



Mental Health Chat with AFOI!

My name
is Klara

hi!

hello!

What are the mental and emotional impacts of having an incarcerated loved one?

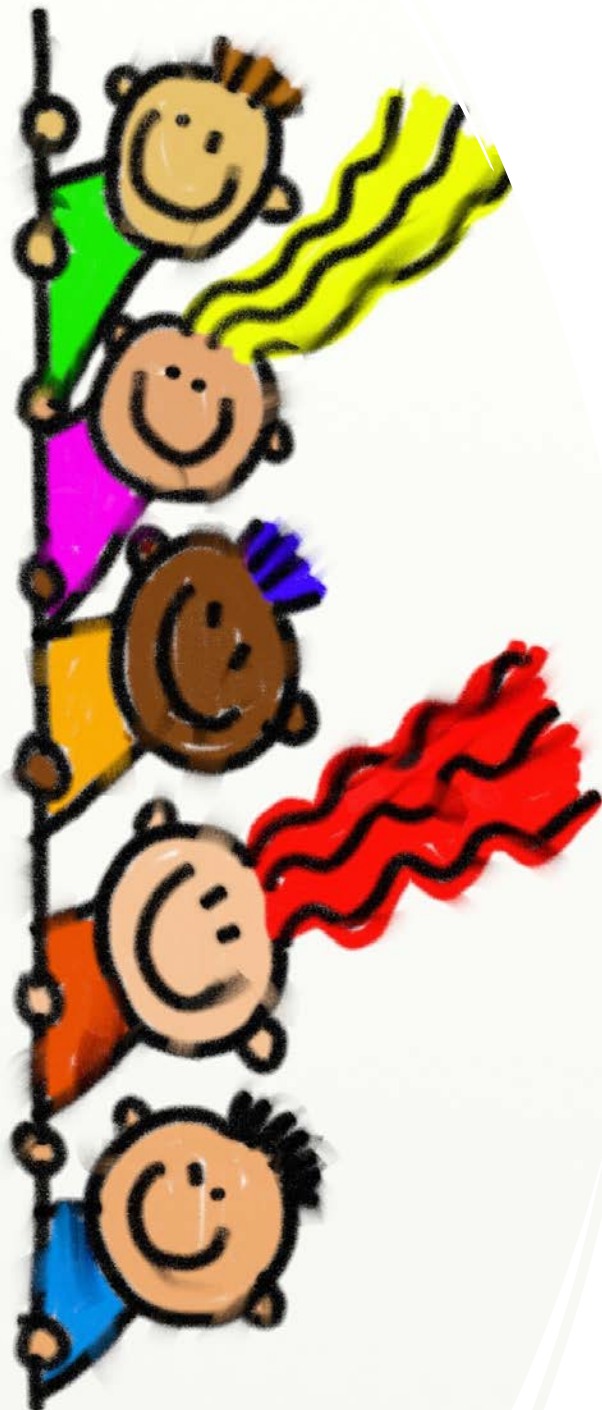


TRESS

Some of the emotional impact can be ...



- Anxiety, uncertainty, fear
- Anger
- Helplessness
- Difficulty balancing your own life while supporting your loved one
- Feeling “numb”
- Concern/fear for loved ones’ safety, mental and physical health while incarcerated
- Distrust
- Increased alcohol/drug use
- Shame and stigma
- Isolation and loneliness
- Grief



What do the kids say?

-
- ***“Court process is confusing”***
 - one boy with a father in prison described how ***“they bully me, say nasty things. I don’t let them know I care, but sometimes I cry on the way home. The teachers don’t know my Dad’s in prison and I don’t want to tell them”***
 - A sister said her brother’s incarceration was ***“the most horrible thing I ever had to witness . . . I just could not tell you how stressful it was and how many years I cried and knowing what he was going through and there were . . . I felt helpless. There was nothing I could do”*** ... ***“it was just like I was suffocating thinking about what he was going through.”***
 - The arrest of a parent can cause children to feel shocked, confused and “scared”

Reactions to Stress

- **Mental reactions** can include having trouble concentrating and making decisions, confusion, nightmares
- **Physical reactions** can include sleeping problems (too much or too little,) changes in appetite, stomachaches, headaches
- **Social reactions** - avoiding people and activities you enjoyed, isolation, withdrawal
- **Emotional reactions** - numbness, disbelief, anger, hopelessness, guilt and despair. Fear and anxiety about the future, sadness, tearfulness, grief, guilt mistrust



Can some of these emotional reactions turn into mental illness?

