

MENTAL HEALTH



Adolescent Toolkit

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YOUTH RETHINKING MENTAL HEALTH IN BELIZE SEMINAR: FINAL REPORT

August 24-27, 2020

Duration: 4 days from 9am-11am + 1pm-3pm

Mental Health in Belize remains a consistent concern for many people. While our country continues to experience a pandemic the understanding and need for mental health continues to grow.

The need for further education and discussion regarding mental health remains a priority. It was refreshing to experience how most participants focused and engaged throughout the seminar. It was a great experiential learning experience as they were open to discussing their own personal stories about mental health in Belize. There was an overall earnest zest to learn and understand the intricacies of each topic covered.

The seminar covered four main topics:

- 1. Mental Health in Belize**
- 2. Depression**
- 3. Anxiety**
- 4. Mindfulness**

Each topic was explored using PowerPoint presentation and interactive discussions and activities with the youth facilitators. The youth facilitators will be provided with a user-friendly manual, PowerPoint presentations and the videos that were utilized throughout the training.

YOUTH RETHINKING MENTAL HEALTH IN BELIZE SEMINAR:

MODULES

Introduction

“There is no Health without Mental Health” is a phrase that has echoed through mental health organizations and by practitioners across the world. Creating a healthy lifestyle and well-being for any young person first involves acquiring and understanding knowledge of what this means and what it takes to accomplish. This Mental Health Seminar aims to educate youth facilitators on mental health, anxiety, depression and mindful practices and they in turn, will train their peers.

Objectives

1. To develop each youth facilitator’s self-awareness of the reality of mental health Belize.
2. To educate youth facilitators’ on how to identify other peers struggling with anxiety
3. To educate youth facilitators’ on how to identify other peers struggling with depression
4. To develop youth facilitators’ skills in coping and mindful techniques
5. To encourage youth facilitators to become active ambassadors for mental health in Belize

Energizers

Each module will begin with an overall check in of each participant:

- How are you feeling today?
- What are you hoping to accomplish in today’s training?

Normally a fun interactive energizer would be used at the beginning of each session to break the ice and build connection amongst group, however due to the virtual nature of this seminar we will be practicing mindfulness and mediation at the beginning of each session.

Examples of mindful and meditation exercises are seen in Appendix 1.

Introduction/Understanding Mental Health

OBJECTIVES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- To get to know each other and the facilitator(s)
- To understand the aims and objectives of the seminar
- To develop ground rules to ensure smooth running of the seminar
- To discuss and understand the many facets of mental health

DURATION	UNIT	METHOD	MATERIAL
10 mins	1.1 Introductions	Energizer	Appendix 1
10 mins	1.2 Aims and Objectives	Presentation and Group Discussion	PowerPoint
05 mins	1.3 Ground Rules	Group Discussion	PowerPoint/Flip Chart
40 mins	1.4 Understanding Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Facts and Myths • Causes • Trauma • Statistics • Stigma and Discrimination • Access to Mental Health Resources 	Group Discussion/ Activities	PowerPoint/ Video Testimonial
10 mins	BREAK		
15 mins	1.5 Identifying and Processing Youth Facilitators' Mental Health Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse Childhood Experiences Assessment: Individual follow up session done online 	Individual Assessment + Schedule Individual De-Briefing Session	PowerPoint
15 mins	1.6 Learning Points, Role-Playing and Reflection on Mental Health Topic	Group Discussion	
15 mins	1.7 Participants Evaluation 1.8 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire	Written	

UNIT	1.1 Introductions 1.2 Review Aims and Objectives 1.3 Establish Seminar Ground Rules
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an introduction to and between the participants and the facilitators • To introduce the seminar’s objectives, and to give participants the chance to reflect on their own aims and objectives. • To set ground rules for the seminar.
TIME	15 mins
MATERIALS	Paper, pen, note pad for each participant, PowerPoint.

1.1 Introductions

Introductory activities help to reduce feelings of uncertainty and anxiety; build connection amongst participants and facilitators; and support communication as the seminar progresses. There are no “right” or “wrong” options, something as simple as saying their name in turn can be an activity.

1.2 Review Aims and Objectives

Introduce and review aims and objectives so that participants and facilitators are on the same page with the trajectory of the seminar. Additionally, it allows participants to recognize and share their personal objectives. Explain to participants that even though some objectives are set for the seminar, each participant will bring their own objective, knowledge and experiences to this seminar making it an experiential learning process.

1.3 Establish Seminar Ground Rules

Considering that the seminar will be done virtually, it is important to set clear ground rules that would be applicable for virtual learning. However, it is most important for the participants to be involved in establishing these rules. Some examples are: keep camera on, mute mic when talking, telephone use; punctuality; raising hands before speaking; respect; confidentiality; recording of sessions; etc.

UNIT **1.4 Understanding Mental Health**

- PURPOSE**
- Definition
 - Facts and Myths
 - Causes
 - Trauma
 - Statistics
 - Stigma and Discrimination
 - Access to Mental Health Resources

TIME 40 mins

MATERIALS Paper, pen, note pad for each participant, power point and handouts

1.4 Understanding Mental Health

For much of human history physical health has been given much more importance and hence, more attention than mental health. Now in the twenty first century opinions continue to shift and research continues to prove that mental health and physical health are inseparable. However, there are still stigmas and stereotypes to fight when it comes to having full recognition of mental health’s importance. Seminars such as these, especially with youth participants are one of the best tools to reduce stigma and discrimination. This is especially true in a time when the young, middle and older folks are showing a record high in mental health challenges. Suicide is the second leading cause of death of 15 to 25-year-old globally. With such statistics, mental health can hardly be ignored anymore as it is costing us our lives daily.

At the end of this seminar the participants will be mental health ambassadors helping to reduce stigma and discrimination and increase support and sharing.



AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION (APA)

Defines mental health as “the foundation for emotions, thinking, communication, learning, resilience and self-esteem. Mental health is also key to relationships, personal and emotional well-being and contributing to community or society.”

