



Cheat Sheet

WHAT ADULTS CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Action	Example
Notice Changes	Pay attention to changes in behavior, mood, relationships, sleep, or daily functioning. Instead of focusing on a single behavior, look for patterns that persist over time.
Start the Conversation	Choose a private, calm setting and approach the conversation with curiosity rather than judgment. Helpful phrases may include: • “I’ve noticed you don’t seem like yourself lately.” • “How have you been feeling?” • “Is there anything you’d like to talk about?” • “I’ve been thinking about you and wanted to check in.”
Listen More Than You Talk	When youth share something difficult, they often want understanding before solutions . Try: • Listening without interrupting • Reflecting back what you hear • Validating emotions Example: “That sounds really overwhelming” or “I can see why that would be difficult.”
Ask How You Can Help	Not every young person wants the same kind of support . Try asking: • “What would feel most helpful right now?” “Would you like advice, or would you rather I just listen?” • “Who else do you feel comfortable talking to?”
Encourage Healthy Coping	Help youth identify healthy ways to manage stress and emotions , such as: • Physical activity, spending time outdoors, creative activities, journaling, cultural practices and traditions, connecting with supportive people, mindfulness or relaxation exercises
Connect Them With Additional Support	Sometimes youth need support beyond what a caring adult can provide . If they are in a crisis, help them call or text the national suicide hotline 988 for free, confidential, crisis counseling. You can also consider connecting them with: • School counselors, behavioral health providers, medical providers, trusted family members, community mentors, tribal or cultural support programs Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.