

I am convinced, however, that the faith community, the Church, has a unique role to play in responding to this crisis. We have professional, pastoral and spiritual gifts we can bring to help support and heal the wounded and frightened members of our community. And, as always, we trust that our human efforts will be complemented by the powerful grace and unfailing compassion of our Heavenly Father.

May our Blessed Mother Mary, who never fails to assist her children, and St. Dymphna, the patron saint of mental health, accompany us as together we begin this journey of healing and peace.”

+ *Th. J. Tobin*

*Loving God, you are always near to us, especially when we are troubled and experiencing distress.  
Reach out to those who experience mental health challenges.  
Lift their burdens, calm their anxiety, and quiet their fears. Surround them with your  
healing presence that they may know that they are not alone.*

Introducing a new  
diocesan task force  
focused on Youth  
Mental Health



DIOCESE of PROVIDENCE

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YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

For more information visit  
[dioceseofprovidence.org/bewell](http://dioceseofprovidence.org/bewell)



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YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GUIDE



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AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF PROVIDENCE



MOST REV. THOMAS J. TOBIN  
Bishop of Providence

“ We are well aware that recently there has been a rapid and intense increase in mental health problems in our society, especially among young people – **young adults, teenagers** and **children**.

This development has been well-documented by physicians and mental-health experts. It is a deep concern for all of us.

OPEN FOR GUIDANCE & SUPPORT



*The righteous cry out, the Lord hears  
and he rescues them from all their afflictions  
The Lord is close to the brokenhearted  
saves those whose spirit is crushed*

Psalm 34: 18-20

## SUPPORTING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

The **Youth Mental Wellness Task Force** of the Diocese of Providence was established by Bishop Thomas J. Tobin in 2022 to address the growing mental health crisis among young persons. Its mission is to identify and recommend resources and supports to assist our diocesan schools, parishes, and institutions in promoting the well-being of the young persons whom we serve.

Mental health is an essential part of overall health. Young persons who experience mental health challenges need support, compassion, and care. Although increasing prior to the pandemic, rates of psychological distress among young persons have escalated during the past two years since the onset of the pandemic in 2020.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory Report (2021), recent national surveys of young persons have shown an alarming increase in the prevalence of youth mental health difficulties, especially symptoms of anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal ideation. Moreover, rates of suicide among young persons have increased dramatically in recent years.

**Mental health conditions can cause much distress for young persons and their families.  
Fortunately, there are resources and supports available to help.**

## WHEN TO SEEK HELP

### TIME TO SEEK CARE

Young persons may benefit from professional assessment and treatment if they are presenting some or all of the following difficulties:

Appear sad, depressed, and/or anxious much of the time	Emotional distress; tearfulness, anger, irritability	Expresses sense of hopelessness, pessimism	Negative, critical statements about self and/or others	Sudden, unpredictable changes in mood or behavior
Difficulties with concentration; confusion, disorientation	Persistent worries or fears	Regularly reports not feeling well; complains of physical pain, headache, stomach ache	Difficulties with fitting in or getting along with others	Persistent sense of loneliness, increased social withdrawal, isolation
Decreased interest in and/or motivation to be involved in class activities, homework, or other activities	Difficulty coping with normal activities	Talk about possible self-harm		



According to the **National Institute of Mental Health** guidelines, it is advisable to consider seeking help if the young person's challenging behaviors and emotions persist for a few weeks or longer, cause distress for the individual and/or the family, or interferes with the individual's functioning at home, school, or socially.

### SEEK IMMEDIATE HELP

Seek immediate help for possible warning signs for suicidal thoughts or plans, including:

Makes statements and/or writes about death or suicide	Comments about feeling hopeless, helpless, worthless; no reason for living	Social withdrawal from family, friends, community; isolation	Reckless behavior or engaging in risky activities; increase in alcohol and drug use	Dramatic mood changes
Experience of recent significant loss, trauma, abuse, bullying	Recent exposure to the suicide of others	A history of suicide in the family, or previous suicide attempts; easy access to firearms		

## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

### LOCAL Immediate Support

- **Butler Hospital Behavioral Health Services**  
Call Center - 24/7 access to support  
(844) 401-0111
- **BHLink** - For confidential support call (401) 414-5465 or visit BHLink 24/7 triage center at 975 Waterman Ave. East Providence.  
Website: [bhlink.org](https://bhlink.org)
- **Kids' Link RI**  
24/7 crisis care for children and adolescents  
(855) 543-5465
- **The Samaritans of Rhode Island**  
(401) 272-4044 or (800) 365-4044  
Website: [samaritansri.org](https://samaritansri.org)

### NATIONAL Immediate Support

- **Parents Helping Parents**  
Parental Stress Line: (800) 632-8188
- **Hopeline**  
Call (877) 235-4525 or Text HOME to 741741
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org
- **Samaritans**  
24-hour response (877) 870-4673

### Informational Support

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** Children's Mental Health - Website: [cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/index.html](https://cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/index.html)
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness** ([nami.org](https://nami.org))  
Kids, Teens, and Young Adults
- **National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry** (NFCYM)  
Youth Mental Health Resources
- **Protecting Youth Mental Health**  
The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory (2021)