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

MENTAL DISORDERS

Refer to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior. They are generally characterized by some combination of abnormal thoughts, emotions, behavior and relationships with others.

THERE ARE SEVEN TYPES OF DISORDERS

- Mood disorders (such as depression or bipolar disorder)
- Anxiety disorders
- Personality disorders
- Psychotic disorders (such as schizophrenia)
- Eating disorders
- Trauma-related disorders (such as post-traumatic stress disorder)
- Substance abuse disorders.

DEFINITION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN WORDS OF YOUTH FACILITATOR TRAINEES

Mental health dictates the state of one’s entire well-being and includes the physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral. A person’s mental well-being allows a person to cope with society, human interactions and value him/herself to

reach his/her full potential. There is not a certain age that a person starts suffering from a mental illness. A person can become mentally unwell at any age. There is no specific cause as there are different reasons why mental health can be affected. It is important to know where we stand regarding our mental health.

FACTS AND MYTHS

Can you tell the difference between a mental health myth or fact? As an introductory activity it is important to recognize if you have any misconceptions, biases and/or misinformation about this intricate topic. There are many myths, misunderstandings, stereotypes and attitudes about mental health that result in judgement, discrimination, shame and isolation for those suffering and/or their family members. Challenge your own biases and then help others to do the same. One person at a time, stigma and discrimination is eliminated.

MYTHS

- If you try harder, you can snap out of your depression.
- Mental Health is a sign of weakness.
- Mental Health can be genetic.
- Children can have mental illness.
- People with mental illness are more violent and dangerous.
- Young people do not have mental health issues, they are just moody.
- Children cannot commit suicide.
- Young people who are suicidal are only seeking attention.
- Young people who self-harm is only looking for attention.
- Young people cannot experience panic attacks.

MENTAL HEALTH CAUSES

Mental health disorders are not caused by character flaws. This is one of the major causes of stigma and discrimination as many still hold the belief that mental disorders stem from weakness, sensitivity, laziness, craziness, gender, etc. There is no single cause as a number of factors can contribute to the development of mental health disorders such as genetics, upbringing, trauma, life experiences and others. Mental disorders do not discriminate; we are all vulnerable to some degree or another.

TRAUMA

According to Psychology Today, trauma is the experience of severe psychological distress following any terrible or life-threatening event. Individuals may develop emotional disturbances such as extreme anxiety, anger, sadness, survivor's guilt, or PTSD. They may experience ongoing problems with sleep or physical pain, encounter turbulence in their personal and professional relationships, and feel a diminished sense of self-worth due to the overwhelming amount of stress.

We know from research done in Belize by *Dr. Gayle, *Project HEAL and others that trauma is a huge comorbidity issue in Belize, especially amongst our young people. So mental health seminars must include trauma for a complete understanding of issues relevant to mental health.

MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT ACE

To best help others it is important to have an ever-evolving awareness of self which allows us to reflect on ourselves to explore beliefs, biases, body language, boundaries and many other facets that can help us to know and understand ourselves better. The more connected we are without selves the better able we are to connect with others in a healthy way. In any mental health field, budding practitioners must attend counselling themselves to ensure that they are best able to identify their issues and begin the process of addressing their needs. This seminar uses the Adverse Childhood Experiences as a starting point for ambassadors to increase their self-awareness and also, to have some experience with the process that many with mental health challenges have to endure- some level of assessment. All the information is confidential and details only discussed individually.

STATISTICS

Mental health statistics play an important role in how mental health improvements are approached. Statistics provide a picture of how many persons are experiencing mental illness, what type of mental illness, ethnicities and many other important facets. Fortunately, there is an increase in research being done and so statistics, although not without their nuances, are becoming more globally available. Belize is lacking in the area of statistics but nonetheless, the Ministry of Health does collect the data that comes through their mental health units. There is a need for young people to seek education and degrees in fields that can help Belize to collect reliable data across the board so that when intervention and programs are rolled out, they are based on reliable statistics and facts.

STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Stigma is when someone sees/judges you in a negative way because of your mental disorder (She is crazy). Discrimination is when someone treats/behaves towards you in a negative way because of your mental disorder (If she sits next to me, I was move). Stigma and discrimination are the reason that many suffer in silence, especially in smaller societies such as Belize where many know each other. They both increase isolation which makes getting help harder for those suffering and/or their families.

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

It is very important, especially as mental health ambassadors, to know what resources are available in Belize and those that can be accessed globally. This importance can be used personally or to help others in need. Belize is in need of more resources ranging from certified mental health practitioners to an acute unit for patience in crisis.

FIGHT STIGMA: CHANGE YOUR LANGUAGE (@THERAPYWITHTONI)

INSTEAD OF THIS:

“He is crazy/psycho/insane”



“She committed suicide”



“They’re so bipolar”
or “I’m so OCD”
or “that gave me PTSD”



DO THIS:

Just don’t

“She died by suicide”

Describe what you are
actually feeling/doing.
Don’t use a diagnosis casually.



UNIT**1.7 Learning Points, Role Playing and Reflection****PURPOSE**

Learning points and debrief of session

TIME

15 mins

MATERIALS

Pen, paper, telephone

1.7 Learning Points, Role Playing and Reflection

Each person has a unique learning preference (visual, audio, tactile...) but research confirmed that we learn best by doing. For this seminar, which is experiential based, doing means presenting information and having the participants digest, reflect, discuss, practice, role play, make mistakes and then come back to summarize and reflect again in this last portion. This is how the brain will best digest new information, challenge old assumptions and allow for growth mindsets that those in the helping profession so need. This is done during and at the end of each session in this seminar to ensure that participants do not regurgitate information but that they have adequately digested and can own the information and thus, can better share with others.



