



# Parents Session: Mental Health Triage

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RAISING RESILIENT TEENS:  
GRACE STUDENT MINISTRIES

# Parents Session: Mental Health Triage

## **The Purpose of This Seminar:**

The purpose of this seminar is to provide parents the needed information to identify how they can effectively help their teens deal with various stressors and when to consider help from professional services.

# Parents Session: Mental Health Triage

**Medical Triage** – the process of medical evaluation and prioritization of patients based on their need for immediate medical treatment



**Mental Health Triage** – the process of evaluation and mental health assessment to determine the type and urgency of the responses required from mental health services



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**First Thing to Consider** – recognize that the years of adolescence are a ‘normal’ time of transition, moods, hardship, anxiety, and learning to define their identity:

- Puberty
- Relationships
- School
- Faith



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## **Also Consider:**

- Context & Situation – Exams, Concert, Travel, etc.
- Age-Appropriate – How do others at this age respond?
- Imminent Danger – Real Harm or ‘Blowing off Steam’?
- Progress & Growth – Don’t Just Look at the Event



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**How do you tell the difference between a teenager just having a hard day, and a mental health problem?**

- Severity
- Duration
- Consistency

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How do you tell the difference between a teenager just having a hard day, and a mental health problem?

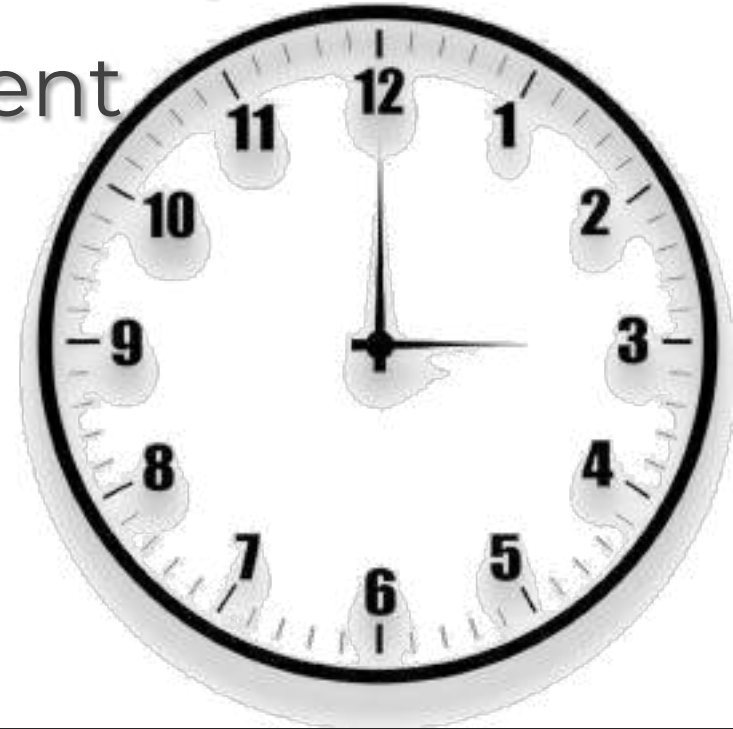
- **Severity** – significant impairment negatively affecting normal aspects of life



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**How do you tell the difference between a teenager just having a hard day, and a mental health problem?**

- **Duration** – symptoms have been persistent for at least 2 weeks or longer





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How do you tell the difference between a teenager just having a hard day, and a mental health problem?

- **Consistency** – mental health issues negatively affect multiple aspects of their life



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## **Symptoms to Look For**

- Decrease in Grades
- Social Withdrawal from Usual Friends/Family
- Change in Sleep Patterns
- Change in Eating Habits
- Doesn't Enjoy Things that Usually Bring Joy
- Lack of Motivation

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## **Symptoms to Look For**

- Frequent & Consistent Rebellion
- Criminal Behavior
- Self-Harm
- Threats to Others or Self
- Sexually Acting Out
- Substance Abuse (Alcohol, Drugs, Food, Caffeine, etc.)

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## **Symptoms to Look For**

- Comments like “Nobody Cares”, “I wish I wasn’t here”
- Significant Mood Swings
- Talking about Suicide

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## **How to Help**

- Talk with Your Teenager
- Partner with your Church Leadership
- Start with Pediatrician/Family Dr.
- Consider Therapy – Both Individual & Family
- Discuss Medicinal Management



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## **How to Develop Resilience Beyond the Struggle**

- Understand the Reality of Stress
- Identify What Stress Looks Like
- Learn How to Properly Express Stress
- Employ Stress Management Strategies
- Create Healthy Spaces



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