

How to Help Others In A Crisis

Today's Presenter

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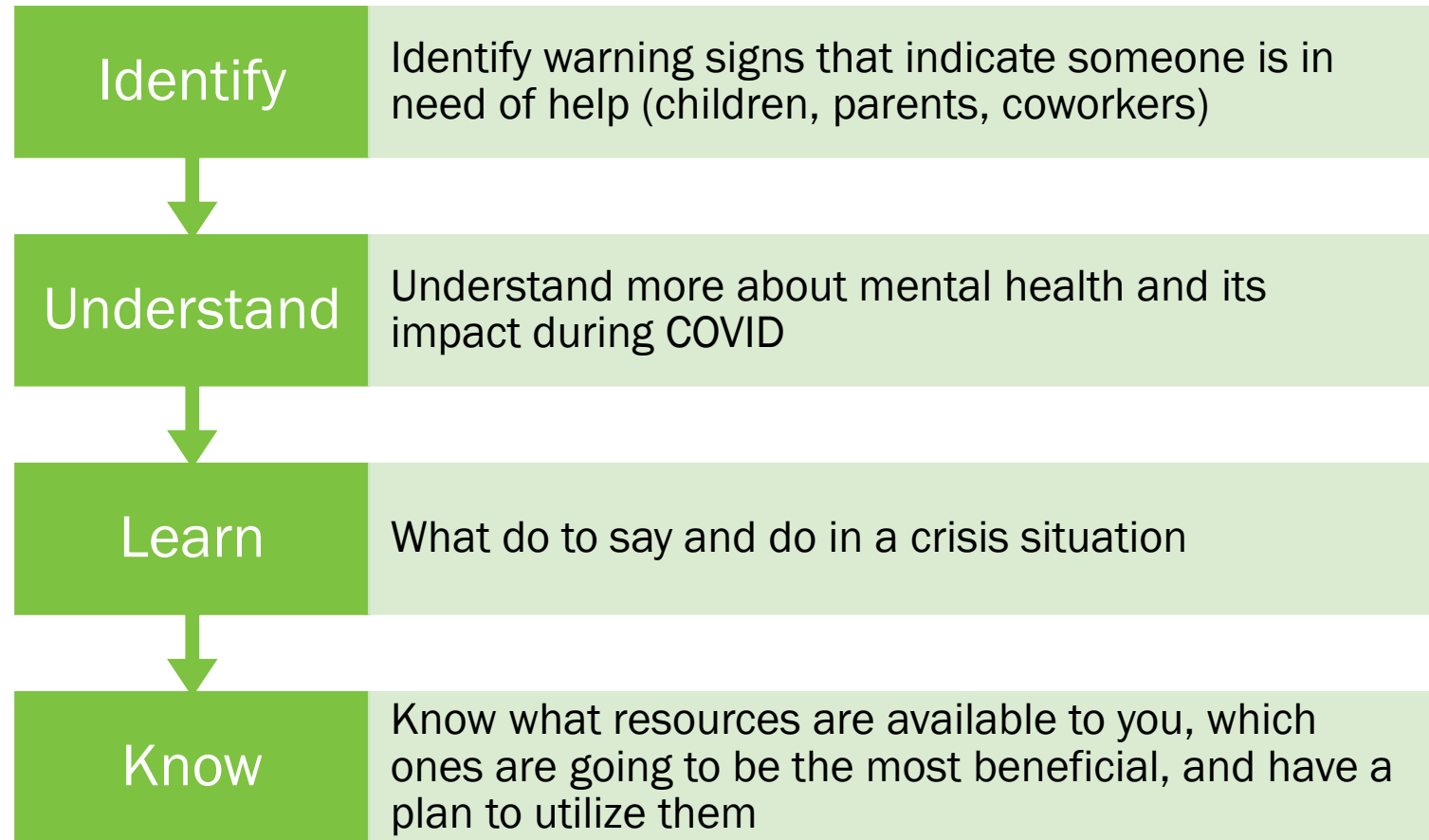
- 20 Years working in the Mental Health Field
- Certified Health Coach
- Fluent in American Sign Language

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EveryMind strengthens communities and empowers individuals to reach optimal mental wellness

- Counseling and Case Management for Children, Youth and Families
- Crisis Phone/Text/Chat Line
- Service Coordination for Veterans, Service Members and their Families
- Community Education

Today's Objectives



Audience question

What is your definition of mental health?

