

FAMILIES FOR DEPRESSION AWARENESS

Youth and Young Adult Mental Wellness Program



**Improving youth mental wellness and preventing suicides by teaching parents
and caring adults how to help and showing youth how to ask for help**

391 TOTTEN POND ROAD, SUITE 101, WALTHAM, MA 02451

ABOUT FFDA

Families for Depression Awareness (FFDA) is a nonprofit organization that helps families recognize and cope with depression and bipolar disorder to get people well and prevent suicides. FFDA was founded on the belief that caring family members play a powerful role in uniting their loved ones and ensuring that no one suffers alone with a mood disorder (i.e., the forms of depression and bipolar disorder). Since we were founded in 2001, FFDA has become the premier mental health organization specializing in family caregiver education.

FFDA's efforts to break down the stigma of mental health conditions have always centered on storytelling. We were one of the first mental health organizations to feature real people telling their stories of living with mood disorders, sharing perspectives, inspiration, and hope. From our headquarters in Waltham, Massachusetts, we have impacted thousands of people with our in-person and online programs for teens, parents, and other caring adults.

Our workshops provide psychoeducation and actionable advice so participants learn to recognize mood disorders and intervene effectively. We equip family caregivers to understand mental health conditions, communicate their concerns, and provide constructive support for their loved ones living with mood disorders. This approach increases the likelihood that people will receive treatment long before reaching a crisis point, constituting an effective upstream suicide prevention strategy.

CONTACT US

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FAMILYAWARETEENS

www.familyaware.org/communitypartner
We look forward to working with you!

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A LETTER FROM OUR CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



August 2023

Dear Caring Community Member,

According to the Surgeon General,* protecting youth mental health is a national priority. We think so, too! Families for Depression Awareness (FFDA) has been helping Massachusetts communities improve youth mental health and promote suicide prevention since 2010.

We offer trainings for parents and other “trusted adults,” a set of programs for youth, and a workshop for families to participate in together. We offer a workshop in Spanish and a training about Black youth mental health. We collaborate with, for example, school districts, PTOs, health departments, after-school programs, public libraries, spiritual communities, businesses, and local nonprofits to bring this education to their communities. These programs are available at no cost to communities across Massachusetts.

Our in-person and virtual events are delivered by mental health professionals, Massachusetts-based volunteer peer storytellers, and our experienced staff. Attendees learn practical strategies to address mental health concerns and are inspired to act. Our printed materials encourage continued learning and discussion.

We have trained more than 40,000 people to recognize and address mental health concerns, reducing the likelihood of suicide attempts and strengthening family relationships. We look forward to working with you to bring needed education to your community to improve teen and family mental health and, ultimately, prevent suicides.

**Very truly yours,
Susan Weinstein, JD
Co-Executive Director**

***<https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/youth-mental-health/index.html>**

OUR 2022-2023 IMPACT

1,711



People trained through our Adult and Youth Workshops

2,163



English, Spanish, and Portuguese Teen Depression Resource Cards Distributed in Massachusetts

20+



Communities in Massachusetts reached through our programming.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

- **Bolton**
 - Nashoba Regional School District
- **Boston**
 - Boston CASA, Boston Samaritans, Emmanuel College, MassART
- **Framingham**
 - Framingham State University, Youth Development and Substance Use Coalition
- **Grafton**
 - Grafton High School
- **Haverhill**
 - Haverhill Public Library
- **Holliston**
 - Holliston Public Library
- **Holyoke**
 - The Support Network
- **Hopkinton**
 - Hopkinton Public Library
- **Lenox**
 - Lenox Middle and High School
- **Lexington**
 - Minuteman High School
- **Littleton**
 - Reuben Hoar Library
- **Longmeadow**
 - Richard Salter Storrs Library
- **Lunenburg**
 - Lunenburg Public Library
- **Marblehead**
 - Marblehead High School
- **Medfield**
 - Montrose High School
- **Natick**
 - Natick 180, Natick High School
- **Newton**
 - City of Newton Health & Human Services, Newton North High School, Newton South High School
- **Rowley**
 - Solstice Day School
- **Sharon**
 - Sharon Public Library
- **Statewide Organizations**
 - Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition, Parent Professional Advocacy League, Massachusetts School Mental Health Consortium, MIAA, MAHPERD
- **Topsfield**
 - Tri-Town Council, Topsfield Town Library
- **Waltham**
 - Waltham Partnership for Youth, Waltham High School
- **Wilmington**
 - Wilmington Memorial Library
- **Wellesley**
 - Wellesley Health Department
- **Westfield**
 - Westfield High School
- **Worcester**
 - SHINE Initiative Summit

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

FOR ADULT AUDIENCES, SUCH AS PARENTS, GUARDIANS, FAMILY MEMBERS, TEACHERS, YOUTH WORKERS, AND OTHER CARING ADULTS



UNDERSTANDING TEEN DEPRESSION WORKSHOP (60 to 120 minutes)

How can you ask your teen if they are feeling depressed? This on-site or virtual workshop is facilitated by FFDA staff and delivered by a mental health professional. Participants learn how to recognize depression in teens, communicate effectively with teens about depression, find treatment, and access community resources. Our staff works with local event organizers to customize the workshop for your group's specific needs.

