

# The -ISM Youth Files: Mental Health Toolkit



Taking care of our Mental health is important for everyone - and everyone deserves help and support. Whether you or someone you know is struggling in some way, or you just want someone to talk to, this toolkit can offer a little help, support, and connection. You are not alone. We are all in this together. The first step is starting the conversation.



*Created in partnership with MediaRites & Oregon Children's Theatre*



## Start the Conversation

The crew at Youthline shared [these stories](#) through the medium of digital storytelling to help do just that. Check out their stories and feel free to call in or text to share your own. Youthline is just one of many amazing organizations that are doing their best to break down stigma and open conversations.

### YOUTHLINE

YouthLine is a free teen-to-teen crisis support and helpline. Teens are available to help daily from 4-10 pm PST (adults are available by phone at all other times!) You can call 877-968-8491 Text 839863 or chat online. (<https://oregonyouthline.org>)

### SEIZE THE AWKWARD

Hear [real stories](#) from celebrities and influencers like Billie Eilish, Aminé, and Tyler Posey share about how talking with friends about their mental health made an impact. Plus, some online tools like conversation guides and tips that can help you help those in need.

### YOU MATTER

You Matter is a safe space for youth to discuss and share stories about mental health and wellness, created by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. They provide help for everything from Addiction, Anxiety, Depression, Eating Disorders, Gender Identity, Self-Harm, Sexual Assault, Sexuality, and Suicide prevention.

### NOW MATTERS NOW

If you've had suicidal thoughts, big emotions, or problems that felt unsolvable, you are not alone. Now Matters Now believes you're in excellent company. Through shared stories, tips, and advice from young people who've been there NMN is here to help.

### ULIFELINE.ORG

ULifeline is an anonymous, confidential, online resource for college mental health centers. Need help now? Text "START" to 741-741 or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

### RAINN.ORG

RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country. Chat online at [online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org) or call 1-800-656-4673





**“With the worsening COVID-19 statistics, the continuous inflow of bad news seemed to be bearing down on me.”**

**-Adrija**

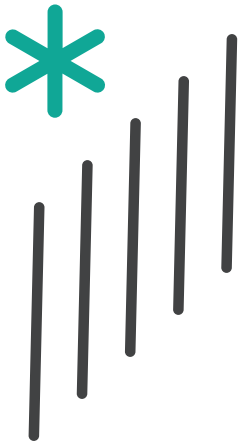
A lot of us are struggling more than usual during the pandemic. This is a global trauma affecting us all. [This study](#) from the CDC shows just how difficult the struggle has been.

Even before the pandemic, people were experiencing or had experienced some type of trauma or had an [Adverse Childhood Experience](#) known as an ACE. The Center for Youth Wellness created this [ACE questionnaire](#) as a resource to help understand how ACEs affect us all. ACEs don't only affect us when they happen, they affect our mental and physical health well into our teen years and into adulthood.

ACEs also add to Historical or [Generational Trauma](#), when the effects of trauma are passed down between generations. BIPOC individuals and families are disproportionately affected by generational trauma. According to [mygoodbrain.org](#), “Almost 50% of all Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), as well as the LGBTQ+, suffer from mental health issues. This percentage has increased as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.” [This video](#) opens the conversation on community response, cultural healing, and where we go from here.



When people share their experiences it's important to fully listen to them. Young people often express that the adults in their life don't listen to them. It can be hard to share when we don't feel heard. [This article](#) from Parents Letting Go shares a proactive approach to Deep Listening or “Listening in Color.” Not everything is black and white.



## Affinity Groups

Sometimes it's helpful to talk to others who have similar experiences to ourselves. An affinity group is a "safer space," where everyone in the group shares a particular identity. Affinity groups can be a place where underrepresented or marginalized groups can come together to feel less isolated and more connected.

### THE TREVOR PROJECT

The Trevor Project offers accredited life-saving, life-affirming programs and services to LGBTQ youth that create safe, accepting, and inclusive environments over the phone, online, and through text.

**"There were physical fights almost three times a month, which is abnormal, and intense bullying. All of this was mostly directed at the LGBTQ+ community."**

**-Journeya**

**"I'm Jamaican, Chinese from my mother's side and mostly African American on my father's side. I'm a hybrid, and both of my cultures suffered all of 2020."**

**-Deandre**

### PROJECT LOTUS

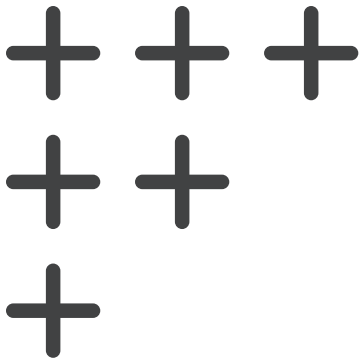
Project Lotus destigmatizes mental health in Asian-American communities by tackling the model minority stereotype through culturally-relevant education for the community and the empowerment of voices.

