



Healthy Hearts & Minds

CCYSB YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

JULY 2026



Why Representation Matters in Mental Health

Have you ever felt like no one really understands what you're going through? Maybe you've had experiences shaped by your race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender identity, or another important part of who you are. Those parts of your identity matter and they can influence how you experience mental health. Representation in mental health means having spaces where people feel seen, heard, and respected. It also means having access to mental health professionals who understand that culture and identity can play an important role in a person's experiences, strengths, and challenges.

For many BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) youth, mental health is influenced not only by everyday stress but also by experiences such as racism, discrimination, cultural expectations, immigration experiences, language barriers, or feeling like they don't fully belong. These experiences can affect emotional well-being and deserve to be recognized not overlooked or dismissed. That's why culturally responsive mental health care is so important. Culturally responsive therapists work to understand each person's background, values, traditions, and lived experiences. They recognize that culture is an important part of a person's identity and avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes. Instead, they listen with curiosity, respect, and humility to better understand what each individual needs.

Feeling understood can make it easier to open up about difficult emotions and build trust with a therapist. When young people don't feel accepted or worry that they will have to explain or defend their culture or experiences, they may be less likely to seek help or continue with treatment. Everyone deserves care where they feel safe, respected, and valued.

It's also important to remember that mental health challenges can look different across cultures. Some people may express emotional distress through physical symptoms like headaches or stomachaches. Others may have been taught that discussing emotions outside the family is unacceptable or that asking for help is a sign of weakness. These beliefs don't mean someone doesn't need support, they simply highlight why understanding a person's cultural background is an important part of providing effective care.

Representation isn't only about finding a therapist who shares your race or ethnicity, although that can be meaningful for some people. It's about finding someone who respects your identity, listens without judgment, and is willing to learn about your unique experiences. A strong therapeutic relationship is built on trust, empathy, and feeling accepted for who you are.

As we recognize BIPOC Mental Health Month, it's a reminder that everyone deserves equitable access to quality mental health care. No one should have to choose between getting help and feeling understood.

Your identity is something to be proud of. Your experiences matter. Your voice deserves to be heard. And no matter your background, you deserve mental health support that honors who you are and helps you thrive.

What's Inside:

Why Representation Matters in
Mental Health

Stay Connected This Summer

"Would You Rather?"
Self-Care Edition



Slide the Park, at City Park

11 Longwell Ave.

Dive into a day of fun and excitement with thrilling water slides and water activities, perfect for cooling off and having a blast with family and friends.

This event is free but
requires registration.



July 17th 10am-12pm



July 2: City Park, 10 AM-12 PM

July 9: King Park, 1 PM-3 PM

July 16: Dutterer Park, 10 AM-12 PM

July 23: Charles Street Tot Lot, 1
PM-3 PM

July 30: Tahoma Farm Park, 10 AM-
12 PM

Stay Connected This Summer

Summer is often seen as a time to relax, sleep in, and take a break from school. While having fewer responsibilities can feel great, the change in routine can also leave some people feeling bored, lonely, or disconnected. Without seeing classmates every day, it's easy to lose touch with friends or spend more time scrolling on your phone than actually connecting with others. The good news is that staying connected doesn't mean you have to be surrounded by people all the time. Having even one or two supportive relationships can make a big difference in your mental health. Spending time with people who make you laugh, listen without judgment, and encourage you can help reduce stress, improve your mood, and remind you that you're not alone.

Here are a few ways to stay connected this summer:

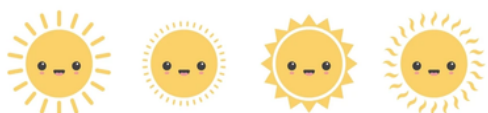
- Reach out first. If you haven't talked to someone in a while, send a text or ask if they'd like to hang out. Many people are waiting for someone else to make the first move, so don't be afraid to reach out.
- Make simple plans. You don't have to spend money or plan something elaborate. Go for a walk, grab a snack, watch a movie, play basketball, visit a local park, or have a game night.
- Try something new. Join a summer camp, sports team, volunteer program, book club, or community event. These are great opportunities to meet people who share your interests.
- Stay connected from a distance. If friends are traveling or live farther away, schedule a video call, play an online game together, or check in with a quick message.
- Take breaks from social media. While social media can help you stay in touch, it can also lead to comparison or make it seem like everyone else is having a "perfect" summer.

Remember that people usually post their highlights—not the whole story.

If you're feeling lonely, know that you're not the only one. Many teens experience loneliness during the summer, even if it doesn't seem that way. Feeling disconnected doesn't mean something is wrong with you, it often means your mind and body are telling you that you need more meaningful connection.

As you spend time with others, pay attention to how they make you feel. Healthy friendships are built on trust, respect, kindness, and being able to be yourself. The people who make you feel accepted are often more important than having a large group of friends.

This summer, set a goal to make one meaningful connection each week. It could be checking in on a friend, joining a new activity, or simply spending quality time with someone you trust. Small moments of connection can have a lasting impact on your mental health—and you might brighten someone else's day, too.



"Would You Rather?" – Self-Care Edition

Self-care looks different for everyone. What helps one person recharge may not work for someone else and that's okay. The most important part of self-care is finding healthy activities that help you feel calmer, happier, more connected, or more like yourself.