Understanding & Identifying Signs of Depression

OBJECTIVES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- To gain an understanding of depression as a leading mental health challenge
- To gain knowledge in identifying signs of depression
- To gain knowledge in identifying possible coping mechanism
- To gain knowledge about the brain and depression

DURATION	UNIT	METHOD	MATERIAL
10 mins	2.1 Revision of aims and objectives of this modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in • Revision of Ground Rules 	Presentation and Group Discussion	PowerPoint
10 mins	2.2 Mindful Practice/Energizer	Energizer	Appendix 1, self and a quiet space
50 mins	2.3 Introduction to Depression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts and Myths • Causes • Statistics • Stigma and Discrimination • Insight on Belizeans living with depression • Coping Mechanisms • Identifying symptoms in young people 	Interactive Presentation	PowerPoint/ Video Testimonial
10 mins	BREAK		
10 mins	2.4 Neuroplasticity and the Brain	Presentation and Group Presentation	Video
15 mins	2.5 Learning points, role-playing and reflection on mental health topic	Group Discussion	
15 mins	2.6 Participants Evaluation 2.7 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire	Written/Group Discussion	

UNIT	2.1 Revision of Aims and Objectives: Check-In + Revision of Ground Rules
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each module begins with a brief agenda of aims and objectives of this • To do some feelings check-in for each participant for the day. Review their individual expectations
TIME	10 mins
MATERIALS	Individual self, a quiet and comfortable space and PowerPoint

2.1 Revision of Aims and Objectives: Check-In + Revision of Ground Rules

An overall revision of the past modules and plans for the days' module of the seminar is an important step for the day. It is important for both facilitator and participants to be clear on what their objectives are for the day. It also involves active participation and input from both, which contributes to experiential learning.

UNIT	2.2 Mindful Practice/Energizer
PURPOSE	To continue to practice mindfulness practices and bring the facilitator to the room and focus on the training
TIME	10 mins
MATERIALS	Individual self, a quiet and comfortable space and PowerPoint

2.2 Mindful Practice/Energizer

Mindful practices are done for two main purposes-they allow the participants to focus their energy and bodies in the present and allows for learning to happen more easily. It is also important that if they will be teaching this to other adolescents that they can practice it themselves. It takes practice to become more and more comfortable with their breathing and their bodies and to build new neural pathways. The overall check- in of their day and their mood reminds us of the importance of our emotions and allows the facilitator to be cognizant where and what the participants might be bringing to the table on that day. For example, if participants share that their energy is low or they feel lethargic- there may be need to plug in some more interactive icebreakers so they keep their bodies moving.

UNIT**2.3 Introduction to Depression****PURPOSE**

An introduction to depression

TIME

50 mins

MATERIALS

Paper, pen, post-it's for each participant, PowerPoint and video testimonial

2.3 Introduction to Depression

Depression has become more and more a word loosely used among various groups. However, there are many thoughts and facts that may allow the understanding of depression to be misconstrued. Due to the continue stigma and discrimination around mental health it also remains a topic that is not easily explored or discussed. At the end of this section, the youth facilitators will be able to identify the signs and symptoms of depression and cues to help them possible identify symptoms in other young people.

DEPRESSION MYTHS

- You cannot have depression and another mental illness.
- All people with depression will try to kill themselves at least once.
- Antidepressants always cure depression.
- Talking about it only makes it worse.
- Depression only happens after a sad situation.
- Depression is a sign of weakness.
- Only women experience depression.

DEPRESSION FACTS

- Depression can happen at any age.
- One in four people have experienced a bout of depression.
- Depression can last for years.

CAUSES/STATISTICS

Depression is considered a mood disorder.

This section will allow the youth facilitators to explore what they feel are the causes and will create a discussion on the common causes of depression. Some of the causes that 15 will be explored and discussed are trauma, grief/loss, genetics, brain chemistry, substance use, stress, and poor nutrition. The facilitator will also explore how it may manifest differently for males and females. The facilitator will also engage in a group discussion to explore common causes for the Belizean adolescents. Local and international statistics on depression and suicide will be shared so that participants.

STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Many deem depression in particular as a sign of weakness or that one suffering from depression has the ability to shake off. In many instances it goes unnoticed or overlooked as laziness. The participants' ability to identify when this may be happening will make it easier for them to advise or encourage when a peer may need to seek mental health care.

INSIGHT ON BELIZEAN EXPERIENCES LIVING WITH DEPRESSION

Both facilitators have been practicing therapy for over ten years and will be sharing a few statements and comments from Belizean individuals that have suffered from depression. This will be an open discussion to explore how much of what is shared has either been individually experienced or they have seen in others. Again, all this is done in an effort for them to have a clearer understanding of what depression looks like and makes it easier for them to identify when a peer may need further mental health assistance. A video testimonial will also be shown.

COPING MECHANISMS

This section will be started by exploring with the participants what are some of activities that bring joy and happiness to each participant. Facilitators will explain that we all cope differently and the need to explore existing coping mechanisms before making any recommendations is important. Facilitators will have an open discussion on both positive and negative coping mechanisms that may manifest when an individual is depressed. The positive/ healthier coping mechanisms will be concentrated on for the remainder of this section.

IDENTIFYING SYMPTOMS

At this point of the training, it is the hope that the participants will have a clearer understanding of depression. This section will zone in how to identify the common symptoms of depression and then what they can do to address. Again, section will also highlight existing mental health resources that both present and future participants will be able to access in Belize. The list and handout will be reviewed and updated at the end of the session with the facilitators input.

POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Loss of interest in things you enjoy, such as work or hobbies
- Low levels of motivation and energy
- Trouble sleeping
- Oversleeping
- Inability to concentrate
- Feeling anxious
- Feeling angry or irritable
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Feelings of sadness and hopelessness
- Feeling angry
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities, like sex
- Feeling fatigued
- Not able to remember details
- Overeating or not wanting to eat at all
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- Aches, pains, headaches, cramps
- Inability to meet daily responsibilities

UNIT	2.4 Neuroplasticity and the Brain
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PURPOSE	Understanding how the brain works in creating new synapses and neural pathways as we grow.
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TIME	50 mins
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MATERIALS	PowerPoint Presentation and Video
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2.4 Neuroplasticity and the Brain

In recent decades the development of neuroplasticity, that the brain can create new synapses and neural pathways no matter the age of a person, came as a humongous relief and a powerful tool. It was previously believed that at 40 years of age brain cells would start to diminish and hence, the inevitable demise of the brain. Through research it is now clear that we generate new neurons until the day we die. The brain is static and fluid! Individually, we can influence our habits, patterns, perception by using the brain plasticity to create new healthier patterns mentally and physically.