### THE MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

The Mental Health Coalition is dedicated to addressing the mental health needs of the BIPOC community, and we know that society's work is far from over in creating culturally informed, quality mental health equity for all. For immediate text support, reach out to Crisis Text Line by texting COALITION to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor for free 24/7. You can also call National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. It's free and highly confidential unless it's essential to contact emergency services to help you or your friend stay safe.

Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio 1-888-628-9454.





## Mental Health Coaching

**It took me a little over a year to come to the realization that I might need some help controlling my anxiety.**

**-Mila**

We need to take care of our minds as much as we need to take care of our bodies. We don't have to be in a bad place before we reach out for help. Just like an athlete works with a coach or trainer when they're in great shape we can work on our mental health with a counselor or therapist. An athlete might also have physical therapy after an injury, the same way we might need extra support when going through a difficult time. No matter what we're going through, we are not alone.

### YOUTH ERA

Youth Era creates solutions for communities across the country that look beyond short-term assistance for the few and toward sustainable support for the many. With Youth Era services, young people have a much better chance of becoming happy, successful, and contributing adult members of their communities, and everyone reaps the rewards.

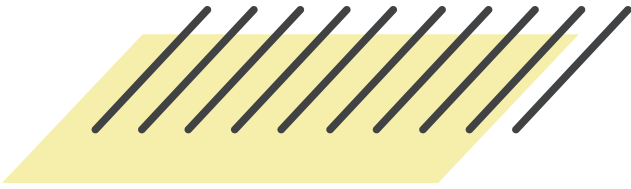
### MENTAL HEALTH IS HEALTH

Our emotional health can range from thriving to struggling. No matter what you're experiencing, there are ways to take action to support yourself and those around you. This initiative aims to normalize the conversation, create a connection to resources and inspire action on mental health.

### WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

Whatever your goals or challenges, WRAP can help you make a plan with results you can see. Discover simple, safe, and effective tools to maintain wellness; stay on track with your life goals; identify what throws you off track, and develop a plan to keep moving forward so you can gain support and stay in control even in a crisis.





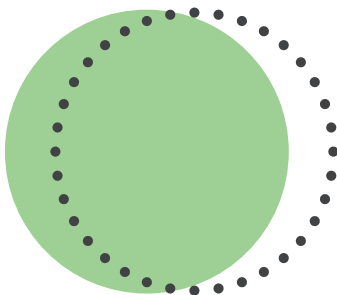
# Coping Strategies

When we're feeling overwhelmed, it can be difficult to manage our emotions and think clearly. We can reach out for a little extra help and we can also use coping strategies.

A coping strategy is something that helps us find some peace and calm when we start to feel stressed out. It can be something as simple as putting in earbuds and listening to music, taking five minutes to meditate, or going for a run. Any little thing we can do for ourselves to feel better when we need it or to stay chill when we feel stressed is a coping strategy.

What are some coping strategies you have? Sometimes it can be helpful to share these with people close to us. For example: when I'm feeling stressed or overwhelmed it helps me to go for a walk. How would you fill in these blanks? When I'm feeling \_\_\_\_ it helps me to \_\_\_\_.

If you can't think of any coping strategies of your own, these resources might help you find some ways to find some calm. They can also be tools to maintain positive mental health even when you're not struggling.



## CELL PHONE APPS:

### CALM

An app to calm your mind and help you meditate, sleep, relax and breathe. The #1 app for Sleep, Meditation, and Relaxation, with over 100 million downloads and over 1.5M+ 5-star reviews and is dedicated to adventures in mindfulness, the power of a good night's sleep, and cultivating a healthier and happier life.

### SUPERBETTER

A game app with points for taking care of yourself. SuperBetter builds resilience - the ability to stay strong, motivated and optimistic even in the face of change and difficult challenges. Playing SuperBetter unlocks the heroic potential to overcome tough situations and achieve goals that matter most.

### CALM HARM

Calm Harm provides tasks to help users resist or manage the urge to self-harm. The app contains five categories to help you fight the urge to self-harm. Each category includes five to 15-minute activities. These activities turn users' attention to healthier ways to handle emotions and impulses.

### MINDDOC: YOUR COMPANION

MindDoc is a leading monitoring and self-management app for promoting emotional well-being and coping with such mental illnesses as depression, anxiety, insomnia, and eating disorders. MindDoc can be used by itself for prevention or self-help, or as a part of treatment with a mental health practitioner.



