

# ISSUES THAT MATTER MENTAL HEALTH

[sno-isle.org/issues-that-matter](http://sno-isle.org/issues-that-matter)



## Steps you can take to promote positive mental health

Below are some of many suggestions offered by panelists in the Sno-Isle Libraries 2017-2018 Issues That Matter forums on mental health. For library and community resource lists, plus video and audio archives of the forums, visit [sno-isle.org/issues-that-matter](http://sno-isle.org/issues-that-matter).

**Become informed.** Being well-informed on mental health issues helps a community member to better identify needs and support mental health in their community. It also enables us to better advocate for mental health services and support at the local and state levels. Ways to do this include:

- Attend a Mental Health First Aid course or attend a National Alliance on Mental Health event such as legislative lobby day. See the NAMI Washington website, [namiwa.org](http://namiwa.org).
- Become aware of crisis referral services and procedures in your community.
- Learn more about the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma on physical/mental health and behaviors. Get information on these websites: [cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/](http://cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/); the National Child Traumatic Stress Network at [nctsn.org](http://nctsn.org); or the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov). Also by watching the 2015 “How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime” TED talk by Nadine Burke Harris at [ed.ted.com](http://ed.ted.com) or on [youtube.com](http://youtube.com).
- Review the Washington State Suicide Prevention Plan at [doh.wa.gov/suicideprevention](http://doh.wa.gov/suicideprevention).

**Advocate** for mental health programs and services by:

- Supporting legislation that funds these programs (you can take advocacy training at your local United Way if you want to join a group directly advocating for legislation at the state level).
- Supporting community education programs on mental health issues through your attendance and/or volunteering.

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**Mentor a youth.** Research shows that the difference between a child avoiding the juvenile justice system or not depends heavily on whether or not they had one person in their lives who acted as a role model to them. Be that person. Contact your school district to see if it has a mentoring program and learn what it entails.

**Provide other kinds of support.** Contact your school and ask how you can volunteer or support ongoing programs. Childcare, food, and extra support are often essential for continuing programs and decreasing barriers.

**Tell your own story** about mental health struggles. Encourage loved ones to tell theirs.

**Get involved.** Find an aspect of mental health you are passionate about and find a way to engage with it.

**If your passion is brain health ...** share your story, sign up for a Brain Health & Wellness class, and learn about the annual Brain Injury Alliance of Washington fundraiser at [biawa.org](http://biawa.org).

**Volunteer** for a local crisis line. Learn more at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org/participate/](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/participate/)

**Get more connected.** Start or join a Meetup group (on any topic) to connect to your community. Meeting people and feeling a sense of belonging with a group goes a long way towards improving everyone's mental health! Social media can be a springboard for finding and connecting with people, but can't replace connecting in person.

**Above all else, be a good listener.** Be ready when someone needs help or a sounding board.

### Seeking knowledge, inspiration?

Watch these TEDxSnoIsleLibraries event talks online at [sno-isle.org/tedx/video](http://sno-isle.org/tedx/video)

- “Integrated care: Connecting medical and behavioral care” by Tom Sebastian (2017)
- “How to connect with depressed friends” by Bill Bernat (2017)
- “Be a voice, not an echo” by Sargun Handa (2017)
- “Connect and lead, how we create community” by Kathy Coffey (2017)
- “Trauma and music therapy: Let the healing begin” by Karla Hawley (2016)
- “Good boundaries free you” by Sarri Gilman (2015)
- “The resiliency of shame” by Catherine McHugh (2015)

