

Care for Yourself, Care for Each Other

The team at Youth Collaboratory hopes you find these vetted and curated resources useful. Recognizing mental health needs and responses are complex, we hope this guide can serve as a starting place as you search for supports that are appropriate for you and your community.

[Disponible en español aquí.](#)

For a Crisis Moment

What is a crisis moment? There are moments when we experience challenges and can easily think of ways to move through them. During a crisis, however, our attention is so focused on what is causing us fear, stress, or anxiety that our ability to think about possible solutions is impaired; during a crisis we need help. Something that feels like a crisis for one person may not feel like a crisis to another. In a crisis moment, know that there are trained individuals who are skilled and care. Whether you or someone you know is going through a difficult time, you do not have to go through it alone.



988 offers 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing mental health-related distress. That could be:

- Thoughts of suicide
- Mental health or substance use crisis, or
- Any other kind of emotional distress

People can call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

988 serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live in the United States, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.

To learn more, visit [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).

In crisis?
Text HELLO
to 741741.

Free, 24/7, confidential
crisis support by text.

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, **24/7 support via a medium people already use and trust: text.**

To learn more, visit www.crisistextline.org.

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Tips for calling 9-1-1 during a mental health related crisis. As our communities increase capacity to support individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, it is important to acknowledge that individuals impacted by mental health challenges are not likely to become violent (in fact, they are much more likely to become victims of violence). Whenever we call for help through 9-1-1, consider that law enforcement is likely to respond with the tools and training they receive. Specifically, law enforcement will prioritize threat neutralization, which has led to violent intervention and death of individuals experiencing mental health challenges. If you call 9-1-1, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) recommends taking the following steps so people are more likely to receive the support they need.*

Ask for a CIT-trained officer. Let them know this is a mental health crisis.

On the phone: Give concrete examples of the dangerous behaviors related to the mental health challenge. For example, say, “My daughter pulled a knife” instead of “My daughter wants to kill me.”

Calmly state over the phone the following information and be ready to repeat it to arriving police officers and/or medical professionals:

- Your name
- Your address
- Loved one’s name
- Your relationship
- Diagnosis
- Medications (on or off)
- Describe what your family member is doing now
- Prior history of psychosis
- Any weapons in the area
- Clothing description
- Prior history of violence
- Things that would help or worsen the situation

Until professionals arrive:

- Be polite, respectful, reassuring, calm, and direct with the person you are supporting.
- Maintain on-going communication directly with the person and do not include others on side conversations.
- Do not try to trick or deceive the person experiencing a crisis.
- Avoid immediately moving in close or touching the person unless necessary.
- Remove all objects with which a person may use to cause harm to self or others.

When professionals arrive:

- Have all the lights on inside the house.
- Identify yourself.
- Carry nothing in your hands especially when coming outside to meet them. Walk, don’t run to meet them.
- Be prepared to repeat the information you gave over the phone.
- State whether there is a history of suicide attempts.
- State whether the person is behaving violently or experiencing delusions.
- If available, have the treating psychiatrist’s phone number handy.

*Adapted from [Calling 911 and Talking to the Police | NAMISF](#). NAMI also offers a guide to navigate mental health crises, available for download in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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To Become a Better Supporter

Appropriate professional help is often limited or out of reach, but good support can make a meaningful difference. Support and help can result in similar, even identical outcomes. The main difference is that *help does something to or for* a person, while *support does something with* the person. Youth and young adults are powerful partners in coming up with strategies to support each other. [This poster campaign](#), for example, was co-created by Bay Area youth during a summer leadership program.



Youth Mental health First Aid teaches how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and youth ages 12-18. View Youth MHFA's flier [here](#).

Learn more about Youth MHFA, find courses near you, and apply to become an instructor [here](#).



Many conversations related to mental health focus on telling people how to react, rather than exploring how mental health plays a role in our lives and our communities.

Intro to MHFA, a community conversation is an easily adaptable guide available for free. Sample slides can be downloaded and adapted [here](#), and the facilitation guide can be downloaded [here](#).



Responses to mental health challenges are not immune to racist and dehumanizing worldviews. With mindful guidance, we can deepen our ability to support others with an awareness of how our past experiences may result in biased thinking.

The 6-week **Racial Equity and Liberation Virtual Learning Series** is available for free to anyone with an internet connection, [available here](#).

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For the Long Term

Many people will receive a mental health diagnosis at some point, and even more will experience mental health challenges throughout their life. We know that recovery is possible and likely. For the long term: we are much more likely to be good supporters when we are grounded in our individual well-being and resilience. Consider building a monthly, weekly, or daily practice where you check-in with and take care of yourself. If something does not work for you, drop it and try something else - you've got this!

Identify and build your baseline of wellbeing using the 4 Ls: Life, Love, Laugh, Learn/work. Spend 5-10 minutes writing out your answers to the following questions and identifying signs of your well-being and resilience (*yes, pen and paper is recommended, you can transfer to your phone or computer after*).

- **Live:** What lets you know you are well?
- **Love:** Who or what makes you feel valued? How do you let others know you value them?
- **Laugh:** What brings you joy?
- **Learn/work:** What stimulates your curiosity? At your best, how do you respond to mistakes?

If you're feeling inspired, consider two more Ls:

- **Language:** What language do you need/wish those around you had to engage in effective conversations that can be vulnerable? What language makes you feel able to express yourself?
- **Listen:** Whose words do you trust? What helps you hear other perspectives?

If you had everything you needed, how could you embed these into your monthly, weekly, or daily habits?

Get familiar with grounding techniques.

Whenever big emotions come up, it is easier to disconnect from our physical body in the here and now. There are different ways to reconnect with ourselves before, during, or after difficult moments.

- Trauma Tapping Technique (TTT) is a first aid, self-help technique to calm emotional responses related to stress and traumatic experiences. Learn more [here](#).
- 5-4-3-2-1, Categories, Body Awareness, and Mental Exercises are available to download [here](#).
- Explore [Art as Therapy](#), [News as Therapy](#), [Books as Therapy](#), and [Food as Therapy](#).
- Access the Well Beings Mental Health Language Guide [here](#).