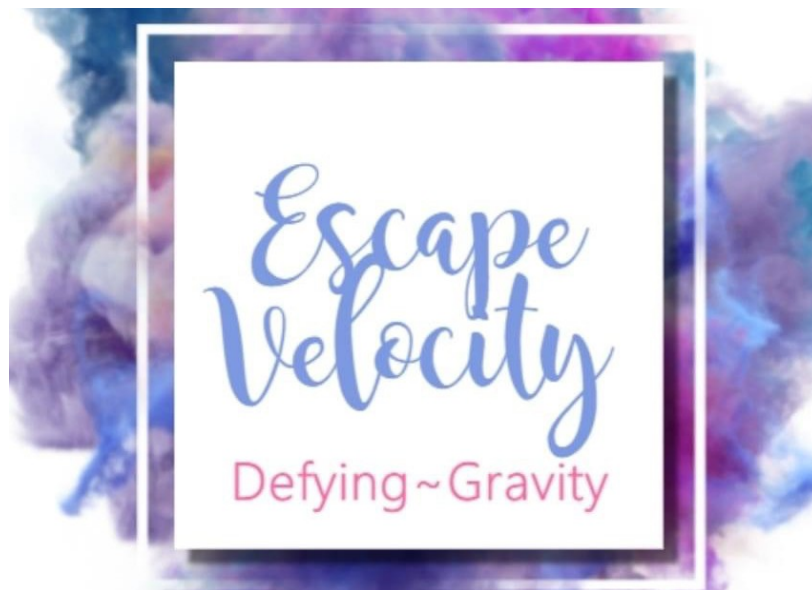

LITERAL INFLUENCE NEWSLETTER

MENTAL HEALTH EDITION



Escape Velocity Resources Foundation, Inc

What Is Mental Health

By Nola Poreé

There are a lot of stigmas surrounding mental health, like what it looks like, or how it affects people. Even though you can't control every person's thoughts or opinions, you can influence and give facts. One out of five people in America have experienced some form of mental illness, such as bipolar, depression, or schizophrenia. Suicide accounts for over 800,000 deaths globally each year. The U.S. accounts for over 41,000 of those deaths. It is the second leading cause of death for 15 - 29 year olds world wide. The rate of mental health disorders are twice as high for people who have experienced traumas in war or lived through major disasters. People who experience mental health issues are generally nonviolent. In actuality, 3-5% of violent acts can be connected to people who suffer from serious mental illnesses. By addressing risk factors, such as trauma, it is possible to help prevent certain mental health disorders and illnesses. Especially starting with youth, such as children and adolescents.

Improving mental health services in low - to medium - income cities and countries is not as costly as some may think. A simple investment of \$2 - 4 per capita would have a major impact on thousands, and millions of lives. Each year serious mental illnesses such as bipolar cost the U.S alone \$200 billion in lost earnings. 50.5% of adults in the U.S who have some experience, or witnessed others who have had problems with substance abuse also suffer from mental illness.

20% of youth have experienced or suffered some form of mental health condition. With one out of ten youths having experienced a period of major depression. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community are two times as likely as heterosexual individuals to have or experience some sort of mental illness. Also someone's background or life experiences may have a negative impact and might result into that person experiencing problems.



Words From Your Peers

By Ravyn Davis

The 21st century is one of the most stressful times to be a teenager. Social media has further promoted harmful body image, less in-person interaction and many other things that have the potential to negatively impact mental health. This is why it has become increasingly important to prioritize your mental health and learn about mental health and illnesses.

It's important to know that struggling with mental health or having a mental illness is completely normal. In an effort to eliminate the stigma, I interviewed a couple of my peers. Jaionna Allen, a teen from Houston, Texas struggles with bipolar depression. She opened up about her experience, saying that for her, "sometimes it's hard to get up in the morning, sometimes I have episodes and sometimes it's easy". Bipolar depression includes having sad, empty, hopeless feelings most of the time and mood swings.

Being a member of the Black community while struggling with mental illness may also add to the challenges. India Easton, a teenage girl from Southern California expressed that "If someone has a mental illness in the Black community, it's viewed as you're playing or it's not really valued or it's not really a big concern." Allen stated that "A lot of black people think mental health issues are not real and that you don't need the help, medication, or counseling to make you feel better or help deal with it." This common mentality may stem from historically how the Black community has had to stay strong through so much struggle. However, it's time to educate and get rid of the negative stigmas surrounding mental health.

Allen expressed how her mental illness puts a strain on relationships. She said "it's hard to explain something that you don't know about yourself. Sometimes you don't know why you feel this way, you know, you don't know why you're having these mood swings or exactly what's going on with you. It's hard to explain that to somebody else and sometimes it's hard for them to understand it." This speaks to the importance of mental illness education. Many people who struggle with mental illness feel isolated due to the lack of understanding from others of their illness.

Mental health, especially with the ongoing pandemic, has finally been getting the spotlight. However, teens need more than just learning about mental health from social media. Mental health awareness should be a priority throughout schools, but especially high schools. India Easton, expressed that she "was only really informed on depression and how it affected people" leading her to be "ignorant on bipolar" and other mental illnesses. Jaionna Allen echoed the same concerns with her school's mental health and illness education, stating that due to the lack of education "a lot of people just think mental illness stops at anxiety and depression, but there's different things like personality disorder and the list could go on." Although, administration and students at the school would "put up posters for mental health awareness week" Allen realized that "they don't really talk

about it.” Putting up posters without actually educating students about mental health and mental illness does not genuinely benefit the students..

