

# Talk to Your Teen



**BlueCross  
BlueShield**

Federal Employee Program.

Teens are facing more challenges with pressure from friends, school and social media. [Research](#) shows nearly half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14. You don't have to wait until your teen is in crisis to talk about mental health. Talk to your teen early and often.

## Watch for these warning signs:

- Changes in mood or personality
- Avoiding social interactions
- Missing school and/or changes in grades
- Changes in eating or sleeping
- Extreme irritability and/or outbursts
- Increased physical complaints, like headaches or stomachaches
- Talking about self-harm or attempted suicide

## Let your teen know that you support them and ask open-ended questions. Some questions you might ask are:

- How are you feeling today?
- What is going on that is causing you to feel this way?
- What was the best part of your day?
- What was the worst part of your day?
- What is something you are looking forward to?
- What is something you are worried about this week?

It's ok if answers seem short. The goal is to keep the conversation open. Continue to check in regularly.

## Listen to your teen and be empathetic.

- Don't try to solve your teen's issue – just listen actively, patiently and non-judgmentally
- Avoid dismissing your teen's feelings using terms like "crazy," "dramatic" or "attention-seeking"
- Be empathetic when you respond to your teen. Empathetic responses can help your teen **feel understood**, **build trust** and feel more comfortable to talk about difficult feelings with you. Say things like:
  - "That is a difficult feeling to cope with, but I am here to support you through this."
  - "We can find a way through this together."

## Mental Health Case Managers can help:

- Provide education on your teen's mental health condition
- Develop a plan and set goals to help your teen improve their mental health
- Offer connections to educational or community-led support groups
- Provide a list of crisis support resources
- Create a list of in-network providers

**Call the number on the back of your member ID card to speak with a Customer Advocate.  
They can connect you with a Mental Health Case Manager.**

## Additional Resources:

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):**  
Visit [nami.org](https://www.nami.org)
- **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:**  
Call, text or chat **988** from anywhere in the U.S. 24/7 or call **1-800-237-TALK (8255)**
- **Crisis Text Line:**  
Text **HELLO** to **741741** or visit [crisistextline.org](https://www.crisistextline.org)

