

# Well-Being Watch



## UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health refers to a state of well-being where children can realise their potential and cope with daily emotions and stresses.

Recent data from the Singapore Youth Epidemiology and Resilience Study (2023) shows that 1 in 3 youths aged 10-18 experience symptoms such as sadness, anxiety and loneliness, with 1 in 8 having a current mental health condition.



### The state of well-being of Singapore's youth

To assess the overall mental health of those aged 15 - 35 living in Singapore, the Institute of Mental Health carried out its first National Youth Mental Health Study in 2022. Here are the key findings:

#### Symptoms of depression

Nearly 15 per cent, or about one in seven youth,



had severe or extremely severe symptoms of depression, such as feeling sad, empty and a lack of interest and pleasure in activities most of the time.

#### Symptoms of anxiety

About 27 per cent, or more than one in four youth,



had severe or extremely severe symptoms of anxiety, such as feeling worried, tense and restless most of the time.

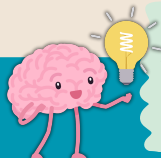
#### Symptoms of stress

Nearly 13 per cent, or about one in eight youth,



felt severe to extremely severe levels of stress, including being unable to relax or feeling upset or irritable most of the time.

Infographic from The Straits Times article, Sep 19, 2024: Depression, anxiety, stress: 1 in 3 youth in S'pore reported very poor mental health, says IMH survey



### Thinking Point:

What are some practical, everyday ways you can support your child's mental health?

## Mental Wellness Strategies

### 1. Positive Thinking



Teach your child to remain optimistic when facing difficulties. This boosts self-esteem and helps them recover from setbacks while staying motivated.

### 2. Positive Self-Talk



Teach them internal dialogue like "Relax! I don't need to get angry" or "I am okay" to help manage feelings and behaviour.

### 3. Physical Health Connection



Encourage adequate rest, hydration, proper nutrition, regular exercise, and sunlight exposure – all crucial for mental health and mood.

### 4. Stress Management



Engage in relaxing activities together like exercising in parks or visiting museums. Teach relaxation techniques such as closing eyes and thinking happy thoughts.



## Recognising When Your Children Need Help

When your children are struggling, there are observable warning signs which may indicate that they need help and support to cope.

### We can **LOOK** out for:

- L**oss of interest in hobbies
- O**verly tired, sad, worried or upset
- O**ften posting moody messages or talking about hurting themselves
- K**eeping away from people they are usually close to, or being quieter than usual

## Additional Support Strategies

### Transition to School

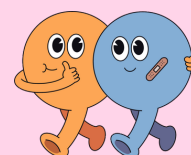


What they're experiencing:

Adapting to new environment, new friendship, and increased structure.

### How to support:

- Have regular conversations encouraging open sharing
- Discuss ways to manage worrying situations
- Build confidence by celebrating effort and small improvements
- Share your own school challenge stories



## Assessment- Related Stress



### What they're experiencing:

Stress from increased academic load, new subjects like Science, and formal assessments.

### How to support:

- Show interest in daily learning
- Emphasise that assessments help identify learning gaps and are opportunities to learn from mistakes for future improvement
- Celebrate improvements and affirm them for giving their best effort
- Guide them in creating balanced schedules with time for rest and play
- Manage your own expectations to avoid additional pressure

### What they're experiencing:

Physical changes causing anxiety, hormonal mood fluctuations, and self-esteem challenges.



## From Child to Tween

### How to support:

- Be a safe harbour during these changes
- Create safe spaces for conversations
- Keep communication channels always open
- Validate their feelings without dismissing them
- Show patience with mood fluctuations and heightened sensitivity

For tips to support meaningful conversations with your child, you may refer to page 11 of Parenting for Wellness Toolkit or scan the QR code provided.

Reference: <https://go.gov.sg/pfw-toolbox-for-parents>