There are no right or wrong answers. This is just a chance to think about what helps you recharge and feel your best. Circle your choice, compare answers with a friend, or use these questions to discover new self-care ideas!

Would You Rather...

- ☀️ Spend an afternoon outside in nature *OR* curl up inside with a good book?
- 🎵 Listen to your favorite playlist *OR* watch your favorite comfort movie?
- 📱 Take a one-hour break from social media *OR* turn off all notifications for the day?
- 🚶 Go for a walk with a friend *OR* spend an hour doing your favorite hobby?
- 📖 Journal about your thoughts *OR* talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling?
- 🎨 Express yourself through art, music, or writing *OR* through sports or movement?
- 😴 Sleep an extra hour *OR* wake up early to watch the sunrise?
- 🍌 Treat yourself to your favorite snack *OR* cook or bake something new?
- 😄 Watch funny videos that make you laugh *OR* listen to a calming meditation?
- 📚 Learn a new skill *OR* revisit an old hobby you haven't done in a while?
- 💖 Give someone a compliment *OR* write down three things you appreciate about yourself?
- 📷 Spend time taking photos of things that make you smile *OR* leave your phone behind and simply enjoy the moment?
- 🌱 Volunteer or help someone in your community *OR* spend the day focusing on your own self-care?
- 💬 Text someone you haven't talked to in a while *OR* invite a friend to hang out?
- 🌈 Create a summer bucket list *OR* make a playlist that matches your mood?

Challenge: Pick one new self-care activity from this list to try this week. You might discover a new favorite way to take care of your mental health!



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)



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

BlackLine®:

Call: 1-800-604-5841

Text: 800-604-5841

Carroll County Mobile Crisis:

410-952-9552

Open Access at CCYSB

Ready to Get Started?

Connect to Care ... TODAY!

As of July 1, 2026, Open Access

Walk-In Assessments will now be

Open Access Services

We offer TWO convenient ways to complete your initial referral and paperwork process:

Option 1:

Call Our Referral Line: 410-848-2500, option 1

OR email: op_referrals@ccysb.org

Referral Availability: Mon-Fri 8:30 am - 4 pm.

Voicemails & emails received between 4 pm and 8:30 am or on weekends will be responded to during business hours

Option 2:

Visit During Walk-In Paperwork Hours

Tuesdays: 8:30 – 11 am **AND** 2 – 4 pm

Wednesdays: 12 – 2 pm

Our 1-Week Commitment to

Connecting You to Care:

Once your initial referral & paperwork are completed, a comprehensive clinical assessment slot will be offered within 1 week, and an assessment will be scheduled.

IF SUMMER ISN'T YOUR SEASON...

@POSITIVELYPRESENT



ENJOY THE
LITTLE INDOOR
LUXURIES.



DON'T COMPARE
YOURSELF TO
OTHERS.

RELEASE IDEAS OF WHAT
YOU "SHOULD" BE DOING.



CHOOSE TO DO
ACTIVITIES THAT
UPLIFT YOU.

PREPARE YOUR
HOT DAY HELPERS.

FOCUS ON
WHAT YOU CAN
APPRECIATE.



YOU DESERVE SUPPORT

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR TEENS

Especially for BIPOC youth and young adults



WHAT IS THE STEVE FUND?

The Steve Fund is a nonprofit organization that supports the mental health and emotional well-being of young people, especially those from underserved communities. Their resources are culturally responsive, meaning they recognize that your identity, culture, and experiences matter when it comes to mental health.

REMEMBER



Asking for help is a strength.



Your culture and identity **matter**.



You **deserve** mental health care that **understands** your experiences.



You are **not alone**.



MY DIGITAL SANCTUARY

A free online space created just for young people.

You'll find:

- ✓ Guided mindfulness activities
- ✓ Stress relief and grounding exercises
- ✓ Inspiring stories from other young people
- ✓ Creative wellness activities
- ✓ Tools to help you build resilience

stevefund.org/mydigitalsanctuary



LEARN ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Easy-to-understand articles and videos on:

- ☹️ Anxiety
- 😞 Depression
- 🧠 Stress
- 👤 Self-care
- 💞 Relationships
- 🧩 Identity
- 🔄 Life transitions
- 💔 Suicide prevention
- 🛡️ Building resilience

stevefund.org/knowledge-center



RESOURCES THAT REFLECT YOU

The Steve Fund offers resources that recognize the unique experiences of:

- ♥ Black youth
- ♥ Latino/Hispanic youth
- ♥ Asian American & Pacific Islander youth
- ♥ Native and Indigenous youth
- ♥ LGBTQ+ youth of color
- ♥ First-generation students
- ♥ Young women of color

Because feeling understood matters.

NEED HELP RIGHT NOW?



Text **STEVE** to **741741** to connect with a trained Crisis Counselor 24/7.



Or call or text **988** to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

♥ Help is here. You matter.

LEARN MORE

Visit:

stevefund.org

Explore:

- ✓ My Digital Sanctuary
- ✓ Youth Healing Space
- ✓ Mental Health Articles
- ✓ Wellness Activities
- ✓ Videos and Stories



You are seen. You are valued. You are enough.