ADDRESSING FAMILY STRESS AND DEPRESSION WORKSHOP

(60 to 90 minutes)

Does your family have the strategies they need to address life's stressors? By being knowledgeable about self-care and mental health, your family can get and stay on the path to wellness. This on-site or virtual workshop is facilitated by FFDA staff and delivered by a licensed mental health professional. Participants learn how to identify symptoms of stress in themselves and family members, manage stress as a family, respond when symptoms become "more than stress," and get help for themselves or a family member.



NEW PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

FOR ADULT AUDIENCES, SUCH AS PARENTS, GUARDIANS, FAMILY MEMBERS, TEACHERS, YOUTH WORKERS, AND OTHER CARING ADULTS



SPANISH TDW

(60 to 120 minutes)
Disponible en Español

Como puedes preguntar si tu adolescente se siente deprimido/a/x? Esta programa es presentado por una profesional en la salud mental. Participantes aprenden como reconocer las simptoms de depression en los adolescentes, hablar sobre la tema de depression, como buscar tratamiento y donde acesar recursos en su comunidad. Nuestra oficina trabajara con su agencia para personalizar la presentation para los necesidades de su grupo.

ADDRESSING BLACK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP

(60 to 90 minutes)

How can you identify and support a Black youth struggling with a mood disorder? Although Black youth may face systemic barriers when it comes to addressing mental health, there are ways in which adults can help. This on-site or virtual workshop is facilitated by FFDA staff and delivered by a licensed mental health professional. Participants learn how to recognize someone who needs help and assist them in accessing services.



PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

FOR PRE-TEENS, TEENS, AND YOUNG ADULT AUDIENCES



#TURNTO PROGRAM

30 to 60 minutes

This on-site or virtual event features Massachusetts teenagers and young adults (ages 14-25) who have lived experience with depression. Peer Storytellers share their stories of identifying symptoms, seeking adult support, finding effective treatment, and learning how to stay well. Who can they #TurnTo when they need help? This workshop aims to end mental health stigma and encourage help-seeking among teenagers and young adults.

STRESS SURVIVAL GUIDE WORKSHOP

45 to 60 minutes

Pressures from school, family, friends, work: youth are burdened by stress from all sides. Because untreated stress can lead to mental health conditions like depression, youth need to develop practical strategies to manage day-to-day stress. During this workshop, a trained facilitator shares their experience of surviving stress and depression throughout their teen and young adult life. Participants learn the signs of stress and depression, identify strategies to manage day-to-day stress, and begin to create a survival guide of their own!



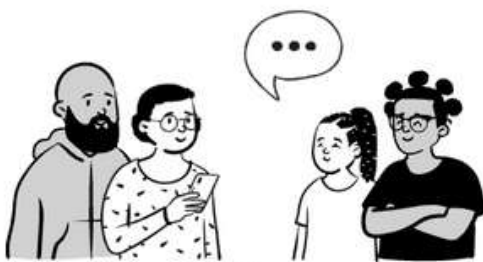
NEW PROGRAM FOR FAMILIES

FOR PRE-TEENS, TEENS, AND THEIR CAREGIVERS



Family Stress Survival Guide

Create your plan for managing stress and promoting your family's overall health.



Families for
Depression Awareness

FAMILY STRESS SURVIVAL GUIDE WORKSHOP

Now scheduling events for 2024!

Occurs over two 2-hour sessions

Available virtually or in-person

An interactive session that equips caregivers and teenagers (ages 11 to 18) with the skills needed to recognize and manage day-to-day stress.

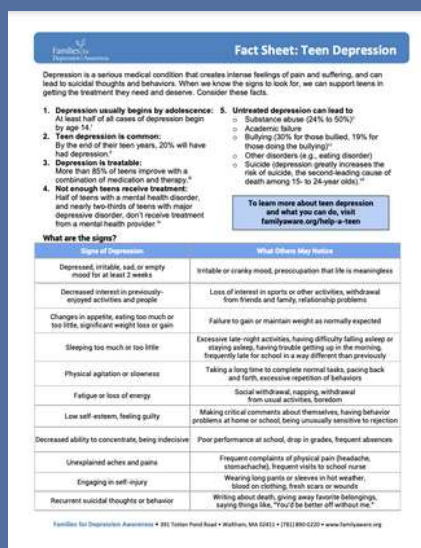
Families develop a robust toolkit for enhancing wellness. Members learn communication skills so everyone feels valued, heard, and able to get their needs met.