These bright students offered solutions to the problems that they noticed. Allen and Easton both would like to see a more comprehensive mental health education implemented at their schools. This includes education about more than just a couple of mental illnesses. This includes education on the importance of prioritizing your mental health and what that looks like. This includes taking real action steps. The state of Illinois is already taking those steps by allowing students five mental health days from school. This should be the standard nationwide.

We must also do our part in educating ourselves on mental illnesses and mental health. Thanks to the digital age, there is so much information at your fingertips, all you have to do is look for it. Educate yourself on the different mental illnesses and the different signs. Learn different ways to cope, either for yourself or to help someone else. We’ve given you a head start with the tips below and the resources at the end of the newsletter. Mental health is just as important as your physical health. It is time to prioritize mental health.

Ways to Cope

By Shay Poreé

Breathing:

Apart from being a necessary human function, breathing offers great support of mental health. Breathing lowers your heartbeat and stress which is useful for high stress and anxiety filled thoughts or situations. If you find yourself in a position where you feel you are not able to think and not make clear decisions or maybe something is causing your heart rate to fasten; removing yourself and taking a few minutes to deeply breath would be an amazing thing to do, as it helps increase focus and calms your mind giving you a sense of ease and peace.

Music:

Music can shift your emotions based off what you are listening to. If you feel you want to let out a good cry, laugh, or maybe feel some happiness play something that will induce that emotion from you. It can help you take a break from your mentally taxing activity and focuses your energy and mind on releasing whatever that particular activity it is.

Walks:

Walking is a great physical exercise, to add no to that it is also great for your mental health. If you are feeling cramped, suffocated, tense muscled , possibly a headache taking a walk outside could be a good use of your time. Taking the time to walk 1 to 2 times a day for just even 5 minutes promotes a boost of creativity in your thoughts, more clear thinking, and will help you connect with your body and nature which can help you feel interested in your decision making.

Writing:

Writing in a safe and comfortable space encourages a non-pressure environment. As it helps lower your stress it increases your focus while you explore you thoughts and help you in better decision making. Another great bonus of writing is that it helps you enhance clarity in your mind and will possess a better understanding with your self. Writing is really great in times of self exploration when you are figuring out what you like, dislike, and makes you uncomfortable and comfortable, in the process of learning what your feelings mean and are coming from, when you just want to clear your mind, and so much more.

Talking to Someone:

Talking to a trusted someone or it might be some random person you met on the street can create a great feeling of support. It is a way to clear ones thought process and provide a different outlook on things as well as providing another angle for you to see. Many times people keep things inside to themselves in trepidation of not wanting to feel judged, not wanting to “bother” someone with what their feeling, wanting to keep on a brave/ happy face while inside your mind you are just staying above water. When doing this you are making your situation worse by keeping all your emotions locked inside you and constantly pushing them down till one day they overflow-(also known as “The Trashcan Method”) This is a great way of releasing pent up emotion, processing them, and then move on with your life.

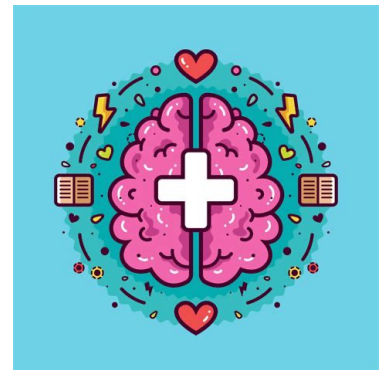
All of what I have expounded upon above are just a few of the Amazing methods of caring for your Mental Health. All of these things fall under the category of Self Care which is important as it relates to your Mental and Physical Health which should be treated with care, respect, open mindedness, and patience. It is not selfish for to take time out for yourself and bring your self vibrations up in this World, you are doing this for the benefit of you with no malicious intent behind them. It is a gift and a privilege to take time out and work on your Mental Health, the more people know that Mental Health is not just a sickness that some people possess but that every person/ living being in the World has, is a closer step to breaking that stigma.

Informational Links:

escapevelocityfoundation.com

adaa.gov

mentalhealth.gov



Contact Us:

Facebook: [@gravityhavingnoaffect](https://www.facebook.com/gravityhavingnoaffect)

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Thank you to our community partner Pro Youth & Families – MindOneSix project.



IN MEMORY AND APPRECIATION OF DANA MAESHIA



Dana Maeshia was a kind soul who spent her time spreading Mental Health Awareness, particularly for youth and black youth. We want to thank Dana for her kindness, dedication, and support that she radiated and gifted to the World; which inspired the people and communities that surrounded her. She made it her mission to spread Mental Health Awareness as she saw the youth as an extension of herself. She wanted to open up youth to opportunities and experiences that she knew would help them along their journey. She created the Escape Velocity Foundation and has been helping youth on their Mental Health journey till her last day.

Dana's Earthly absence has left a void in the hearts of many. Yet her legacy of Love and meaningful contributions will live on for eternity. We Love you, Ms. Dana!!!