The link between trauma and neuroplasticity is very important as trauma leaves such a harsh imprint on our brains and bodies that it is pivotal to know that despite trauma, we can create new neural pathways that allow the effects of trauma to become only one neural pathway amongst many versus being the only one that plays out in a person's narrative.

UNIT	2.5 Learning Points, Role-Playing and Reflection
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PURPOSE	Learning points and debrief of session
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TIME	15 mins
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MATERIALS	Pen, paper, and telephone
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2.5 Learning Points, Role-Playing and Reflection

Each person has a unique learning preference (visual, audio, tactile...) but research confirmed that we learn best by doing. For this seminar, which is experiential based, doing means presenting information and having the participants digest, reflect, discuss, practice, role play, make mistakes and then come back to summarize and reflect again in this last portion. This is how the brain will best digest new information, challenge old assumptions and allow for growth mindsets that those in the helping profession so need. This is done during and at the end of each session in this seminar to ensure that participants do not regurgitate information but that they have adequately digested and can own the information and thus, can better share with others.

UNIT**2.6 Youth Facilitator Evaluation
2.7 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire****PURPOSE**

- Youth facilitators are evaluated on their knowledge and critical thinking skills based on this first unit of the seminar
- Youth facilitators are asked to reflect and review their experience of the seminar

TIME

15 mins

MATERIALS

Pen and paper

2.6 Youth Facilitator Evaluation

As a form of monitoring and evaluating the learning and processing that has occurred during this first unit of the seminar it is important to have some form of evaluation where the youth facilitators can demonstrate some level of growth from their participant in the seminar.

2.7 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire

Just as the youth facilitators are required to do an evaluation, it is equally important that they be able to share their experience with the seminar facilitators. This allows for adjustments to be made that can help the learning experience of both the youth facilitators and the seminar facilitators. This will be gathered via survey monkey.



Understanding and Identifying Signs of Anxiety

OBJECTIVES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- To gain an understanding of anxiety as a leading mental health challenge
- To gain knowledge in identifying signs of anxiety
- To gain knowledge in identifying possible coping mechanism
- To gain knowledge about the link between anxiety and depression

DURATION	UNIT	METHOD	MATERIAL
10 mins	3.1 Revision of aims and objectives of this modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in • Revision of Ground Rules 	Presentation and Group Discussion	PowerPoint
10 mins	3.2 Mindful Practice/Energizerr	Energizer	Appendix 1, self and a quiet space
50 mins	3.3 Introduction to Depression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts and Myths • Causes • Statistics • Stigma and Discrimination • Belizean Testimonials on Living with Anxiety • Coping Mechanisms • Identifying symptoms in young people 	Interactive Presentation	PowerPoint/ Video Testimonial
10 mins	BREAK		
10 mins	3.4 The link between anxiety and depression	Presentation and Group Presentation	Video
15 mins	3.5 Learning points, role-playing and reflection on mental health topic	Group Discussion	
15 mins	3.6 Participants Evaluation 3.7 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire	Written/Group Discussion	

UNIT	3.1 Revision of Aims and Objectives: Check-In + Revision of Ground Rules
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each module begins with a brief agenda of aims and objectives of this • To do some feelings check-in for each participant for the day. Review their individual expectations
TIME	10 mins
MATERIALS	Individual self, a quiet and comfortable space and PowerPoint

3.1 Revision of Aims and Objectives: Check-In + Revision of Ground Rules

An overall revision of the past modules and plans for the days' module of the seminar is an important step for the day. It is important for both facilitator and participants to be clear on what their objectives are for the day. It also involves active participation and input from both, which contributes to experiential learning.

UNIT	3.2 Mindful Practice/Energizer
PURPOSE	To continue to practice mindfulness practices and bring the facilitator to the room and focus on the training
TIME	10 mins
MATERIALS	Individual self, a quiet and comfortable space and PowerPoint

3.2 Mindful Practice/Energizer

Mindful practices are done for two main purposes-they allow the participants to focus their energy and bodies in the present and allows for learning to happen more easily. It is also important that if they will be teaching this to other adolescents that they can practice it themselves. It takes practice to become more and more comfortable with their breathing and their bodies and to build new neural pathways. The overall check- in of their day and their mood reminds us of the importance of our emotions and allows the facilitator to be cognizant where and what the participants might be bringing to the table on that day. For example, if participants share that their energy is low or they feel lethargic- there may be need to plug in some more interactive icebreakers so they keep their bodies moving.

UNIT **3.3 Introduction to Anxiety**

PURPOSE An introduction to anxiety

TIME 50 mins

MATERIALS Paper, pen, post-it's for each participant, PowerPoint and video testimonial

3.3 Introduction to Anxiety

Anxiety is a growing terminology that people have become more aware of and are using when describing feelings of nervousness, dread and/or worry. While it is a normal emotion all human beings experience, it's when these feelings are intense and persistent and affect an individual's normal daily routine it may be an indication of a possible anxiety disorder. It can manifest in many forms for different individuals. Anxiety Disorders is a cluster on its own in the DSM and has six different forms of anxiety disorders (panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, social phobia, specific phobia and generalized anxiety disorder).

ANXIETY MYTHS

- If you tell someone to calm down when they feel anxious it works.
- You can die from a panic attack.
- Anti-anxiety medications are highly addictive.
- Anxiety can give you physical symptoms.
- Anxious people should avoid stress.
- Children don't have anything to be anxious about.
- Social Anxiety is the same as being shy.

ANXIETY FACTS

- Anxiety is normal and makes us perform better.
- Anxiety disorders are very common.
- Anxiety is twice as common in women than it is in men.

