The Effects of Mental Health Stigma on Youth

DEFINING STIGMA
According to the Cambridge Dictionary, stigma is "A strong feeling of disapproval that most people in a society have about something, especially when this is unfair."1 NAMI stated, "Stigma causes people to feel ashamed for something that is out of their control. Worst of all, stigma prevents people from seeking the help they need."2

STIGMA IN AMERICA
52% of Americans have tried to “grin and bear it” instead of seeing a doctor when feeling depressed or mentally unstable.
31% have worried about others judging them when they told them they have sought mental health services; and
21% have lied to avoid telling people that they’ve sought mental health services.

EFFECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA ON GENERATION Z
Nearly 1 in 2 Americans in Generation Z experienced the adverse effects of poor mental health on their physical health.
38% have sought mental health treatment for being suicidal.
Yet 49% have worried about others judging them when they say they’ve sought mental health services.

HOW DO YOUTH COPE?
31% of American youth have tried to seek out mental health services but found it too hard to figure out where to go. When asked which sources they turned to most for mental health information:
45% of Generation Z reported conducting internet searches and 22% indicated social media.
While 39% reported reaching out to family and 38% to their friends.

WE ALL NEED HELP SOMETIMES. For youth, it can be hard to figure out where to get that help. Make it easier by providing accessible, easy-to-use resources and empowering youth to lead their healthiest lives. Post these resources in a classroom, community room, at home — wherever young people will see them. Don’t forget to add your local resources, helplines, clubs or support groups for mental wellness to the list.

CLUBS AND COMMUNITIES

1. **Active Minds**
   https://www.activeminds.org
   Active Minds is a nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for students. With a focus on students and young adults ages 14–25, Active Minds has chapters at many U.S. universities and has resources for hosting mental health and wellness events for youth and young adults.

2. **Bring Change to Mind**
   https://bringchange2mind.org/get-involved/high-school-program
   Bring Change to Mind’s High School Program gives teens a platform to share their voices and raise awareness around mental health. Their goal is to empower students to educate one another and their communities and to create a culture of peer support within their schools.

EMERGENCY CRISIS RESOURCES

1. **Crisis Text Line**
   https://www.crisistextline.org
   Crisis Text Line is free, 24/7 support for those in crisis. Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the U.S. to text with a trained crisis counselor. Crisis Text Line also trains volunteers to support people in crisis. With more than 100 million messages processed to date, they’re growing quickly!

2. **Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
   https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org
   The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress — including youth and young adults. It also offers prevention and crisis resources and best practices for professionals.

MINORITY POPULATION RESOURCES

1. **Latinx/Hispanic Communities and Mental Health**
   https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/issues/latinxhispanic-communities-and-mental-health
   Mental Health America has compiled a complete list of Spanish language mental health resources for the Latinx/Hispanic community. Spanish language materials are translated and adapted to reflect the various sub-groups that make up the Spanish-speaking community.

2. **The Steve Fund**
   https://www.stevefund.org
   The Steve Fund is dedicated to the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color and provides tailored resources to address some of the unique stressors and challenges that young people of color may face that can influence and exacerbate negative mental health outcomes.
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3. **The Trevor Project**
   https://www.thetrevorproject.org
   The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25. Young people can connect with help through the crisis hotline at 1-866-488-7386 to chat, by texting START to 678678 or even via online social network.

ONLINE COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA
1. **7 Cups**
   https://www.7cups.com
   7 Cups is a website that connects people to caring listeners for free emotional support. Talk to volunteer listeners or join a community support group for different populations such as students, LGBTQ+, young people of color and more.

2. **Buddy Project**
   http://www.buddy-project.org/mission
   Buddy Project is a non-profit movement that aims to prevent suicide and self-harm by pairing people as buddies and raising awareness for mental health. With a primary focus is on children, teens and young adults across the globe, it provides positivity, companionship, resources and education to reduce the stigma of mental illness, bullying and negativity on social media.

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS
1. **Sources of Strength**
   https://sourcesofstrength.org
   Sources of Strength is a school-based, suicide prevention program designed to increase help-seeking behaviors in youth, to build socioecological protective influences around youth and to reduce the likelihood that vulnerable youth/young adults will become suicidal.

TRAINING
1. **Mental Health First Aid**
   https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/course-types/youth
   Become a resource for youth in need of mental health supports. Mental health professional or not, you can make a difference! Learn the signs and symptoms of common mental health challenges for youth, review typical adolescent development and learn the 5-step action plan to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD) and eating disorders. A Spanish language version of the training is available. For additional mental health resources, visit Mental Health First Aid’s resource webpage (https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/mental-health-resources).