Program is delivered by a licensed mental health clinician and FFDA staff. A free workbook is provided for all participants.

All families experience stress! Help the families in your communities learn skills to manage stress and promote their overall mental health.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

PRINTED MATERIALS ARE DISTRIBUTED DURING OUR YOUTH AND ADULT PROGRAMMING AND AVAILABLE AS INDEPENDENT RESOURCES.



TEEN DEPRESSION FACT SHEET

Our Fact Sheets provide a concise overview of depression to help people know when they should seek help.

Available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.



STRESS SURVIVAL GUIDE

This workbook walks youth through strategies for managing day-to-day stress. The guide highlights the difference between everyday stress and toxic stress. The resource includes space for creating their own stress management plan and to list contact information for trusted adults to take the guesswork out of asking for help.



RESOURCE CARDS

Using youth-friendly terms, the wallet-sized Teen Depression Resource Cards include information about key signs of depression and how to get help, self-care tips, and crisis numbers for national and statewide suicide prevention organizations. Available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

TESTIMONIALS

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Natick, MA

"Thanks for a really wonderful workshop last night. It was packed with good information. I'll pass along your resources through my connections. I look forward to working with you this year to bring more of your workshops to our community."

PARENT

Topsfield, MA

"This workshop helped me learn signs and techniques for managing stress that will be helpful for me to share with my teenagers, and also for me."

TEENAGER

Worcester, MA

"I learned about how to deal with stress and how to identify it. It is important because now I understand how to use my resources"

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW IS FFDA'S PROGRAM DIFFERENT THAN OTHER YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS?

FFFDA has been providing educational programs about depression and suicide prevention to Massachusetts communities since 2010. We work to cultivate ongoing relationships with communities so we can better support existing suicide prevention efforts and promote additional mental health-related activities. We offer a menu of educational opportunities, some for adults, some for youth. Our adult-focused programs do more than educate people about depression. We provide actionable advice so that caring adults feel equipped to have difficult conversations, support their loved ones in finding care, strengthen their family relationships, and improve their family's wellness.

Our volunteer teen and young adult speakers share their stories of living with depression or bipolar disorder. Our Stress Survival Guide workshop leads youth in identifying their own strategies to manage their stress. Through these events, audiences learn about living with a mental health condition, which breaks down stigma by encouraging them to reassess their preconceived ideas about mental health. Some audience members learn they are not alone in their struggles. Others are inspired to support a friend. All learn about when and how to seek help.

Finally, FFDA is different in that we know Massachusetts. Our programs are developed here in Massachusetts. We utilize Massachusetts-based mental health practitioners as presenters. We involve Massachusetts teen and young adult volunteers. We tailor each presentation to meet the needs of the particular community, and we continue to add new content to address emerging issues. We have a 12-year track record of educating and inspiring communities to support their youth, improve family wellness, and prevent suicides.

ARE THE TEEN DEPRESSION WORKSHOP AND TURN TO PROGRAM DONE TOGETHER OR SEPARATELY? DO WE HAVE TO DO BOTH?

The workshop for adults and peer speaker event for youth and young adults can be scheduled for the same day or independently of each other.

You can also hold a separate workshop for teachers and school personnel, such as during a professional development program. You can choose to do the workshop, the Peer Storytellers, or both.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAN YOU HOLD A TURN TO PROGRAM FOR MULTIPLE GRADE LEVELS?

Yes! We can hold one event with multiple grades or separate events for individual grades or classes to attend.

WHAT IS THE FEE FOR AN EVENT?

Thanks to the generous support of local foundations, families, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the program is grant-funded so there is no out-of-pocket cost associated with the events. If your school or organization has funds available for the event, we suggest you use them on refreshments to increase event attendance. We gratefully accept charitable donations, but there is no obligation to do so.

CAN I RECOMMEND A TEEN OR YOUNG ADULT TO BECOME A PEER STORYTELLER?

Absolutely! We are actively recruiting teens and young adults who want to share their stories and support their peers in getting help. All of our volunteers report that sharing their story helps them to stay well.

WHAT PLATFORM IS USED TO PRESENT VIRTUAL EVENTS?

FFDA hosts programs via Zoom. However, we can usually transition to the platform that your school or organization regularly uses, as long as

- **we can hold a “dry run” to get familiar with the platform and its functions**
- **there is an A/V technician designated to work with us**
- **we can control the slide changes.**

ARE YOU ABLE TO CUSTOMIZE PROGRAMS FOR EACH COMMUNITY?

In our educational events, we try to account for each community’s experience. To that end, we confer with our community host about recent events and concerns, the community’s history with teen mental health issues and suicide, and school-based and local resources for parents and teens. We then adapt our program to deliver the curriculum that serves the community. We can tailor our presentations with content about, for example, bullying or non-suicidal self-injury. Let us know what you would like and we’ll see what we can do!