HEALTHY HEARTS & MINDS

CCYSB YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

JANUARY 2025

What's Inside:

EXPLORING OUR STRENGTHS

We can be so quick to focus on the things we aren't doing so well or the things that we would like to change about ourselves. Sometimes it can be really hard to think of what we are good at or areas that we excel in. Research in positive psychology has shown that learning to identify and use our strengths in new ways can improve well-being. Research also shows that people who know their strengths and use them frequently tend to feel happier, have better self-esteem, and are more likely to accomplish their goals. In order to be able to use our strengths to do these things, we first need to work on identifying our strengths. Ask yourself these questions: 1.) What are you good at? 2.) What do you enjoy doing? 3.) What areas of your life have been most successful? Let's say your answer for number 1 is "basketball." Basketball isn't necessarily a strength, but athleticism and discipline are. You could then ask yourself: "What makes you good at basketball?" or "What about yourself allowed you to be successful in this area?" Other questions that may be helpful in identifying strengths could be "what makes a really good day for me?" or "When do I feel I was at my best during the past week?" Sometimes it can even be helpful to ask loved ones what strengths they can identify in you as it may be easier for them to recognize these things. (Hint: google "list of strengths" or "strengths worksheet" to find lists of examples of strengths. This can be a good place to start and at least become familiar with different strengths that people commonly report having).
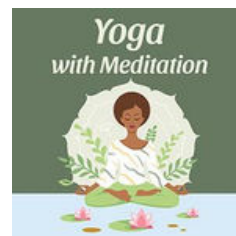
After you are able to identify some of your strengths, your next step is to further develop and use them. Think of the different area of your life that are important to you. Common ones include relationships, school/work, and personal fulfillment. List the different strengths you have that may help you in each of these areas. Try to think of specific times when your strengths were able to help you in these situations. Finally, try to think of 2 new ways that you could use your strengths in these different areas. Sometimes it can be helpful to think of an existing problem you are having and then use your identified strengths to work through this problem more effectively.

Yoga with Meditation

**January 17, 2025
10-11am
Eldersburg Library**
*registration required

Experience the many benefits of yoga and meditation. This class welcomes students of all levels. Meditation exercises will be incorporated into the practice. Please wear comfortable clothing; bring a blanket, yoga mat, and a strap (or belt or towel).

PAJAMA PARTY STORYTIME

**January 14, 2025
6:30-7:15pm
Finksburg Library**

WEAR YOUR PAJAMAS, BRING YOUR FAVORITE STUFFED ANIMAL, AND LISTEN TO STORIES BEFORE BED. THIS STORYTIME INTRODUCES STORIES THROUGH BOOKS, SONGS, AND ACTIVITIES APPROPRIATE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS FOR KIDS AND TEENS

Do you ever wonder, what drives us to act the way we do or to make the choices that we make? In the 1940's, an American psychologist, Abraham Maslow proposed his theory that our actions and unconscious desires were driven by a progression of needs which he called the Hierarchy of Needs. This hierarchy is depicted as a pyramid with the most basic needs on the bottom, the psychological needs in the middle, and the self-fulfillment needs at the top of the pyramid. Teens are in a stage of development where they are experiencing changes physically, emotionally, and intellectually. They are learning about themselves and their relationship to others. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can help those who want to support youths and their healthy development.

1. Physiological Needs. At the bottom of the pyramid are physiological needs, which are simply the physical things we need to survive such as food, water, air, shelter, sleep, and good health. The physical needs of a teenager include getting enough sleep, a healthy and balanced diet, and exercise.
2. Safety Needs. Next on the pyramid is a need to feel safe. This can include protection from the elements as well as feelings of security, order and law, and freedom from fear. To support teens in this, you may need to help them find safety from trauma or abuse. It could be helpful to work with them on developing coping strategies to manage any distressing symptoms.
3. Love and Belonging Needs. These include friendship, inclusion, and intimacy in friendships and family relationships. Having strong, supportive family relationships are very important in order to fulfill the emotional needs of a teenager. Other ways to help support these needs are encouraging them to join after-school activities and reminding them that you love and care about them.
4. Self-Esteem Needs. The needs in this category include achievement, independence, self-respect, and respect from others. Encouraging self-exploration is a way to support them in this area.
5. Self-Actualization Needs. Self-Actualization involves realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, and seeking personal growth. For teens, this could look like setting goals and finding something that they are passionate about.

Considering all aspects of health and well-being for teenagers can help parents support their teens in the best ways possible. Engagement in therapy can help teens address psychological needs and build stronger relationships with their family and friends.