- **Fast Facts**

1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year

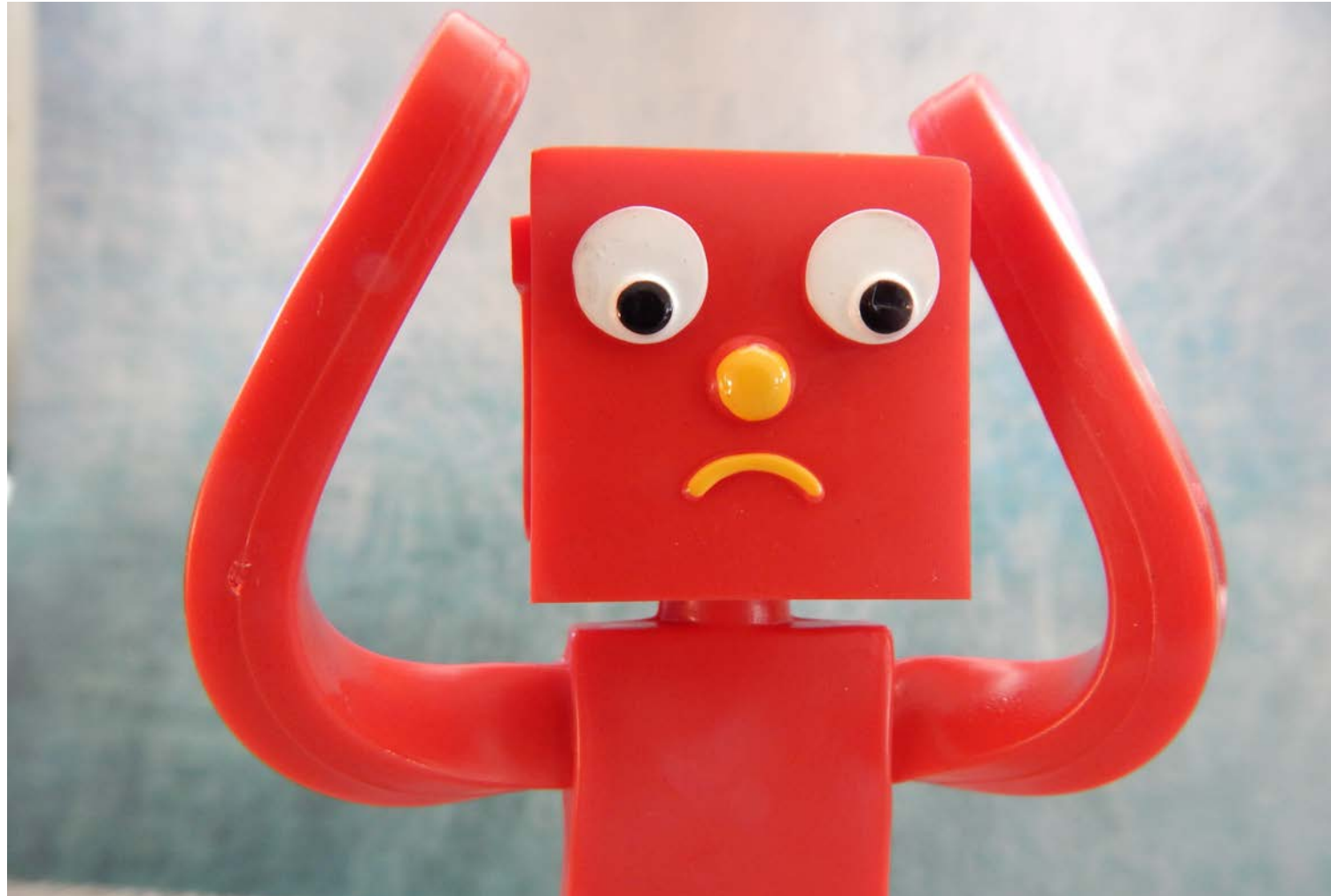
1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year

1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year

50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14





If you suspect you or your family member is not coping well, what signs should you look for?



Family members should be looking out for things that are out of the ordinary, not typical.

What could you notice in kids?

Sudden change in behavior

- Withdrawn, isolates from friends and activities
- More irritable, more anxious or afraid
- Sudden mood swings
- Anger, destruction of property
- Abusive behavior toward self or others
- Sleep disturbance
- Struggle with focusing
- School grades drop
- Talking about suicide, or saying things like “nothing matters anymore”
- Regression



How to help your kids with stress

- Reassure (if you can) your child that they are safe
- Maintain a normal routine (bed-time, family dinners, church)
- Listen to you child's thoughts and feelings and keep these conversations going .. Ask again in a week, 2 weeks, a month ..





What you may notice in the non-incarcerated parent/caregiver?