CAUSES/STATISTICS

Anxiety disorders is a cluster of disorders in the DSM 5. It has 6 different types of anxiety disorders that fall under this cluster. This section will allow the youth facilitators to explore what they feel are the causes and will create a discussion on the common cause of anxiety. Some of the common causes that will be explored and discussed are trauma, genetics, brain chemistry, substance use, and stress. The facilitator will also explore how it may manifest differently for male and female. The facilitator will also engage with participants to explore if they feel some causes are more linked to Belizean adolescents. Local and international statistics on anxiety will be shared with the participants to gain a better understanding of how common anxiety may be seen.

STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Stigma is when someone sees/judges you in a negative way because of your mental disorder (She is crazy). Discrimination is when someone treats/behaves towards you in a negative way because of your mental disorder (If she sits next to me, I was move). Stigma and discrimination are the reason that many suffer in silence, especially in smaller societies such as Belize where many know each other. They both increase isolation which makes getting help harder for those suffering and/or their families. The participants' ability to identify when this may be happening will make it easier for them to advise or encourage when a peer may need to seek mental health care.

INSIGHT ON BELIZEAN EXPERIENCES LIVING WITH ANXIETY

Both facilitators have been practicing therapy for over ten years and will be sharing a few statements and comments from Belizean individuals that have suffered from anxiety. This will be an open discussion to explore how much of what is shared has either been individually experienced or they have seen in others. Again, all this is done in an effort for them to have a clearer understanding of what depression looks like and makes it easier for them to identify when a peer may need further mental health assistance. A video testimonial will also be shown.

COPING MECHANISMS

This section will be started by exploring with the participants what are some of activities that bring joy and happiness to each participant. Facilitators will explain that we all cope differently and the need to explore existing coping mechanisms before making any recommendations is important. Facilitators will have an open discussion on both positive and

negative coping mechanisms that may manifest when an individual is depressed. The positive/healthier coping mechanisms will be concentrated on for the remainder of this section.

IDENTIFYING SYMPTOMS

At this point of the training, it is the hope that the participants will have a clearer understanding of anxiety. This section will zone in how to identify the common symptoms of anxiety and then what they can do to address. Again, section will also highlight existing mental health resources that both present and future participants will be able to access in Belize. The list and handout will be reviewed and updated at the end of the session with the facilitators input.

POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

- Inability to control excessive worrying
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Irritability
- Easily startled or scared
- Difficulty concentrating or the mind goes blank

COMMON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

- Headaches and fatigue
- Muscle tension and aches
- Having a hard time swallowing
- Trembling or twitching
- Sweating
- Shaking
- Rapid Heartbeat
- Nausea
- Light-headedness and tingling in the extremities.
- Feeling out of breath
- Having to go to the bathroom frequently
- Hot flashes

UNIT **3.4 Link Between Anxiety and Depression**

PURPOSE Understanding how the brain works in creating new synapses and neural pathways as we grow

TIME 10 mins

MATERIALS PowerPoint presentation and video

3.4 Link Between Anxiety and Depression

Depression and anxiety commonly co-occur for many individuals. Many speak of it as a vicious cycle of their mental health. While there is no evidence or research to prove that one disorder causes the other, there is a lot of research to support that many suffer from both disorders.

UNIT **3.5 Learning Points, Role-Playing and Reflection**

PURPOSE Learning points and debrief of session

TIME 15 mins

MATERIALS Pen, paper, and telephone

3.5 Learning Points, Role-Playing and Reflection

Each person has a unique learning preference (visual, audio, tactile...) but research confirmed that we learn best by doing. For this seminar, which is experiential based, doing means presenting information and having the participants digest, reflect, discuss, practice, role play, make mistakes and then come back to summarize and reflect again in this last portion. This is how the brain will best digest new information, challenge old assumptions and allow for growth mindsets that those in the helping profession so need. This is done during and at the end of each session in this seminar to ensure that participants do not regurgitate information but that they have adequately digested and can own the information and thus, can better share with others.

UNIT **3.6 Youth Facilitator Evaluation**
3.7 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire

PURPOSE

- Youth facilitators are evaluated on their knowledge and critical thinking skills based on this first unit of the seminar
- Youth facilitators are asked to reflect and review their experience of the seminar

TIME 15 mins

MATERIALS Pen and paper

3.6 Youth Facilitator Evaluation

As a form of monitoring and evaluating the learning and processing that has occurred during this first unit of the seminar it is important to have some form of evaluation where the youth facilitators can demonstrate some level of growth from their participant in the seminar.

3.7 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire

Just as the youth facilitators are required to do an evaluation, it is equally important that they be able to share their experience with the seminar facilitators. This allows for adjustments to be made that can help the learning experience of both the youth facilitators and the seminar facilitators. This will be gathered via survey monkey.

Understanding and Application of Mindful Practices and Self Compassion for Mental Wellness

OBJECTIVES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- To gain an understanding of mindfulness
- To gain basic skills in mindfulness to use in helping self and others
- To gain knowledge in the importance of Self Compassion and Self Care in the helping profession

DURATION	UNIT	METHOD	MATERIAL
10 mins	4.1 Revision of aims and objectives of this modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in • Revision of Ground Rules 	Presentation and Group Discussion	PowerPoint
10 mins	4.2 Mindful Practice/Energizer	Energizer	Appendix 1, self and a quiet space
TBD mins	4.3 Understanding Mindfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Brief History • The Power of Mindfulness for Mental Health 	Interactive Presentation	PowerPoint/ Video Testimonial
TBD mins	4.4 Five Essential Mindful Techniques to use everyday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diaphragmatic Breathing • Sitting with thoughts and emotions/Acceptance • Mindful Listening • Body Scan • Grounding 	Discussion	
TBD mins	4.5 Importance of Self Care in helping professions	Group Activity	
TBD mins	4.6 Importance of Self Compassion in helping professions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take self-compassion assessment 	Visual Assessment	
TBD mins	4.7 Learning points and debrief	Discussion	
TBD mins	4.8 Participants Evaluation 4.9 Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire	Written	
TBD mins	4.10 Certification		

UNIT **4.1 Revision of Aims and Objectives: Check-In + Revision of Ground Rules**

PURPOSE

- Each module begins with a brief agenda of aims and objectives of this
- To do some feelings check-in for each participant for the day. Review their individual expectations

TIME 10 mins

MATERIALS Individual self, a quiet and comfortable space and PowerPoint

4.1 Revision of Aims and Objectives: Check-In + Revision of Ground Rules

An overall revision of the past modules and plans for the days' module of the seminar is an important step for the day. It is important for both facilitator and participants to be clear on what their objectives are for the day. It also involves active participation and input from both, which contributes to experiential learning.

UNIT **4.2 Mindful Practice/Energizer**

PURPOSE To continue to practice mindfulness practices and bring the facilitator to the room and focus on the training

TIME 10 mins

MATERIALS Individual self, a quiet and comfortable space and PowerPoint



UNIT**4.3 Understanding Mindfulness****PURPOSE**

- Definition
- Brief History
- The power of mindfulness for your mental health

TIME

XX mins

MATERIALS

Paper, pen, post-it's for each participant

4.3 Understanding Mindfulness

Mindful practices are done for two main purposes—they allow the participants to focus their energy and bodies in the present and allows for learning to happen more easily. It is also important that if they will be teaching this to other adolescents that they can practice it themselves. It takes practice to become more and more comfortable with their breathing and their bodies and to build new neural pathways. The overall check-in of their day and their mood reminds us of the importance of our emotions and allows the facilitator to be cognizant where and what the participants might be bringing to the table on that day. For example, if participants share that their energy is low or they feel lethargic- there may be need to plug in some more interactive icebreakers so they keep their bodies moving.

Mindfulness is an increasingly research practice and has yielded results that have increased its use throughout mental health therapeutic approaches.



DEFINITION

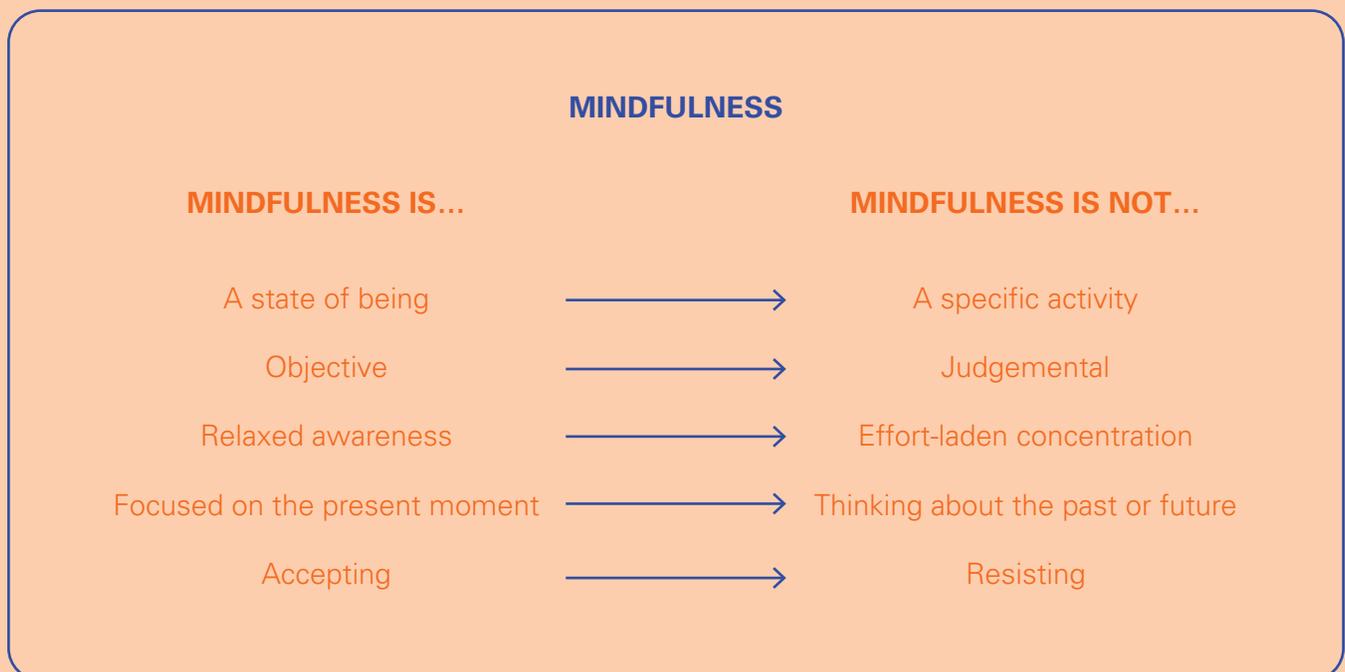
In its basic yet most powerful form, mindfulness is the ability to be fully present in the moment. The practice of mindfulness can yield numerous benefits from reduced feelings of stress, sadness, anger to improved sleep and increased feelings of joy and peace.

BRIEF HISTORY

Mindfulness has been practiced by people for thousands of years. In general, it was popularized in the East by religious sectors such as Hinduism and Buddhism and in the West, it can be traced to particular people or secular institutions.

THE POWER OF MINDFULNESS FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Whatever its origins, it is now quite the buzzword and with good reason as in a demanding world with the highest levels of anxiety and depression ever recorded, mindful practices continue to help millions to cope and build healthier lives. The practice involves breathing methods, imagery, sensory connections and other methods that help the brain to relax and feel a sense of safety and calm. The consistent practice of mindful techniques in turn can create new, more relaxed and present focused neural pathways in the brain. This allows stressed, anxious, depressed and just everyday living to be more manageable and enjoyable. It is important that youth facilitators be aware of the power of mindfulness; its well-researched use in the mental health field; and how it can help them to be more present which in turn allows them to be better able to identify their peers in need.



UNIT

4.4 Five Essential Mindful Techniques to Use Everyday

PURPOSE

To increase knowledge, application and practice of these techniques

- Diaphragmatic Breathing
- Mindful sitting
- Mindful Listening
- Body Scan
- Grounding Techniques

TIME

XX mins

MATERIALS

Paper, pen, post-it's for each participant

4.4 Five Essential Mindful Techniques to Use Everyday

In a demanding world, the mind is constantly pulled in various directions. The challenge is that our mind was not wired to attend to so many things for such long periods of time. In fact, being busy has become so much the norm that many times, if not busy, we or others judge that as being unproductive and/or lazy. One of the reasons why as societies we are more stressed, anxious and depressed than ever before. Mindful techniques help to give the brain and much needed break to be in the moment and to let go of the many competing attention grabbers for at least a while. The techniques below can help a busy, distressed mind to find some level of calm and peace.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Diaphragmatic breathing also called deep breathing or belly breathing is a type of breathing exercise that helps to strengthen your diaphragm, an important muscle that helps you breathe. It has a number of benefits that affect your entire body and is the basis for almost all meditation and relaxation techniques, which can lower stress levels, feelings of depression and anxiety, reduce blood pressure and regulate other important bodily processes. Its benefits are well researched and is usually recommended as one of the first tools for cognitive and emotional regulation.

DELIBERATE BREATHING

Improve your well-being

Deliberate Breathing can boost your performance and recovery—use it to focus and restore your energy

Breathing Technique:

- Pay attention to how you breathe.
- Place one hand on your chest and one on your abdomen.
- Take a few deep breaths. Which hand moves more? You want it to be the one on your stomach.
- Take slow deep breaths in a 5/5 cadence; 5 count inhale, 5 count exhale.
- Imagine you have a balloon in your stomach and you are inflating it slowly.

You can also use Deliberate Breathing to generate positive emotions when you're feeling tense or nervous. Recall a past experience when you felt gratitude joy or love. Start Deliberate Breathing and focus on that positive experience as you breathe deeply.

TEN STEPS TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

- 1. Create time and space:** Choose a regular time each day for mindfulness meditation practice, ideally a quiet place free from distraction
- 2. Set a timer:** Start with just 5 minutes and ease your way up to 15-40 minutes
- 3. Find a comfortable sitting position:** Sit cross-legged on the floor, on the grass or in a chair with your feet flat on the ground.
- 4. Check your posture:** Sit up straight, hands in a comfortable position. Keep neck long, chin tilted slightly downward, tongue resting on the roof of mouth. Relax shoulders. Close eyes or gaze downward 5-10 feet in front of you.
- 5. Take deep breaths:** Deep breathing helps settle the body and establish your presence in the space.
- 6. Direct attention to your breath:** Focus on a part of the body where the breath feels prominent: nostrils, back of throat or diaphragm. Try not to switch focus.
- 7. Maintain attention to your breath:** As you inhale and exhale, focus on the breath. If attention wanders, return to the breath. Let go of thoughts, feelings or distractions.
- 8. Repeat steps 6-7:** For the duration of meditation session. The mind will wander. Simply acknowledge this and return to your breath.

9. Be kind to yourself: Don't be upset if focus occasionally drifts or if you fall asleep. If very tired, meditate with eyes open and rearrange posture to more erect (but still relaxed) position

10. Prepare for a soft landing: When the timer goes off, keep eyes closed until you're ready to open them. Be thankful. Acknowledge your practice with gratitude.

MINDFUL SITTING

Mindful sitting is also called mindful meditation. As with breathing, sitting is a common place activity. We do it all the time! No big deal! However, just as deep breathing is different from normal breathing so is mindful sitting different from normal sitting. In mindful sitting, the difference is the mindful awareness of what is being done. It is about sitting and becoming aware of thoughts, feelings and sensations that may arise and learning to allow them to do just that, surface and arise, without judgement. It is simple but it is not easy but with consistent practice the habit is built. If the mind is restless, the body is restless. If the mind wants a drink, the body goes to the kitchen sink or the refrigerator. We may ponder why the mind is like this for a moment or two, but basically, we are practicing accepting each moment as it is without reacting to how it is...

By doing so you are training your mind to be less reactive and more stable. You are making each moment count. You are taking each moment as it comes, not valuing any one above any other. In this way you are cultivating your natural ability to concentrate your mind.

MINDFUL LISTENING

Is about being fully present when listening and interacting with others rather than planning and thinking about how to respond to what the person is sharing. It is about really listening to another person and honing your attention on their words and body language. We can listen verbally, nonverbally, and relationally, using all five senses. We listen relationally by reading between the lines based on what we know about the relationship and our conversation partner from past experiences. When we do this, we can experience higher quality conversations with others. We can also build quality relationships with others and improve the relationships we are already in. Listening mindfully requires us to comprehend what the other person is actually saying. This is very important in any helping profession. Then we need to let them know we are paying attention and thinking about what they shared. We do this by showing interest and support through maintaining eye contact, nodding, smiling, and encouraging them to express their thoughts. In a sense, we become emotionally involved in their message and it shows.

5 HELPFUL TIPS FOR MINDFUL LISTENING

- 1. Ditch Distraction:** Power down devices and be fully present to your partner, friend or family member.
- 2. Curb Your Reaction:** It's tempting to interrupt by sharing your own reactions. Wait until it's your turn to respond.
- 3. Focus on Sensation:** If you lose focus, come back to the present moment by focusing on the experience of being in your body.
- 4. Use Self-Talk:** During a difficult conversation with someone, remember to be kind to yourself.
- 5. Connect to Intention:** Remind yourself why it's important to listen deeply to others.

BODY SCAN

Sometimes you can be so caught up in your stress, that you don't realize that the physical discomfort you're experiencing—such as headaches, back and shoulder pain, and tense muscles—is connected to your emotional state. Body scan meditation is a good way to release tension you might not even realize you're experiencing. Body scanning involves paying attention to parts of the body and bodily sensations in a gradual sequence from feet to head. By mentally scanning yourself, you bring awareness to every single part of your body, noticing any aches, pains, tension, or general discomfort. The goal is not to relieve the pain completely, but to get to know it and learn from it so you can better manage it. Research has shown that consistent practice of body scans is stress reduction which in turn as many physical and mental health benefits.

