Youth mental health: notice, listen, connect

A short guide for young people, friends and caregivers

Notice changes

Changes in mood, sleep, energy, concentration, interest or connection may be reasons to check in. These signs do not diagnose a condition.

Ask open questions and listen. Say that support is available. Avoid promising secrecy when someone's safety may be at risk.

Connect to care

A public clinic can assess and refer a young person. A school counsellor, campus service or trusted adult may help with the first step.

SADAG's mental health helpline is 0800 456 789. Childline 116 supports children and child-related concerns.

If someone may hurt themselves

Take any mention of suicide or self-harm seriously. Stay with them, seek urgent professional help and contact emergency services if danger is immediate.

Call 112 from a cellphone or 10177 for an ambulance. SADAG's suicide crisis helpline is 0800 567 567.

Make your next step

- Who is one person I can tell today?

- Which clinic or support service can I reach?

- What helps me feel safer while arranging care?

Trusted sources and further reading

WHO adolescent mental health

SADAG helplines

Childline contact

General information only. Ask a qualified local service for advice about your situation. For immediate danger in South Africa, call 112 from a cellphone, 10177 for an ambulance or 10111 for police. Sources checked 29 September 2026.