- Uncertainty
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Feeling numb
- Helplessness
- Isolation and loneliness
- Grief
- Guilt

Resilience

- Strong family connections
- Stable relationship with at least one adult
- Positive co-parenting
- Sense of meaning
- Faith and spirituality

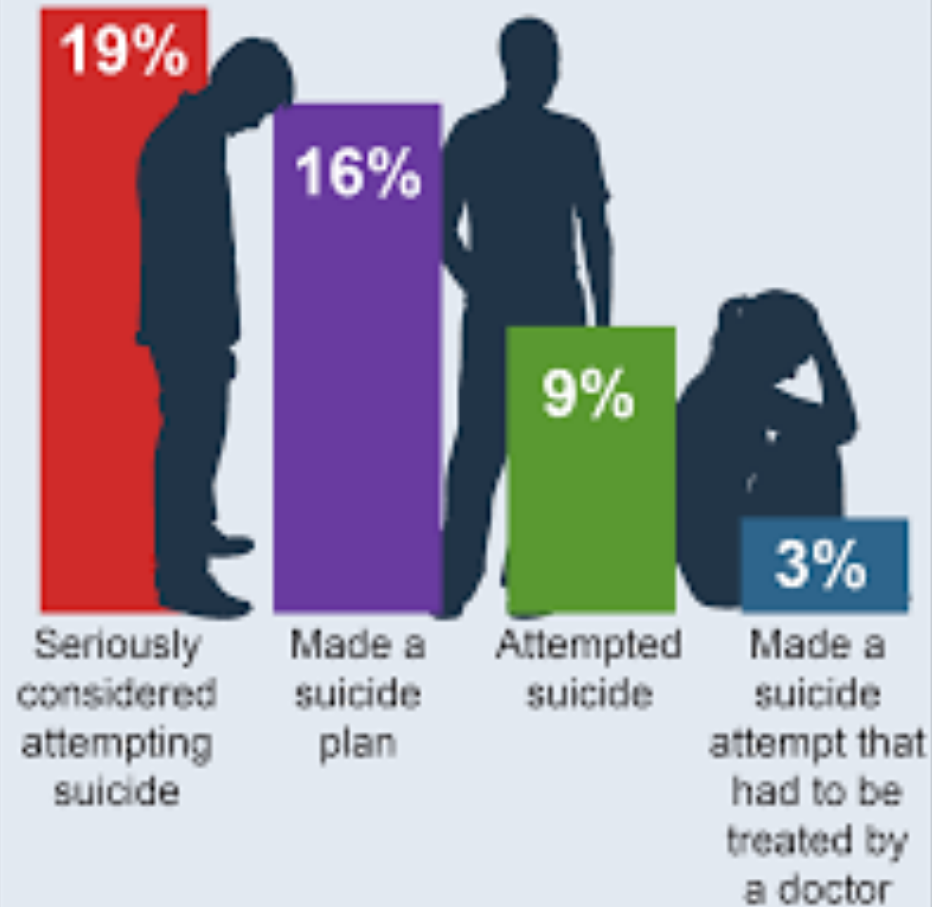


What is a mental health crisis?

- When you feel overwhelmed by things that didn't overwhelm you before, and aren't able function like you used to
- Thinking about suicide
- Homicidal thoughts
- Not taking care of your basic human needs (not eating, not bathing, not sleeping)
- Delusional thought patterns



PREVALENCE OF SUICIDAL
THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS AMONG
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (2019)



Source: 2019 United States Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Suicide: Youth

Suicide : Adults



Nearly

46,000

people died by
suicide in 2020



1 death every

11 minutes

Many adults think about
suicide or attempt suicide

12.2 million

Seriously thought about suicide

3.2 million

Made a plan for suicide

1.2 million

Attempted suicide

If you or someone you know
is in crisis, please contact the

**988 Suicide and
Crisis Lifeline**

- Call or text 988
- Chat at 988lifeline.org





Don't be afraid to ask!

- Trust your gut, you know your child/family member!
- “I’ve noticed that you haven’t been hanging out with your friends as much ... are you ok?”
- Be direct – “are you having thoughts of suicide?”



If they say “yes”