To read more about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, you can visit: https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SELF DIAGNOSIS

Imagine this. You're scrolling on Tik Tok or Instagram and see a video of an influencer discussing something along the lines of "Signs You May Have ADHD" or "Common Signs of Autism." You start to watch the video and may have a thought such as "that sounds a lot like me. I do those things." Your algorithm is soon filled with similar stories and posts which further increases your certainty that "yes, I do have x,y,z...." Over the past several years, diagnosis-related medical content has been becoming more prevalent on social media. Some of this content is created by actual medical professions, but a majority is made by content creators or influencers. The stories can be really relatable and convincing which are reasons why self-diagnosis is at an increase. Some statistics show that 1 out of every 4 people are self-diagnosing based on information they saw on social media. Common self-diagnoses are anxiety, depression, ADHD, Autism, PTSD, and OCD. According to one study, 43% of those who made a self-diagnosis followed up with a medical professional afterwards (tebra.com). There are both benefits and drawbacks of social media diagnosis content that have been highlighted among researchers and the psychology community. Benefits include increased awareness and reduced stigma as well as patient empowerment and increased sense of community. Drawbacks include an increase in misdiagnosis, widespread misinformation or half-factual information, over-generalization, and fear-mongering.

One important thing to remember is that there is likely a "why" of self-diagnosing. Why are individuals relating to this content and diagnosing themselves with a variety of mental health conditions? As humans, we experience a range of difficult and complicated emotions that can feel really confusing and hard to manage. Sometimes having a label or a "reason" for why we are feeling a certain way can be very affirming. If you were scrolling on social media and came across content stating "are you feeling this way? You may have____," this can feel really validating and can alleviate negative feelings (such as shame) someone may have been experiencing.

Since mental health and emotions can be so complicated and confusing, it is also important to remember that a comprehensive evaluation by a mental health professional is needed to determine an accurate diagnosis. Many of the videos on social media oversimplify and overgeneralize mental health symptoms and conditions, making misdiagnosis more likely. While the experience can be validating, self-diagnosis can also have the opposite effect, making an individual think something is wrong with them, when they may be on the typical end of functioning. Consuming triggering content can also heighten a person's emotional distress, so it is important to recognize when you may need a break from social media platforms. And again, an evaluation from a trained professional will have the best results.

Safety Plans Work

There is hope.

1. Write 3 warning signs that a crisis may be developing.

2. Write 3 internal coping strategies that can take your mind off your problems.

3. Who/What are 3 people or places that provide distraction? (Write name/place and phone numbers)
   - Phone
   - Phone
   - Phone

4. Who can you ask for help? (Write names and phone numbers)
   - Phone
   - Phone
   - Phone

5. Professionals or agencies you can contact during a crisis:
   - Clinician: _____ Phone _____
   - Local Urgent Care or Emergency Department:
   - Address _____ Phone _____
   - Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

6. Write out a plan to make your environment safer. (Write 2 things)

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Modified from Stanley & Brown (2021)

PEP22-08-03-007

january SELF-CARE
@POSITIVELYPRESENT

- CELEBRATE BEGINNINGS
- CREATE SOMETHING
- STITCH UP LOOSE ENDS
- GO ON AN ADVENTURE
- KEEP WARM
- HAVE A COZY DAY
- RE-READ OLD FAVORITES
- LET GO OF EXPECTATIONS
- EXPRESS YOUR LOVE
- UNLOCK INSPIRATION
- PLAN FOR THE YEAR AHEAD
- SEEK OUT SUNSHINE
- TACKLE A CHALLENGE
- GOALS
- SLOW DOWN
- SPEND TIME OUTSIDE
- WRITE DOWN YOUR GOALS
- EMBRACE OPPORTUNITY
- TAKE TIME TO REST
- LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE
- NOTICE BEAUTY

Crisis Resources

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:
9-8-8 (Call or Text)
Chat: https://988lifeline.org/chat

The Trevor Project
thetrevorproject.org
1-866-488-7386
text 678-678

Carroll County Mobile Crisis:
410-952-9552

To access assessment and treatment services at CCYSB call
410-848-2500 x 1
or
Walk-in Assessment Hours:
Tuesday: 8:30am-11 am & 2-5pm
Wednesday: 11:30am-2pm
(We have a limited number of assessment slots available each day. See our website for arrival and check-in details)

CARROLL COUNTY YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU
"It Starts With the Heart."

WE ALL NEED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT.
TEXT MDYoungMinds to 898-211
Teens, get supportive text messages.

Maryland Information Network
POWERING 211 MARYLAND
Maryland DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Scan to learn more

MY NEW YEAR'S Resolutions

Name

Age

I want to try

YEAR

I want to learn

I WANT TO GO

I really want to

I will try to be healthier by

© Mrs. Merry (www.mrsmerry.com)