



Understanding Mental Health and Well-Being

According to the Singapore Youth Epidemiology and Resilience (YEAR) Study (2023) conducted by the National University of Singapore,

1 in 3 youths (aged 10 to 18) in Singapore experienced symptoms such as sadness, anxiety, and loneliness.



Common mental health conditions experienced by children and youth include:



Generalised Anxiety Disorder



Major Depressive Disorder

Here are some common myths and misconceptions about mental health:



Myth/ Misconception

Having good mental health means not having any mental health conditions.



Mental health conditions are caused by a lack of self-discipline and willpower.



My child will not have a good future if they have poor mental health or are diagnosed with a mental health condition.



Reality

Good mental health is more than not having a mental health condition. It refers to a state of well-being where we realise our potential and can cope with the varying emotions and normal stresses that we all experience in our daily lives.¹

Mental health conditions usually result from the **interaction of biological** (e.g. genetics) and **environmental factors** (e.g. stress) **over time**.

With the right treatment and support, people with mental health conditions **can lead meaningful and fulfilling lives**, especially if they seek help early and have supportive family and friends.

¹ Adapted from World Health Organisation (WHO)'s definition.





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Mental health conditions are not caused by a lack of discipline or willpower. It is usually a combination of risk factors and stressful life events, as well as a lack of protective factors, that contribute to the development of a mental health condition. A single factor cannot, on its own, cause your child to develop mental health conditions.

Risk Factors

Risk factors increase the likelihood of your child developing mental health conditions and may be amplified by the inappropriate use of technology or social media.

Protective Factors

Protective factors shield the effects of risk factors and enhance your child's well-being.

- Traits/temperament, e.g. being naturally more sensitive
- Family history of mental health conditions
- Hormonal changes due to puberty



Biological Factors

- Healthy diet
- Exercise
- Sleep

- Issues with self-esteem
- Negative worldview, e.g. seeing the world as a threatening or hopeless place
- Fear of failure



Psychological Factors

- Healthy self-esteem
- Ability to understand and express emotions
- Good coping skills
- Good problem-solving skills
- Feeling secure and supported by parents

- Financial stressors in the family
- Lack of access to support and resources



Social Factors

- Supportive and reliable relationships with family, significant adults (e.g. teachers), and peers
- Financial security
- Access to resources
- Willingness to seek help

Stressful Life Events

- Traumatic experiences, e.g. abuse, natural disasters, accidents
- Parental separation
- Conflict with peers or at home
- Life-threatening illness
- Recent loss of a loved one