## Gratitude Practice

Another coping strategy is having a gratitude practice. We can all benefit from practicing gratitude. Finding gratitude can be as simple as noticing the good things in life, big or small that we take for granted and appreciating them.

### NOTICE THE GOOD THINGS

Each day, think of 3 things you are grateful for. This can be any small things like: went for a bike ride, saw my BF, or had really good pizza. Think of three of your own.

### START A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Write down at least one good thing each day. It makes it more likely that we will notice other good things as they happen in the moment.

### SOAK IT UP

There are some moments when we naturally feel filled with gratitude. These are moments when you say to yourself, "Oh, wow, this is amazing!" or "How great is this!" Pause. Notice and absorb that feeling of true, genuine gratitude. Let it sink in. Soak it up. It'll stay with you.

### TAKE A MOMENT

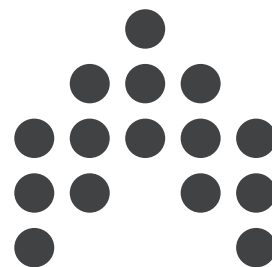
Some people say grace before a meal. Pausing in gratitude before eating doesn't have to be religious. We can just take a moment to reflect and be grateful for what we have.

### EXPRESS YOURSELF

We can also show our appreciation for others by saying things like "thank you for listening when..." "It helped me out when you..." or even just saying "I appreciate you" to a friend or loved one. You don't have to be mushy or over-the-top. We all have our own style. It can even be a simple, "Thanks for hanging out today. It was fun". A little goes a long way.

### DO SOMETHING KIND

Return a favor, or act with kindness. Maybe there's a moment you can "pay it forward." Hold the door open for the person behind you, do someone else's chores without letting the person find out it was you. Notice how you feel!

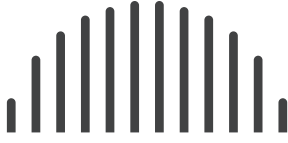


As helpful as coping strategies and gratitude practice may be, we might not always feel we are in a safe enough space to use them. If you or a loved one are in a situation that feels unsafe [The Domestic Violence Hotline](#) can help. You can call 1-800-799-SAFE (TTY 1-800-787-3224) or text START to 88788.

It can also be hard to find gratitude when we're struggling to make ends meet or keep food on the table. SNAP, the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, "provides food benefits, access to a healthy diet, and education on food preparation and nutrition to low-income households." You can check if you're eligible by calling 1-800-723-3638 or going to:

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/assistance/food-benefits/Pages/eligibility-apply.aspx>





# Suicide Prevention Resources for Youth & Young Adults

**“Here’s the thing about suicide. It’s a parasite that consumes its host. It becomes the only thing in the host’s mind. I used every single waking second following my first attempt planning my next attempt. This time, I would starve myself to death. This time, I would succeed. I almost did.”**

**-Isabella**

## **NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE**

1-800-273-TALK (8255) / Or dial **988** to be connected!

The Lifeline is a 24-hour toll-free phone line for people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. An online [chat](#) option is available. Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime. Crisis Text Line is here for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

## **U.S. SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

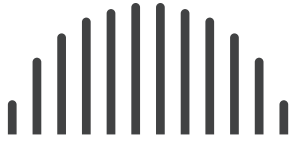
### **ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA)**

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA’s mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities.

### **SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER**

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) is the only federally supported resource center devoted to advancing the implementation of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. SPRC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).





# Suicide Prevention Resources for Youth & Young Adults

## **AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY (AAS)**

The membership of AAS includes mental health and public health professionals, researchers, suicide prevention and crisis intervention centers, school districts, crisis center volunteers, survivors of suicide loss, attempt survivors, and a variety of laypersons who have an interest in suicide prevention.

## **YOUTH.GOV**

youth.gov is the U.S. government website that helps you create, maintain, and strengthen effective youth programs. Included are youth facts, funding information, and tools to help you assess community assets, generate maps of local and federal resources, search for evidence-based youth programs, and keep up-to-date on the latest, youth-related news.

## **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH (NIMH)**

NIMH is the lead federal agency for research on mental disorders. NIMH is one of the 27 Institutes and Centers that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the largest biomedical research agency in the world. NIH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

## **THE JED FOUNDATION**

Transitioning into adulthood can bring big changes and intense challenges. The Jed Foundation (JED) empowers teens and young adults with the skills and support to grow into healthy, thriving adults.

## **ACTIVE MINDS**

Active Minds is the nation's premier nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for young adults. Through education, research, advocacy, and a focus on young adults ages 14–25, Active Minds are opening up the conversation about mental health and creating lasting change in the way mental health is talked about, cared for, and valued in the United States.

## **AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION (AFSP)**

Established in 1987, the AFSP is a voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education, and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death. AFSP is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those in need.

