NO PREP

Getting Help

When to Reach Out and Who to Turn To

Includes: Student reading, case study, differentiated questions, teacher key

Name: Period: Date:

Getting Help: When to Reach Out and Who to Turn To

Reducing Fear Around Seeking Help

Admitting you need help for a mental or emotional concern can be intimidating. Some teens worry they'll be labeled "weak" or that seeking help will make the problem seem more real. However, asking for help is often a brave step toward improved well-being. By recognizing that mental health struggles are common, you take pressure off yourself to handle everything alone. Many people delay seeking assistance because they fear judgment from peers or adults. Yet schools and communities increasingly recognize the importance of mental health support. By speaking up, you give yourself a chance to find resources that can drastically change the course of an emotional challenge. Whether it's anxiety, depression, or stress, addressing issues early can prevent them from becoming crises.

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Trusted Adults, School Counselors, and Hotlines

One of the best places to start is with a trusted adult (a family member, coach, teacher, or neighbor who has shown genuine care for you). They can offer guidance, share personal experiences, or help you find professional services. School counselors are also vital. They're trained to deal with academic, social, and emotional issues and can connect you with additional resources if needed. For immediate concerns, especially if you're in crisis, hotlines can be a lifeline. Many offer text or chat options, so you don't even have to speak on the phone if that makes you uncomfortable. Hotlines provide anonymous, 24/7 support, ensuring there's always someone available to listen.

When It's Time to Reach Out

You might wonder, "How do I know if my feelings are serious enough to seek help?" If persistent sadness, overwhelming anxiety, or any concerning emotion is

interfering with daily life (sleep, appetite, school performance, relationships), it's time to reach out. Another clear sign is if you're thinking about harming yourself or others. Even if you're just unsure, asking a trusted adult or mental health professional for a quick assessment is safer than waiting to see if things get worse. It's also important to note that mental health doesn't always follow a clear pattern. Feelings can come in waves. You might have "good days" and "bad days," but if the bad days start to overshadow the good, consider seeking a professional opinion. Early intervention often leads to faster, more effective solutions.

Viewing Help-Seeking as a Strength

One of the biggest myths is that seeking help is a sign of weakness. In reality, it takes courage and self-awareness to admit you can't solve every problem alone. Recognizing you need support shows a willingness to take responsibility for your well-being, which is actually a hallmark of maturity. Professional athletes, famous celebrities, and high-achieving students alike benefit from therapy or counseling. These services offer tools to cope with life's pressures, improve self-awareness, and build healthier relationships. By reframing your perception of help-seeking, you empower yourself to take advantage of all available resources.

Key Information: Help-Seeking Pathways Table

Option	Description	Benefit
Trusted Adult	Family member, teacher, or mentor you trust	Immediate support, familiarity
School Counselor	On-site professional for academic and emotional aid	Connects you with local or specialized resources
Hotlines	Phone or text services (often 24/7)	Confidential, immediate crisis support
Therapy	Sessions with a mental health professional	Long-term coping strategies, personalized care

Case Study Excerpt

Miguel felt constant dread about upcoming college decisions and financial worries. He started avoiding conversations about the future, fearing judgment from peers who seemed more prepared. One evening, after a particularly stressful day at school, he found himself crying uncontrollably for reasons he couldn't fully explain. Unsure of what to do, Miguel reached out to a former teacher who had always shown concern for students. The teacher listened, reassured Miguel that many teens feel overwhelmed, and suggested he speak with the school counselor. Though nervous, Miguel made an appointment. The counselor not only validated his anxieties but also provided resources on scholarships and stress management techniques. For Miguel, seeking help didn't eliminate his worries overnight, but it gave him practical steps and a sense of hope he couldn't find on his own.

1. What initially stopped Miguel from discussing his worries about college decisions?

2. How did the school counselor assist Miguel in managing his stress?

Multiple Choice

1. Asking for help when dealing with mental health challenges is:
    a) Something that will worsen your issues
    b) Only acceptable if you've tried everything else alone
    c) A demonstration of strength and responsibility
    d) A sign of giving up

2. One possible advantage of talking to a trusted adult is:

a) Risk of public embarrassment

b) Access to experience, guidance, and further resources

c) Guaranteed resolution of all problems without any ongoing effort

d) Immediate disapproval and criticism

3. If persistent sadness or anxiety is affecting your daily life, the best step is to:

a) Seek immediate help from a mental health professional or counselor

b) Wait until you can handle it alone

c) Only talk to friends who might also be dealing with similar struggles

d) Assume it's normal and ignore it

Matching

Write the letter of the correct definition on the line next to each term.

Term	Definition
1. ___ Hotlines	A) Someone you can confide in, like a teacher, coach, or family member
2. ___ Persistent Sadness	B) Fear or hesitation in reaching out for help
3. ___ Trusted Adult	C) Negative judgment or shame around mental health issues
4. ___ Stigma	D) A free, confidential support resource available 24/7
5. ___ Help-Seeking Anxiety	E) Sad or anxious feelings that interfere with daily life and don't go away

Fill-in-the-Blank

1. _____ is often a barrier that stops teens from admitting they need help.

2. A _____ adult can offer both emotional support and practical advice.

3. Seeking help from a mental health professional is a sign of _____, not weakness.

Short Answer

Answer each question in 2-4 complete sentences.

1. How can reframing help-seeking as a form of strength change a teen's mindset?

2. Why might hotlines be valuable for teens who are uncomfortable speaking face-to-face about their problems?

3. What's a practical first step for a teen who feels overwhelmed but isn't sure if their feelings are serious enough for professional help?