



A Guide to Guard Your Teen's Mental Health

**8 Warning Signs, Crucial Tips,
& 5 Powerful Prayers**

by Alicia Searl

The Mental Health of America reports that over 10% of youth are trying to cope and manage severe depression; that is 1 in 10 dealing with a major depressive disorder. In addition, over 16% of children ranging in age 12-17 reportedly suffer from at least one manic depressive episode, affecting their ability to function at home or school.



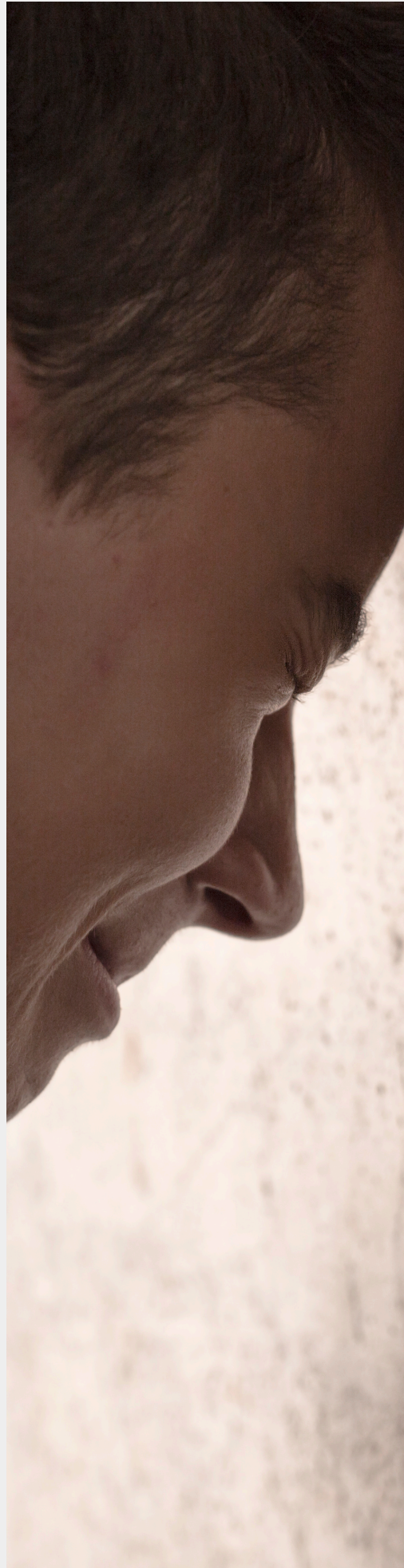
***“There is a mental health crisis sweeping across the nation, and it is targeting our kids.*”**

However, with the constant and ever-evolving pressures our children face in today’s society, from being immersed in identity confusion, having little to no filters on explicit language/images, and being tethered to socials at their fingertips, it’s no wonder our children are struggling. Add to that the fact that these years are crucial for development, as their brains and bodies are rapidly growing and changing, making them even more susceptible to anxiety and depression.

8 Signs Your Teen Could Be Struggling with Mental Illness

1. Retreating or isolating from family and friends.
2. Changes in their sleeping or eating patterns.
3. Academic changes, like slipping grades or loss of passions/interests.
4. Major or disturbing mood swings.
5. Problems with friendships or other relationships.
6. Taking more risks or getting involved in reckless behavior.
7. Using drugs or alcohol.
8. Breaking curfews or disregarding family rules.





How Do I Talk to My Teen About Their Mental Health?

- 01** If your teen is showing any of these signs, start with a general conversation.
- 02** Let them know you notice a change and state your concerns.
- 03** Encourage an open line of communication and talk openly about issues that they are facing and what is stoking any worry or fear.
- 04** Create healthy boundaries in your home to set the tone and a safe environment for your teen.

3 STEPS TO CREATE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES:

- 01** Start by clearly communicating the boundaries, keeping them concise and direct.
- 02** Write them down if needed and sign a contract to prove that as a family, you will all strive to hold each other accountable.
- 03** Set consequences for not following through so that they know you take this very seriously and that certain behaviors will not be permitted.

(Please note that if trust continues to be broken and more mental health issues arise, it may be wise to seek a teen counselor or therapist for help and intervention.)

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” – Ephesians 2:10



Here are 5 boundaries you and your family may consider putting into place:

1. God defines your worth and identity (Ephesians 2:10).
2. There will be a curfew for weeknights and weekends.
3. Phones will come with restrictions and limited use.
4. Do something physical every day.
5. Surround yourself around good influences.

5 Powerful Prayers for Your Teen's Mental Health



A Prayer for the Teen Struggling with Anxiety

Lord, we ask that You draw near and walk alongside the teen struggling with peace of mind and fighting the battle of fears that may be suppressed and hidden. We know that You see them and know them full well. Ease their anxious heart, and if it is Your will, allow them to be free from this grip of anxiety. Amen.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
– ***Philippians 4:6***

A Prayer for the Teen Battling Depression

Father, we lift up the precious teen who is waging a war against depression. We ask that You replace lies with Your truth, banish any evil thoughts, and remind them of their worth in You, God. Fill them with Your presence, casting light on the darkness, giving them hope for their future. Amen.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11



A Prayer for the Teens Facing Bullying

Holy Father, there are so many mixed messages targeting the hearts and minds of our teens. As the world calls for them to compare, shame, or lean into their insecurities, help them combat those lies and flood their heart with truth. Grant them the courage to care for the physical, emotional, and mental needs of their body, all while reminding them that they were bought with a price and so deeply loved. Amen.

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies" -. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

A Prayer for the Teen Wrestling with Addiction

O God, we know that peer pressure is high and that when our teens are already carrying the mental load of depression, anxiety, or any other form of mental unclarity, it is easy to fall into the trap of addiction. We lift the teen up to You who is fighting the battle on many fronts and turning to substance, alcohol, or sexual abuse to cope. We ask that You give them the courage to fight the good fight so You can step in and restore and heal the brokenness inside. Amen.



“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”
- Matthew 4:23



notes

While it can be scary and worrisome raising a teen who has a mental health issue, let me assure you (as a mom who is walking this journey with you) that God has got them in His loving hands, and He has also got you, too! He has equipped you for this.

Keep fighting, keep parenting, keep going... and keep praying!

Alicia Searl is a devotional author, blogger, and speaker that is passionate about pouring out her heart and pointing ladies of all ages back to Jesus. She has an education background and master's in literacy. Her favorite people call her Mom, which is why much of her time is spent cheering them on at a softball game or dance class. She is married to her heartthrob (a tall, spiky-haired blond) who can whip up a mean latte. She sips that goodness while writing her heart on a page while her puppy licks her feet. Visit her website at aliciasearl.com and connect with her on Instagram and Facebook.