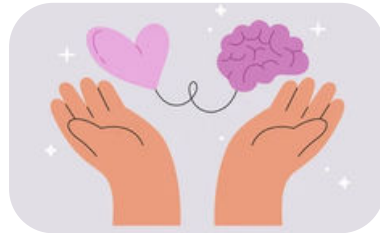




HEALTHY HEARTS & MINDS

CCYSB YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

FEBRUARY 2026



Heart Health = Mind Health: Linking Physical & Mental Wellness

When we think about “heart health,” we often picture blood pressure, cholesterol, or exercise. But did you know that taking care of your body can also have a huge impact on mental health—especially for teens navigating stress, school, and social life?

Move Your Body

Exercise isn’t just for athletes—it’s a natural mood booster.

- Why it helps: Physical activity releases endorphins, which reduce stress and improve mood.
- Easy ways for teens: Brisk walks, dancing, skateboarding, jumping rope, or even a 10-minute stretch session.
- Family tip: Make it a fun challenge together—track steps, try a weekend hike, or have a dance-off in the living room!

Sleep: The Superpower You Already Have

Lack of sleep can make emotions feel more intense, concentration harder, and anxiety worse.

- Tip for teens: Aim for 8–10 hours per night. Keep screens away 30–60 minutes before bed.
- Tip for families: Set a consistent “wind-down” routine—reading, calming music, or a brief family check-in.

Food for Thought (and Mood!)

What teens eat affects how they feel.

- Brain-friendly foods: Fruits, veggies, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- Family tip: Cook together—try one new healthy recipe a week. Teens are more likely to eat it if they helped make it!
- Sneaky mental health bonus: Hydration, balanced meals, and limiting sugary snacks can stabilize mood swings.

Small Steps, Big Impact

Encouraging teens to connect physical health with emotional wellness can give them tools for stress, anxiety, and everyday challenges. Families can support this by:

- Moving together, not just telling them to move.
- Making sleep and meals a shared priority.
- Celebrating small wins—like finishing a walk, cooking a healthy meal, or keeping a sleep streak.

Quick Challenge: This week, pick one physical wellness habit to try as a family and notice how it impacts everyone’s mood.

What's Inside:

Heart Health = Mind Health: Linking
Physical & Mental Wellness

Love, Relationships, and Heartbreak

Heart-Smart: Navigating Crushes,
Dating, and Friendships

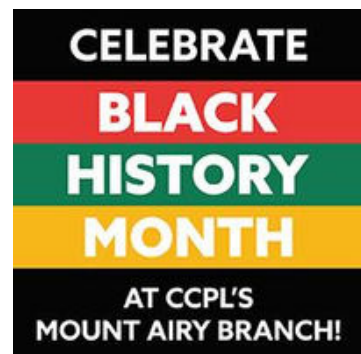


FEB 23 Westminister Large
2026 Meeting Room
MON (Staff Use Only)

Monday, February 23, 2026
3:30pm–4:30pm

Calling all teens looking for leadership roles in planning library programs. We want you for our Teen Advisory Board! Need service hours? We've got those too! Participants can join us in person or log in virtually through Zoom by registering.

Registration opens on February 9th!



Join us in our large magazine reading area throughout the month of February as we celebrate Black History Month at CCPL's Mount Airy Branch! Drop in anytime to enjoy a DIY craft, a community puzzle, and books to read at your leisure. Explore, learn, and participate in the richness that is Black History Month.

Mount Airy Branch

705 Ridge Avenue
Mount Airy, MD 21771
(410) 386-4470



Love, Relationships, and Heartbreak: Supporting Teens Through Ups and Downs

Teen relationships—whether with friends or romantic interests—can bring joy, excitement, and sometimes heartbreak. These experiences are an important part of emotional growth, but they can feel intense. Families play a key role in helping teens navigate these ups and downs.

Coping with Breakups and Friendship Conflicts

- Normalize their feelings: Heartbreak and disagreements are painful, and it's okay to feel sad, frustrated, or angry.
- Encourage healthy coping: Journaling, talking with a trusted friend, or doing a favorite activity can help teens process emotions without bottling them up.
- Give space—but stay available: Teens often need both independence and support. Let them know you're there when they're ready to talk.

Supporting Without Overreacting

- Avoid minimizing their feelings with phrases like "It's not a big deal" or "You'll get over it."
- Resist jumping in to fix everything; this teaches problem-solving and resilience.
- Offer validation: "It makes sense you're upset. That relationship mattered to you."

Teaching Emotional Resilience

- Help teens recognize patterns in relationships—what makes friendships or dating positive, and what feels unhealthy.
- Model coping skills: Show how you handle disagreements, disappointment, and conflict in your own life.
- Encourage self-reflection: Ask questions like, "What did this teach you about yourself?" or "What boundaries could help you in future friendships?"

Healthy Communication Skills

- Practice "I feel..." statements to express emotions without blaming: "I felt hurt when..."
- Teach active listening: Repeat back what you heard and check understanding.
- Promote empathy: Encourage teens to consider the other person's perspective, which strengthens relationships.

"Heart & Hug Breath"

Here's a calming breathing exercise that boosts connection, love, and emotional calm—perfect for teens and families!

How to Do It

1. Get comfortable: Sit or stand together, close your eyes if you like, and place your hands over your heart.
2. Inhale love: Breathe in slowly for 4 counts, imagining you're filling your heart with warmth, kindness, and compassion.
3. Hold your heart: Gently press your hands to your chest and hold for 2 counts, feeling the warmth.
4. Exhale stress: Breathe out for 6 counts, imagining tension or worry leaving your body.
5. Repeat 5 times, focusing on the heart and warmth you're sending to yourself and others.

Family Twist

- Pair up and give each other a gentle shoulder or hand squeeze on the exhale—like a mini "hug" while breathing.

Heart-Smart: Navigating Crushes, Dating, and Friendships

Whether you've got a crush, just started dating, or are figuring out friendships, relationships can feel exciting... and sometimes confusing. Here's a guide to keeping your heart and your boundaries safe.

1. Spot the Red Flags

Healthy relationships should feel safe, fun, and respectful.

Watch out for:

- Someone pressuring you to do things you're not comfortable with
- Ignoring your feelings or boundaries
- Controlling or jealous behavior
- Constant arguing or drama that feels scary
- Making you feel unsafe or anxious

Trust your instincts—if something feels off, it probably is.

2. Consent Is Everything

- Consent isn't just for dating—it's about respecting boundaries in any relationship.
- "No" always means no, and "yes" should be clear, enthusiastic, and freely given.
- Remember: consent works both ways. Ask, listen, and respect each other's limits.

3. Communication Wins

- Talking openly and honestly keeps relationships strong.
- Use "I feel..." statements instead of blaming: "I feel hurt when..."
- Listen actively—repeat back what you hear to make sure you understand.
- Disagreements happen. What matters is how you handle them, not avoiding them.

4. Emotional Awareness

- Knowing your feelings—and noticing how the other person feels—makes relationships healthier.
- Ask yourself: What makes me happy or comfortable? What makes me uneasy?
- Practice empathy: Try to see things from the other person's perspective.

5. Take Care of Yourself

- You don't have to share everything—but it helps to have someone you trust to talk to.
- Celebrate your wins and learn from mistakes. Every crush, friendship, or date is a chance to grow.

Make your own "Heart-Safe Checklist":

- Do I feel respected?
- Do I feel heard?
- Am I comfortable?
- Am I having fun?

If any answer is "no," it's okay to take a step back. You deserve relationships that feel good for you.

Safety Plans Work

There is hope.



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

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

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

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

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




Modified from Stanley & Brown (2021) PEP22-08-03-007

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."

Heart-Smart Rules: Quick Guide for Teens

Keep your heart happy & safe!

- Respect Your Boundaries**
 - ✓ Say "no" if it feels wrong
 - ✓ Stick to your comfort level
 - ✓ Your limits matter
- Spot Red Flags**
 - ✓ Pressure or guilt trips
 - ✓ Jealous or controlling
 - ✓ Ignoring your feelings
- Communication is Key**
 - ✓ Use "I feel..." statements
 - ✓ Listen & understand
 - ✓ Solve problems together
- Consent Always**
 - ✓ No means NO
 - ✓ Respect boundaries
- Emotional Awareness**
 - ✓ Notice feelings
 - ✓ Practice empathy
 - ✓ Reflect on what's healthy
- Fun & Connection**
 - ✓ Feel safe & supported
 - ✓ Enjoy time together

Tip: Ask yourself—Do I feel respected? Heard? Safe? If not, step back & take care of you!

WE ALL NEED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT.



TEXT 
MDYoungMinds
to 898-211

Teens, get supportive text messages.



Scan to learn more



The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, on behalf of the Children's Cabinet, funded this project under award number CCIF-2023-0005. All points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of any State or Federal agency

My Self-Love

Self-love means that you are taking time to take care of your needs and doing things to make yourself happier. It means being kind to yourself and doing things that are best for you. Some ideas for practicing self-love can be using positive self-talk, setting boundaries with others, and taking care of your body. Below, come up with some ways that you can practice self-love and show yourself that you really love and appreciate you! _____

