

**REACH
OUT.**

check in.



**TEEN MENTAL HEALTH VIDEOS
DISCUSSION GUIDE**



United Way of Hall County

REACH OUT. CHECK IN.

This guide was created to support your viewing of four teen mental health videos and to spark conversations with the young people in your life about the importance of acknowledging challenges in life and how to find the help and resources needed to face and overcome those challenges.

THIS IS NOT MY STORY... BUT IT COULD BE.

All four of the videos in this campaign aim to normalize discussions around teen mental health and how important it is to talk to someone to **get help**. The videos hope to reveal to teens that they are **not alone** in what they may be facing—that their stories are not isolated and that others could be facing the same struggles. These videos present an opportunity to talk about the challenges teens face in their lives and how hard it can be to ask for help when they feel sad, scared, anxious, or hopeless. This discussion and exposure to health messages can help **prevent suicidal thoughts** and behaviors and encourage young people to engage in **protective behaviors** to overcome challenges.

There is no expectation for viewers to proceed as mental health professionals, nor should facilitators be expected to diagnose any condition. Rather, the purpose of these videos is to **empower** those working with youth to connect those in need of help with the help they need and deserve.

START THE CONVERSATION

Before watching, please inform those viewing with you that each of the teen mental health videos features an actor depicting an area teen's **true story**. Stories were collected with each teen's permission and with the teen's guidance on who they wanted to portray their story.

Students from **Gainesville High School's** theater classes helped these videos come to life. Please help students to remember that every person who shares their truth, the ones portrayed in these videos and the ones they know in their own lives, including themselves, **deserves dignity**, and we should honor the bravery that accompanies someone acknowledging their difficulties. We are grateful for the stories shared for these videos, and for the respect shown by those involved in producing them so they could help other teens and improve school norms and beliefs about mental health.



NOTE TO FACILITATORS: CONTENT WARNING

Before watching the videos, discuss with those viewing with you, especially the young people in your life, that the content in the video **may trigger people who are experiencing emotions or situations similar to the ones shown in the video.** If the video causes difficult emotions for that person, please encourage them to **step out of the room** or focus on another activity, and as a facilitator, **immediately follow up** with them to offer support, further discussion, or resources that may be helpful as they navigate whatever challenging circumstances or emotions they may be facing. **Please take care when watching.**

Facilitators and viewers are invited to approach this discussion in a way that honors the dignity of those in the room and in their lives, and this discussion guide is not prescriptive but, rather, should be used as a tool to help **build trust** and open lines of communication.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VIEWING AND DISCUSSING:

1.

Preface viewing the video with the information provided on the reverse and above, including reminding viewers about the content warning and caring for their own emotional needs.

2.

Watch the video(s) together. You may choose to watch each video with a discussion following each one, or you may choose to watch all four over a short period of time and save discussion for the completion of all videos. You should choose what works best for the students you have.

3.

Use the following questions as a starting point to spark conversation and encourage participants to share their own stories. Try to resist supplying all the answers, and remember to be comfortable with silence if it takes a while for viewers to respond.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name one element of the story that stood out most to you.
2. Can you name one risk factor that you see in the video?
3. Why is it hard to ask for help when you need it?
 - Facilitators: After group members respond to why it's difficult to ask for help, follow up by letting them know that the following questions may prompt ideas on how to overcome those barriers.
4. Several teens in the videos found help when they reached out to teachers or trusted friends. Asking for help and sharing feelings can make anyone feel vulnerable but are actually signs of courage and strength. What would make you feel comfortable asking for help? Can you identify one trusted adult in your life or at school?
 - Facilitators can offer suggestions if members struggle in answering this question. For instance, they may be more likely to share that they need help with someone who they see as a good listener or someone who is non-judgmental. This might be a great opportunity for a facilitator to briefly share when they may have been helped by a trusted adult when they were younger.
5. Who do you **REACH OUT** to for help? Can you name three people who you know you could reach out to if you were facing a difficult situation or if you were struggling emotionally?
 - Facilitators can ask the youth to write these down. Encourage sharing those names or the role that person plays in their life, but don't require it. Observe anyone who seems to struggle naming a trusted person and check in with them after the conversation. Some youth may not feel they have three people to reach out to, and you can let them know that they have at least one – you!
6. How can you be a person that someone else will want to **REACH OUT** to?
7. How can we make sure we **CHECK IN** on friends we know are struggling, even while we are dealing with other responsibilities?
 - Facilitators can encourage participants to share their ideas. If nobody provides examples, offer a suggestion of sending a text, letting someone know we are thinking about them through DM's, just offering to sit with them, etc. Remind participants that showing someone you care doesn't have to cost anything or be extravagant. Simple actions can mean more than they realize.
 - Also remind students that it's not their responsibility to fix their friends' challenges, especially if they are sharing suicidal thoughts. Provide them with the resources below so they will know where to go if and when a friend comes to them with a significant problem and let them know to immediately seek out a trusted adult.
8. What does the line "This is not my story...But it could be" mean to you?
 - After students have discussed this, facilitators should thank viewers for participating and sharing and remember that there are resources to follow up this discussion.

RESOURCES

For immediate access to routine or crisis services, please call the Georgia Crisis Access Line (GCAL) at 1-800-715-4225. GCAL is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help you or someone you care about through a crisis.

www.unitedwayhallcounty.org/reachout | <https://www.freeyourfeels.org/> | <https://www.notokapp.com/>

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