Momentum

Understanding your teenager’s mental health

Stay plugged in with your teen

Would you want to go back and be a teenager again? It’s not likely you’d want to navigate all those mystifying challenges again—from peer pressures to academic stress to an ever-changing body. If you’re parenting a teen now:

• Listen carefully and nonjudgmentally. Regularly encourage your child to share feelings with you. It’s important for them to know they don’t have to endure things alone.
• Don’t just notice the problems. Teens respond better to positive feedback than frequent criticism. Tell them why you are impressed with or proud of them.
• Be alert for changes. Talk with your child if you notice them seeming often sad, tearful, lacking motivation, having sleeping or eating problems, and/or exhibiting sudden school problems. If you’re unsure what to do, contact your physician or your program.

Teen talk tips

Stay at it... gently. Teens are pretty good at shutting out parents when there’s trouble. Don’t give up. Continue to emphasize your concern for them and your sincere interest in listening.

Be on their side. If your teen’s frustrated or upset, do some joint brainstorming with them for possible solutions to problems. Don’t just take over and tell them what to do.

Show them you’re human, too. Be transparent about your experience of having faced emotional and psychological challenges. Reassure your teen that their feelings are normal; offer your unconditional love and support.

Contact your program
24/7/365 for confidential, no-cost help for you and your household members.

Live Webinar—Please join us online for Helping Your Teen Learn Emotional Regulation, a parenting webinar on Wednesday, May 12, 2021. Register here.

Mind Your Mental Health

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. This health observance highlights the importance of mental health and wellness.

• **Get your body moving.** When you exercise, you release endorphins that trigger positive feelings and increase emotional well-being. It can be as simple as a short walk a few days a week.

• **Surround yourself with supportive people.** Your way of thinking is influenced by those around you. Find people who make you feel good about yourself.

• **Put your needs first.** Make sure to take care of yourself so that you can be there for others.

• **Cut out bad habits.** Look at your lifestyle. If you see habits that don’t work well for you, come up with a plan to stop them. Consider whether short-term gratification is worth the long term consequences.

Visit [www.MagellanHealthcare.com/About/MYMH](http://www.MagellanHealthcare.com/About/MYMH) or call your program for confidential mental health resources.

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Working on Wellness

May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

• More than 60 million Americans suffer with asthma and allergies. This peak allergy season is an optimal time to educate patients, families, friends and co-workers about the conditions so many must manage.

• Asthma symptoms include coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Environmental triggers of asthma attacks include passive smoking, molds, pet hair, dust mites and certain foods (for those with specific food allergies).

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Showing Support

Join World No Tobacco Day in May

• The World Health Organization sponsors World No Tobacco Day on May 31. If you’ve struggled to quit smoking, make sure your reason for wanting to quit is meaningful for you.

• Plan a quit date. Cut down on smoking prior to that date. Try over-the-counter quit tools such as nicotine gum, lozenges or patches.

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Managing Work-Life Balance

Plan a fun summer regardless

Even if COVID-19 restrictions close down pools, summer camps, theaters and concerts, you can still engage the kids in fun. Schedule a daily workout (bike ride, walk or dance party). Camp out under the stars in your back yard. Check out area public lakes for swimming options. Take a culinary vacation, bringing the flavors of far-flung cuisines to your home kitchen; have the kids help out. Plan a scavenger hunt or socially-distanced party.
May is Mental Health Month

Adapting after trauma and stress

We all face trauma, adversity and other stressors throughout our lives. When people think of trauma, they often think of things like abuse, terrorism or catastrophic events. Trauma can also be caused by events that are less obvious, but still overwhelm our ability to deal with them, such as frequent arguing at home or losing a job. Our mental health can be affected by trauma of any kind. Following are ways we can build our resiliency and feel better.

Process your thoughts
During and after trauma, it is common to switch into survival mode and have no energy to wrap your head around what has happened. It may feel safest to bury painful feelings and avoid confronting them, but recognizing what has happened and how it has affected you is one of the healthiest things you can do.

Connect with people
A support system is an important part of well-being. Emotional support helps us feel less alone or overwhelmed by what has happened in our lives. Talking to someone who has had a similar experience, or someone who cares for you, can be an affirmation—and help you cope better with the challenges you face.

Do not compare your experiences with those of others
We often question our own thoughts or experiences, and you can convince yourself that what you have experienced was not a big deal because “others have it worse.” Everyone experiences a trauma differently, and no trauma is “worse” than the other. If it hurts you, then it hurts you—and your feelings and experiences are valid.

Take care of your body
Stress and trauma affect your physical health as well as your mind. Listening to your body and giving it what it needs will help you heal. This includes a nutritious diet, sufficient sleep and regular exercise. Moving your body every day, even if it is just a few minutes of stretching, is particularly helpful in healing trauma.

Know it will take time
There is no predetermined timetable for “healing.” Remove the pressure to get back on your feet quickly and focus on taking one step at a time. Remember: recovery is not linear, and it is normal to have bad days and setbacks. It doesn’t mean you fail—it’s just part of the process.

Source: Mental Health America www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month
Treat yourself with compassion
Dealing with trauma and stress is not an easy task, and it is common to be frustrated with yourself and what can sometimes be a slow recovery process. Try to catch when you are holding yourself to unreasonable standards - instead of angrily asking, “Why am I doing this?” Remember how impressive it is that you are continuing despite what you have experienced.

Don’t be ashamed to ask for help
It is easy to compare how you feel, and how you assume that others who have had similar experiences feel, and you may get down on yourself because everyone else seems to be doing well. What others experience and how they deal with it does not matter on your journey—if you feel that you need or want help, it is important to get it as soon as possible.

For more information, visit MagellanAscend.com or call your The DON CEAP at 1-844-366-2327 (TTY 711) for compassionate and caring support.