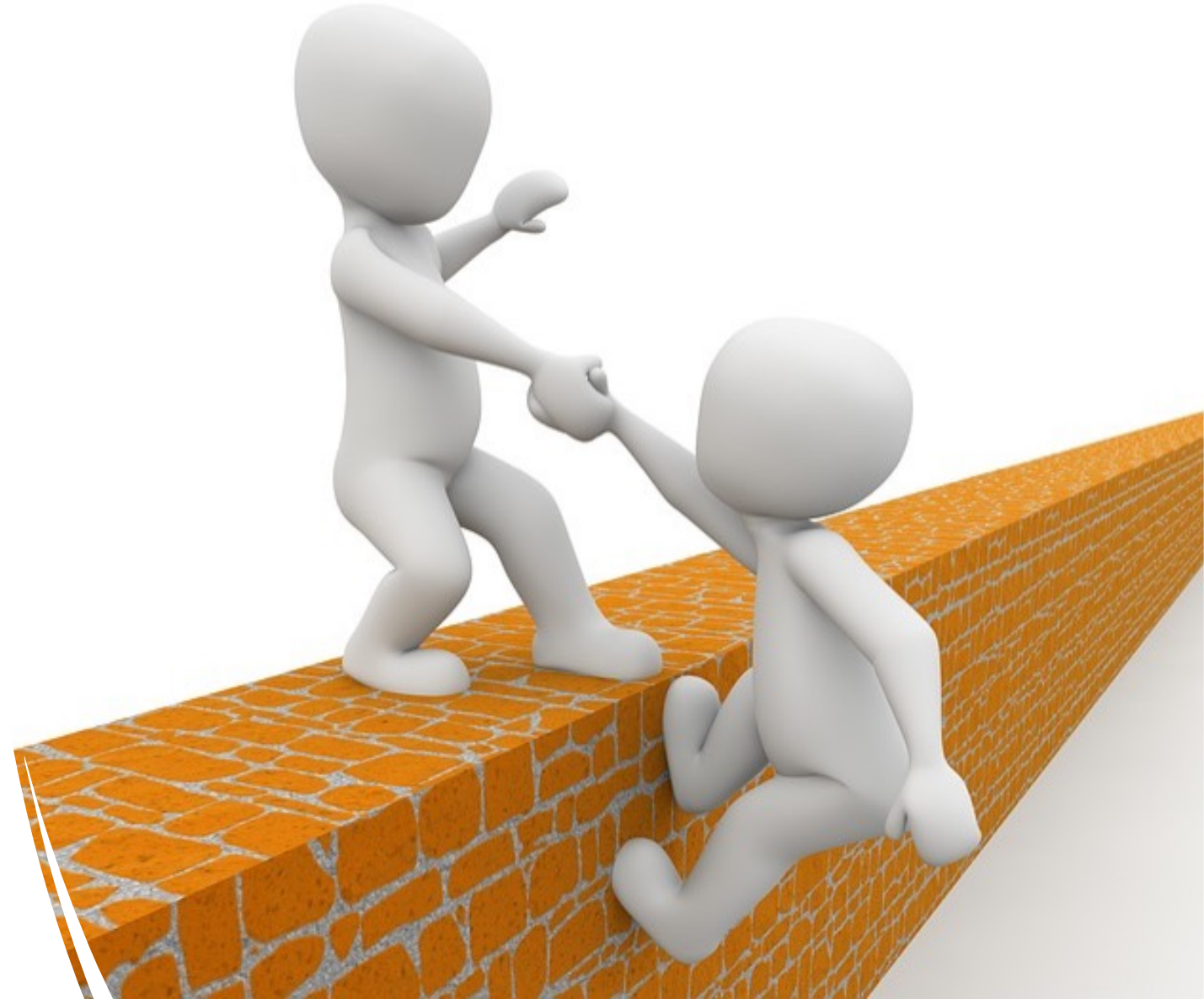
- ✓ Validate that they are having a rough time.
- ✓ Tell them you love them and want to help.
- ✗ Try not to get angry
- ✗ Don't try to list all the reasons why they should not be suicidal



Who can help?

- Mental Health America of Va Warm Line **1-866-400-6428**
- Mental Health America also has a Crisis Text Line; text “MHA” to 741741 if you'd like to use the Crisis Text
- Call the crisis line “988”
- Contact your local CSB crisis program (RBHA 804-819-4100)

**Other resources if
you or your loved
one needs
immediate help**





St. Joseph's Villa (for kids)

Crisis Stabilization

8000 Brook Road, Richmond, VA 23227.

Phone: 804-553-3200

RBHA Crisis Stabilization (for adults)

107 S 5th St, Richmond, VA 23219

- To help people through a crisis, CSU staff:
- Facilitate 8 daily psycho-educational group meetings focused on treatment and recovery daily
- Provide individual one-on-one supportive counseling sessions
- Assist with medication management for both psychiatric and medical illnesses
- Offer medically-assisted withdrawal services in conjunction with behavioral health service needs for those using substances.
- Help the individual develop an individual Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) aimed at effectively managing their recovery during and after discharge.
- CSU provides a safe, structured environment conducive to recovery – no tobacco, electronic devices, weapons, or outside food or drink allowed.



Richmond Behavioral Health Authority



Crisis Response and Stabilization Team (CReST)

For children ages 5 - 18 and adults ages 18 and older

CReST staff work with individuals to:

- Triage and problem solve the crisis at hand
- Identify on-going treatment needs
- Link to community providers
- Provide community based counseling
- **Call the referral line at [1-833-968-1800](tel:1-833-968-1800)**

References

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