Mental Health Overview

“Mental health includes our 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 healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.”

Mental Health Warning Signs - Adults

- Feelings of:
 - Guilt
 - Hopelessness
 - Worthlessness
 - Helplessness
 - Sadness
- Engaging in self-destructive or risk-taking behaviors
- Sudden peace of mind
- Inability to concentrate
- Difficulty making decisions
- Loss of interest in:
 - Activities
 - Friends
- Withdrawal and/or isolation
- Thoughts of suicide or death
- Changes in behavior and/or personality

Mental Health Warning Signs - Children

- Feelings of:
 - Sadness
- Outbursts or extreme irritability
- Out of control behavior that can be harmful
- Drastic changes in mood, behavior or personality
- Talking about death or suicide
- Hurting themselves or talking about hurting themselves
- Changes in eating habits
- Loss of weight
- Difficulty sleeping
- Frequent stomach aches or headaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions
- Withdrawal from and/or isolating from social interactions

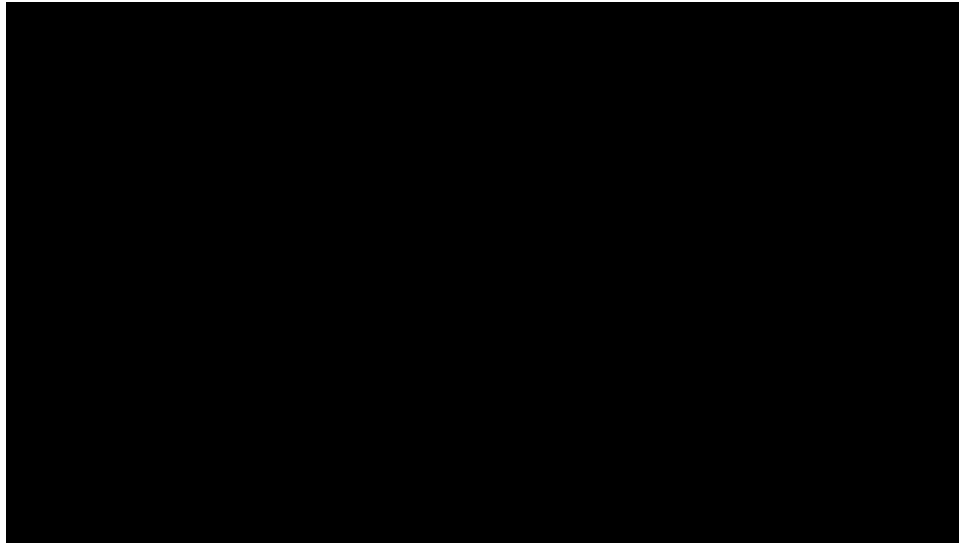
How COVID is impacting children

- Change in routine
- Breaks in continuity of learning
- Breaks in continuity of health care
- Missed significant life events
- Lost feeling of security and safety
- Kids that were struggling before the pandemic are at higher risk of mental health issues now
- Impacting parent child relationships



How Do We Help When Someone is Struggling?

Before you do anything else... just listen



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2zLCCRT-nE>

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What Can YOU do?

- Let them know that you care
- Get outside and go for a walk together
- Encourage them to reach out for help – we all need someone to have our backs once in awhile
- Use good coping skills together



15 Minute Rule – Adults and Kids

- 15 Minute Rule
 - Find an activity or distraction for 15 minutes
- Create a Distraction Box:
 - Books, pens, paper, deck of cards, crayons

Activities/ Distractions

Activities

- Holding an ice cube in your hands
- Punching a punching bag
- Warm bath or shower
- Pet a cat or dog
- Meditate/yoga
- Writing down how you feel
- “Talking” with a hotline

Distractions

- Watch your favorite show
- Exercise
- Memorize song lyrics
- Play video/computer games
- Put on fake tattoos or band aids
- Hang out with friends or family

Examples of What to Say

- “I am here to listen” (then don’t talk)
- “What have you tried already?”
- Reflect how bad they feel
- “What do you need from me?”
- “How can we work together to help you be safe.”
- “Do you want me to stay nearby or do you want alone time”
- “Is there anything I can do that won’t make things feel worse?”

