

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

With children and teens

WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

Mental health is an important part of your child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act.

It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Just like physical health, mental health occurs on a spectrum.



Check In & Create Safety

Make it a normal habit to "check in" on how everyone in your family is feeling, and how certain events – both good and bad – make them feel. Remind your child often that you are here to listen and support them – especially when they face challenges. This opens the door for more trust and comfort.

Offer Help

If your child is struggling, ask how you can help them and be ready to offer solutions if they are unsure. If your child is showing more severe symptoms of distress, such as suicidal thoughts, self-harm, consistent feelings of nervousness or hopelessness that interfere with their daily life, contact a mental health professional or crisis line for more support!



Stop the Stigma

Always assure your child that it is okay to struggle sometimes, and that there is no judgment from you if they need help.

Normalizing care of mental health, the same way we care for our physical health, can make it easier to talk about. Have conversations about mental health often, even if your child is not struggling.



Be Open

Sharing your own feelings – including when you are sad or frustrated – helps children normalize this behavior and feel safer talking to you. It also helps to remind them that it is normal for people of all ages to face challenges.

For More Information

Visit joetorre.org/podcast and tune in to Episode 8 (Stop the Stigma: Mental Health) of **Safe Keeping** to learn more about breaking the stigma and talking about mental health.