

The Youth Mental Health Project EMPOWERS families and communities to act with the KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS and RESOURCES they need to support the SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, and BEHAVIORAL health of youth.



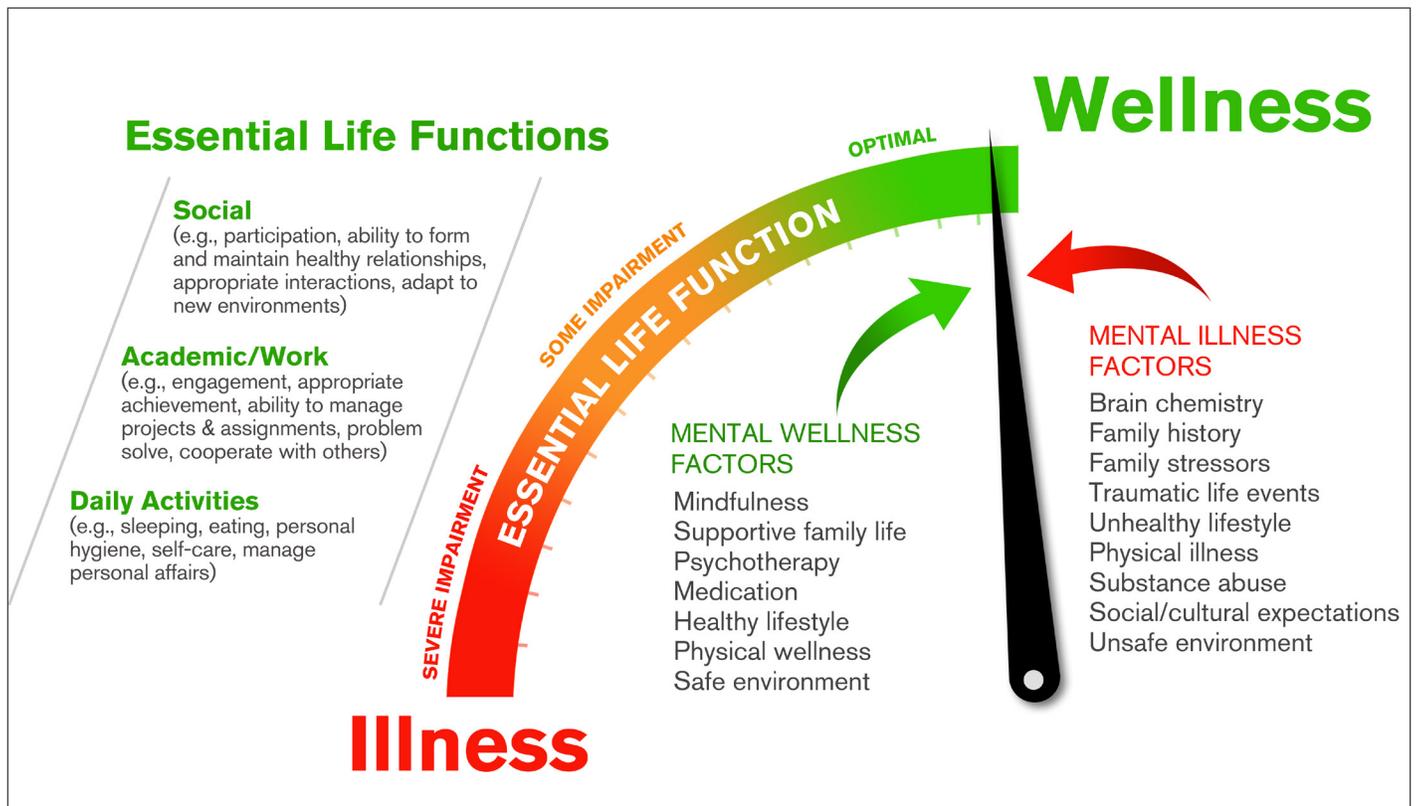
UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health includes all states of health, from wellness to illness. Important at every stage of life, mental health describes a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which affects the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves.

Just like physical health, mental health lies on a continuum and continuously shifts, changes, and evolves during a lifetime. The graphic below helps to identify the current state of a person's mental health in relationship to functioning and includes some of the factors that contribute to wellness or illness on the mental health continuum.

If you observe one or more of the signs of concern listed below, ask yourself where it fits on the mental health continuum as it relates to your child's ability to perform any of the essential life functions. Even mild impairment might be an early warning sign worth investigating.

THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM



EARLY WARNING SIGNS: WHEN TO SEEK TREATMENT

Our Understanding and Supporting Youth Mental Health booklet was designed, in partnership with Silver Hill Hospital, to provide general guidance for a better understanding of youth mental health development through various ages and stages. The booklet contains examples of healthy development markers as well as signs of concern. Below are a few examples of signs of concern:

AGES 0-5

- Difficulty with socializing or playing with others
- Intense difficulty with separation
- Extreme difficulty or inability to toilet train after the age of 3, bowel holding
- Excessive, inconsolable crying or sadness
- Inability to fall or stay asleep, excessive lack of sleep
- Explosive and prolonged tantrums

AGES 6-11

- Disinterest in extra-curricular activities or too nervous to attend
- Difficulty making and/or keeping friends
- Frequent headaches, stomachaches, or other persistent, but unexplainable ailments
- School avoidance or refusal to go to school
- Low tolerance for frustration or discomfort
- Frequent irritability

AGES 12-17

- Difficulty with socializing or playing with others
- Concrete thinking, hyper-focus
- School refusal or avoidance
- Self-harming, self-destructive, or aggressive behaviors
- Severe mood swings, periods of extreme energy, lack of motivation
- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Extreme lack of personal care or hygiene

Early intervention can help children/adolescents develop important coping and adaptive skills (e.g., resilience), allowing them to thrive socially, emotionally, academically, and physically.

With proper treatment and support, people with a mental health diagnosis can lead productive and fulfilling lives. In fact, 80-90% of people who receive treatment see improvement in their symptoms.

1 in 5

children in the U.S. has a diagnosable mental health condition, yet less than 20 percent of those youth receive the treatment they need.¹

For more information:

The Youth Mental Health Project
ymhproject.org

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov