



Mental Health Basics for Teens

Welcome! We're about to start an important journey together exploring mental health and wellness. Just like how we take care of our physical health, understanding and nurturing our mental health is crucial during the teenage years.

We'll explore key concepts and practical techniques to support your wellbeing, including understanding emotions, managing stress, building healthy relationships, and developing coping strategies that work for you. Whether you're dealing with everyday challenges or just want to boost your emotional wellbeing, this guide is here to help.

Remember, taking care of your mental health isn't just about dealing with problems – it's about building a stronger, happier, and more resilient you. Let's get started! ✨



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Understanding Mental and Physical Health

Physical Health

Visible symptoms like cuts, bruises, or stomach pain that are easier to identify and treat. Physical health can be measured through vital signs, medical tests, and physical examinations.

- Regular check-ups can track progress
- Clear treatment paths like medicine or surgery
- Observable recovery process
- Support from doctors and specialists

Mental Health

Internal symptoms that are often harder to identify and may manifest differently in each person. Requires self-awareness and patience to manage effectively.

- Symptoms can be subtle or unclear
- Treatment may need different approaches
- Progress can take time to notice
- Support comes from various sources: counsellors, friends, family

Both types of health are equally important and often interconnected - taking care of one helps maintain the other. Regular attention to both physical and mental well-being creates the foundation for overall health.

Getting to Know Yourself

Self-discovery is a crucial part of your mental health journey. Taking time to understand yourself better helps build confidence and resilience.

Self-Reflection

Notice your reactions and preferences. What do you notice about yourself? Pay attention to what makes you happy, what drains your energy, and how you respond to different situations. Your patterns and preferences are valuable clues to understanding yourself better.

Identify Your Burdens

What worries are you carrying that don't belong to you? Sometimes we take on other people's problems or expectations without realising it. Learn to distinguish between what's truly your responsibility and what isn't. This helps create healthy boundaries and reduces unnecessary stress.

Take Control

Visualise your life as a bus. Where are you sitting? Move to the driver's seat. Remember that while others may be passengers offering directions, you're ultimately in charge of where you're going. Taking control means making conscious choices about your path and learning to trust your judgment.

Remember, getting to know yourself is an ongoing journey, not a destination. Be patient with yourself as you explore these different aspects of who you are. The more you understand yourself, the better equipped you'll be to make choices that align with your values and support your well-being.



The Power of Thoughts

Our thoughts are the starting point of a powerful chain reaction that shapes our daily experiences. Understanding this connection helps us take control of our mental well-being.

1

Thought

Your initial mental response to a situation or trigger. These can be automatic ("I'm going to fail") or intentional ("This is challenging but I can handle it"). Our thoughts are like the first domino that sets everything else in motion.

2

Feeling

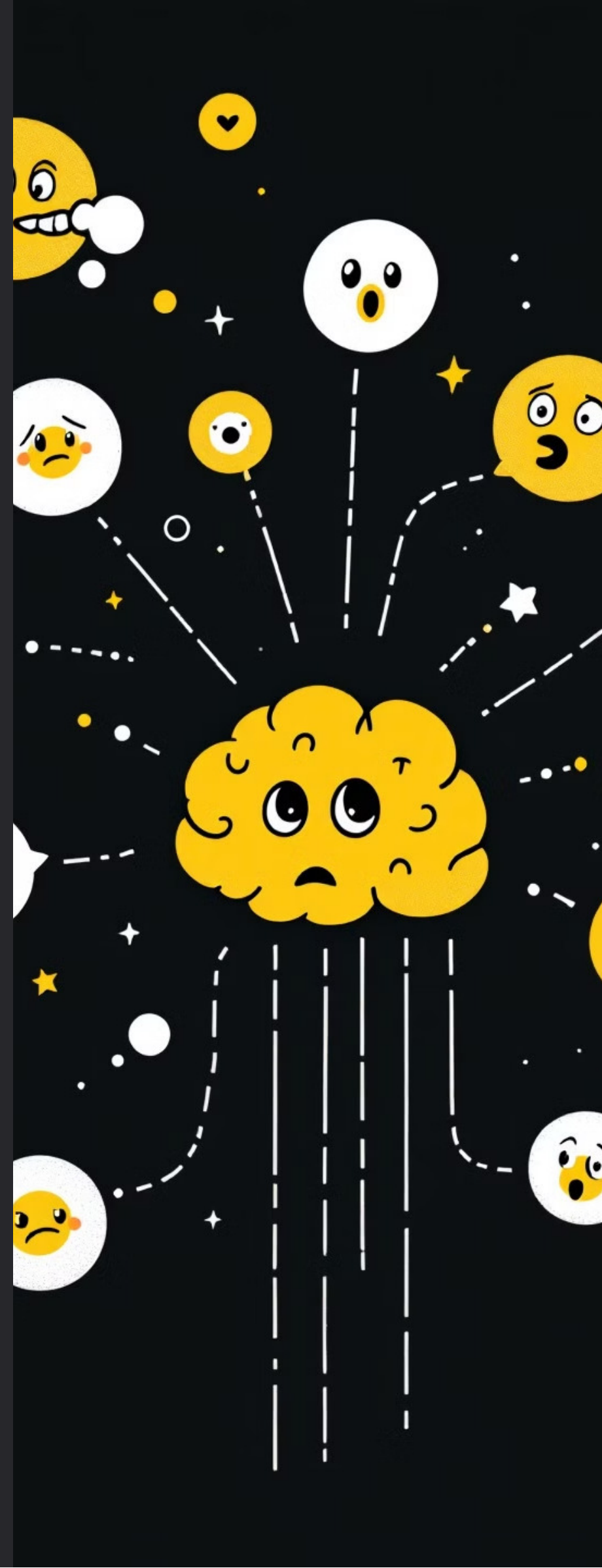
Emotional reactions that arise from our thoughts. One thought can trigger multiple feelings - anxiety, excitement, fear, or confidence. These emotions create physical sensations in our body and influence our mood.

3

Behaviour

Actions and reactions that follow our thoughts and feelings. This might mean avoiding situations when we're anxious, pursuing goals when we're confident, or withdrawing when we're sad. Our behaviours then create new situations that spark new thoughts, continuing the cycle.

By recognising this pattern, you can learn to pause, examine your thoughts, and choose more helpful ways of thinking - leading to better feelings and more positive actions.



Control Circle

Understanding what we can and cannot control is crucial for managing stress and anxiety. This model helps us focus our energy where it matters most.



Let's break this down further:

- 1 Direct Control**
You have complete control over your responses, attitude, effort, words, actions, habits, and how you spend your time. Focus most of your energy here.
- 2 Sphere of Influence**
While you can't control these entirely, you can impact your relationships, physical environment, study habits, and some future outcomes through consistent effort.
- 3 Beyond Control**
Weather, other people's opinions or actions, global events, and the past are beyond your control. Accepting this can reduce stress and help you focus on what matters.

Remember: The key to reducing anxiety is to focus your energy on things within your control, while learning to accept and adapt to things that aren't.



Dealing with Overwhelm

Grounding Technique

Name 3 things you can see, hear, and touch to bring yourself to the present moment.

Mindful Touch

Focus on the sensation of touching an object like a leaf or tracing your hand.

Square Breathing

Breathe in, hold, breathe out, and hold again, each for 4 counts.



Understanding Emotions



Temporary Nature

Emotions come and go like clouds. Don't let them set up camp.



Multiple Emotions

It's normal to experience conflicting emotions simultaneously.



Let Them Flow

Acknowledge emotions without suppressing or holding onto them.

Key Takeaways

Self-Understanding

Get to know yourself better. You're the expert on your thoughts and feelings.

Control

Focus on what you can control and let go of what you can't.

Balance

Maintain a balance between physical and mental health.

Techniques

Practice grounding, breathing, and emotional awareness techniques.