Examples of What Not to Say

- “I know exactly what you are going through.”
- “I know you will be fine.”
- “When I was your age....”
- “It’s no big deal.”
- “Oh you poor thing, you are so brave.”
- “Don’t worry, God’s got this.”

How Do We Help When Someone is Having a Serious Mental Health Crisis?

Ask and Listen Actively

- Take any warning signs seriously
- Reflect that you noticed a change and are concerned
- Create a safe comfortable place to talk and lots of opportunities to talk (shouldn't be one conversation)
- Be non-judgmental
- Ask directly if the person is thinking about killing themselves?

Ask and Listen Actively - More

- Ask directly if the person is suicidal

Do they have a plan?

- “*when* are you going to do it?”
- “*where* are you going to do it?”
- “*how* are you going to do it?”
- “*how* close have you come to taking your life before?”

- Don't:
- Act shocked, angry, or panicked
- Avoid the discussion
- Argue or dismiss their concerns
- Be sworn to secrecy
- Make empty promises
- Offer false hope
- Leave the person alone
- Give advice or try to fix the problem for them

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Help Them Connect

- There are so many resources out there for children, teens and adults who are struggling, but when people are in the midst of their struggle, connecting with those resources can seem difficult.
- You can help them connect in a variety of ways. Help them connect to a support system. Encourage them to put a suicide hotline number into their phone. Ask them to reach out to an a mental health professional. Offer to sit down with them and write out a support system plan or find resources with them.

Follow Up

- Once you have connected them with resources and they are not in an acute crisis make sure to keep checking in with them about how they are doing and feeling in the weeks following the crisis.
- Checking in is especially important if they are getting treatment and its new to them. This can be a vulnerable time, since some people expect to feel better right away when in treatment. If they don't start feeling better, they may believe that it will never get better and feel hopeless.
- Remember that when someone is suffering, they may not be able to pick up the phone to ask for support. They may fear that they are a burden to those they care about and do not want to bother people with their problems.

Resiliency – The Good News!

- Most youth and adults are able to continue and cope despite all of these challenges.
- When difficulties are encountered, we do learn from this and increase our competence and we become more resilient!



Factors That Increase Resiliency In Kids

- Coping Skills
 - Model using them for your kids
 - Teach them to use them: breathing, meditation, coloring, etc...
- Help Them Develop Relationship Skills
 - Model good listening
 - Teach them to use “I” statements
- Good Problem Solving Behavior
 - Model it for your kids
 - Talk about failure as a learning experience
 - Discuss problems together and break them down into manageable parts

Checking in With Ourselves

- Intentional check-ins (with ourselves and other family members)
- Identify any extra pressure you may be adding to yourself or your loved ones
- Understand that during this pandemic, it is normal to feel stress

Levels of Help

- Self-Help
 - Is this something we can handle if we dedicate more time and effort to it, or through employing self-care?
 - Can spending more authentic time with our loved ones help them as well?
- Localized-Help
 - Calling a friend or family member to talk
 - Identify tasks that other people can help you with
- Professional Help
 - Seek out therapy services
 - Utilize the crisis line for calling/texting/chatting

Know Your Resources

- Identify a close family member or friend whom you can reach out to
 - Determine if you can both be there for each other
- Identify community resources
 - Like EveryMind!
- Identify crisis specific resources
 - Know which method of communication works best for you and reach out using that method

Mental Health Resources

- Montgomery County Hotline
 - 301-738-2255
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
 - afsp.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - cdc.gov
- Mental Health America
 - mhanational.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
 - nami.org/home
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 - samhsa.gov

Hotline Services

We are here to listen

- Free and confidential
- 24/7 phones: 301-738-2255
- Text: 8am-midnight 7 days: 301-738-2255
- Chat: 8am-midnight 7 days: <https://every-mind.org/chat>

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