times. Kids can comfort themselves by storing personally meaningful photos and music, playing relaxation exercises, and more.

We R Native: This site -- by Indigenous youth, for Indigenous youth -- shares ways that teens can use to reach out for help. It also has tips on dealing with body image, self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, and more.

Wysa: Mental Health Support. Though getting support from a chatbot might seem like a strange approach, the AI character in this app can offer daily validation and reminders around recurring mental health challenges. A paid version of the app includes access to a therapist if the free chatbot isn't helpful, plus other tools to maintain emotional wellness.

For Information and Awareness

National Alliance on Mental Illness. The NAMI website offers a wealth of information for kids who want to learn more about mental health issues, look up specific concerns, or even help a friend in need. You can also find resources based on gender, race, ethnicity, and identity.

TeensHealth.org. With resources for kids, teens, parents and caregivers, and educators, this site has information for everyone. You can also find information about common concerns like relationships, body image, and dealing with stress.

For Setting Positive Mental Health Habits

Apart of Me. This unique app uses a gentle adventure-game approach to tackle tough topics for kids dealing with loss. By exploring a beautiful world, getting guidance from its characters, and doing periodic meditations, kids can process their feelings and get strategies for handling hard times. Apart of Me also offers audio recordings from other kids who went through similar experiences.

Headspace for Kids. This app uses common meditation techniques such as breath awareness for the mind to rest. After a one-week free trial, Headspace costs \$12.99 per month.

Three Good Things. This teen-created app lets kids write about three positive experiences every day. They can also set a daily reminder and review old entries to remember their positive thoughts.

All the information in this article was taken from:

<https://www.common sense media.org/articles/kids-mental-health-apps-and-websites-for-anxiety-depression-coping-skills-and-professional-support>