BODY SCAN MEDITATION

- Set aside a time and place in your day where you can sit comfortably and you won't be distracted or disturbed
- Find a comfortable but attentive seated position, close your eyes and bring your attention to your toes
- Working up from your toes, bring awareness to each body part in turn: your feet, ankles, calves, knees, etc. up to your head

HEALTH BENEFITS:

- Reduced stress
- Decreased muscle tension
- Increased pain tolerance

WHY IT WORKS TO REDUCE STRESS:

Body scan meditations encourage self-awareness of sensations we might otherwise be ignoring

GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

Grounding and self-soothing are done as a means of calming our bodies when we are overloaded by stress or emotions. Grounding exercises are particularly useful for those who have experienced some trauma. Staying in the present moment allows people to feel safe and in-control by focusing on the physical world and how they experience it. These techniques help bring us back into the here and now in a safe way. The more present you are in your body, the calmer and safer you will feel. Grounding is easy to do. Just focus on some aspect of the physical world, rather than on your internal thoughts and feelings. Focus on the present rather than the past. Practice your grounding techniques so that they will come naturally when you are upset.

SIX WAYS TO PRACTICE GROUNDING: WITH ANXIETY AND INTENSE EMOTIONS

1. **Body:** lay on the ground, press your toes into the floor or squeeze playdough
2. **5 Senses:** wear your favorite sweatshirt, use essential oils or make a cup of tea
3. **Self-Soothe:** take a shower or bath, find a grounding object or light a candle
4. **Observe:** describe an object in detail (color, texture, shadow, light, and/or shape)
5. **Breathe:** practice 4-7-8 breathing: inhale to 4, hold for 7, exhale to 8
6. **Distract:** Find all the square or green objects in the room, count by 7s and say the date



APPENDIX 1

The following are mindful and meditation exercises that can be adapted and used with any group. There are also some interactive energizers in the event there are face to face sessions in the future.

1. TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

- Each participant will have a turn to introduce themselves.
- Each participant will share three statements about themselves: two that are true and one that is a lie.
- The other participants will have to guess which two statements are true and which one is the lie.

2. FRUIT BASKET

- Each participant will be assigned a fruit and a chair
- The person in the middle will have the option of calling out each fruit, a combination of fruits or “basket tun ova”, which would be all fruits
- Once your fruit is called, the participant will move from their chair and find a vacant chair.
- The participant left in the middle will have a turn then to pick which fruit or combination of fruits or “basket tun ova” will be called
- This continues for at least seven rounds or until the facilitator decides to stop

3. CROSS THE LINE – GET THE PARTICIPANTS UP AND MOVING AROUND

- Draw or stick a piece of tape on the floor of the training room to create a line
- Have all participants stand on the line at the beginning of the game
- The facilitator will shout out a number of choices and participants need to move to either side of the line. If there is time, the facilitator can explore some of the participants answers
- Some choices are: Basketball vs Football, Sweet vs Sour, Instagram vs Tic Toc, Lakers vs Cleland, iPhone vs Samsung, sea vs river, cardio b vs Nicki manage, rap vs dancehall, living together vs getting married then living together, long term relationship vs dating around

4. SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

- Ask participants to pair up, then stand and face each other. Have participants take a good look at each other for 60 seconds.
- Ask participants to face away from each other, and then change three things about the way they look. For example, smile, close one eye, cross arms, untie a shoelace, push up sleeves, remove glasses, move a ring from one finger to another.
- Have participants face each other again for 60 seconds and try to spot the differences.
- Discuss what was noticed and what was not.

5. DEEP BELLY BREATHING

- Ask participants to sit in an upright position with both legs grounded on the floor
- Next, participants must place their right hand on the center of their bellies, close their eyes and keep their hands on their bellies
- They will then all take a deep breath in and feel their belly expands
- The facilitator will count for five seconds as this is done
- After five seconds the participants must slowly release the air and feel their bellies deflate.
- This will be done for 5-8 time so all participants can practice

6. BODY SCAN

- Ask each participant to get comfortable at their location. Preferably each participant can lay down to make them comfortable.
- Take five deep belly breaths
- Each participant must bring awareness first to their toes then to their knees, upper thighs, belly, chest, shoulders, neck, face and head
- Ask participants to breathe into each area of their body as each is mentioned, feel the breath and breath into the tension of any area of the body

7. MINDFULLY SITTING WITH YOUR EMOTIONS

- Ask each participant to get comfortable at their location.
- Take five deep belly breaths
- Have each participant close their eyes
- The facilitator will guide them in mediation for one minute
- After the minute, ask participants to observe how their body is feeling and what is the dominant emotion being felt
- Each participant will sit with that feeling for about 2 mins
- They must then open their eyes and share their experience.

8. GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

- Ask each participant to take a seat and get comfortable and have two feet grounded on the floor
- Ask each participant to close their eyes and take five belly breaths
- Have each participant choose one of the five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing)
- Once the sense is selected each participant must name five things they can experience in the room using that sense

APPENDIX 2

VIDEOS

- **A Belizean Story of Depression By Maryam** <https://youtu.be/w4l6P8MbemA>
- **We all have mental health** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxIDKZHW3-E&t=14s>
- **Meditation 101: A beginner's guide** <https://youtu.be/o-kMJBWk9E0>
- **Mindfully sitting like a frog** <https://youtu.be/EOckRqbCdG0>
- **Brene Brown Empathy Vs Sympathy** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

APPENDIX 3

CREDIBLE SITES AND ARTICLES

- **Mind Health Connect Belize** <https://www.mindhealthconnect.com>
- **Reach Out** <http://au.reachout.com/>
- **Teens Health** http://teenshealth.org/teen/your_mind/
- **Go ask Alice!** <http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/>
- **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Youth_Resources/Home.aspx
- **Psychology Today** <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl>
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- **Mayo Clinic** <https://www.mayoclinic.org>

APPS AND TECH

- **Mindfulness for teens** <http://mindfulnessforteens.com/>
- **Beacon 2.0** <https://beacon.anu.edu.au/>
- **Strength for us** <http://strengthofus.org/>
- **CALM App**

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Wherever he lives.

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