

When To Get Help

Without guidance, a people will fall, but with many counselors there is deliverance. *Proverbs 11:14*

Discerning when teens require extra support for their mental health can feel overwhelming. Our desire is to guide them through these waters, anchoring them in faith and the love found in Christ. It's also important to recognize that seeking external guidance is not just a choice; it's a proactive step forward in their mental health journey. As you navigate the challenges of adolescence, it's useful to lean on both the spiritual guidance provided by our faith and the practical support offered by those equipped to assist in matters of mental health. Together, with faith and wisdom, we can support our teens through the storms of life, fostering an environment where their mental and spiritual well-being can thrive.

➤ conversation starter

I've been thinking about how important it is for us to support each other, especially when it comes to things like mental health. Is there anything you'd like to share with me about how you're feeling or anything that's been on your mind lately?

Is there anything you've come across or learned that you find interesting or would like to talk about, especially when it comes to managing stress or mental well-being?

➤ navigating the conversation:

- **Active Listening:** Practice active listening during conversations. Let teens express themselves without interruption. Repeat what you hear to ensure that they feel heard and understood.
- **Integrate Faith into the Conversation:** Share your faith and emphasize the importance of relying on God during challenging times. Remind teens that seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a testament to God's wisdom in placing supportive resources, including mental health professionals, in our lives.
- **Use Relatable Bible Verses:** Incorporate relevant Bible verses that emphasize seeking guidance and finding strength in God. For example, you might share Philippians 4:6-7.
- **Normalize the Process of Seeking Help:** Discuss the idea that seeking help is a normal and courageous step when facing challenges. Highlight individuals in the Bible, like David or Elijah, who sought God's guidance and support during difficult times.
- **Recognize Warning Signs:** Educate yourself on the warning signs of mental health issues, such as persistent changes in behavior, extreme mood swings, or withdrawal from social activities. If you observe these signs, approach the conversation with compassion and express your concern.
- **Encourage Professional Guidance:** Communicate that seeking help from mental health professionals is a valid and valuable option. Emphasize that God works through various means, including the expertise of trained professionals, to bring healing and restoration.
- **Pray Together:** Conclude the conversation by praying together. Pray for guidance, strength, and peace. Reinforce the idea that turning to God in prayer is a powerful source of support.

