

# How you can make youth mental health a priority

In recent years, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges have increased among youth in the U.S.

Before the pandemic, 1 in 5 children in the U.S. had a mental, emotional, or behavioral condition. Feelings of sadness or hopelessness among high school students increased by 40 percent between 2009 and 2019, [data](#) show.



Since the pandemic began, symptoms of depression and anxiety among youth have doubled worldwide.

The youth mental health crisis has especially impacted those who already were vulnerable. This includes youth with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ youth, and others in marginalized communities.

The good news: feeling connected to family, school, and organizations, like a faith community, can make a positive difference for a young person living with mental distress.

You can make youth mental health a priority in your faith community by:

- Publicizing [mental health resources](#) and [suicide prevention resources](#) in your bulletins and social media sites.
- Sharing information about the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#).
- Conducting [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) for your staff and members.
- Publicizing the “[talk they hear you](#)” app, designed to prevent underage drinking and other drug use.
- Sharing [Tools for Supporting Emotional Wellbeing in Children and Youth](#) with members of your community.
- Connecting youth to caring adults and activities in your faith community.
- Offering mentoring programs and after-school programs. [Learn more](#).

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