

# DISCUSSION / VIEWER GUIDE

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Discussion around behavioral health is not easy or simple. Much of this is due to the stigma associated with mental health issues. **“mental HEALTH”** will open discussion about behavioral health **especially in the youth community** so parents, educators and especially youth, understand the wide continuum of mental health issues, **how to identify early troubles and where/when to seek help.**

Curriculum funded by New Mexico Department of Health, Family Health Bureau

Additional Underwriters for the project include: The City of Albuquerque/Family and Community Services Department, Bernalillo County/Department of Behavioral Health Services, State Farm Insurance, Cooperative Educational Services, Blue Cross Blue Shield of NM, NM School Boards Association, NM Pediatric Society and SafeTeen New Mexico

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Thank you for your interest in the “**mental HEALTH**” Discussion/Viewing Guide. We are excited to present this program to ignite discussion among youth, parents and community leaders. We want to empower and support young people to discover how to make healthy decisions in a variety of situations. We also want parents, educators and youth to fully understand that mental health/wellness is just as important and the same as all physical health. It’s also key to understand ways that youth, parents and communities can help everyone, including themselves, stay mentally healthy.

Enclosed are some ideas for discussion and activities for students and adults. Feel free to alter any of these suggestions for a better fit with your particular group. This is intended as a guide and starting point.

You may find it helpful to visit our website:

[www.ChristopherProductions.org](http://www.ChristopherProductions.org)

for further information on this and other issues of concern for young people including dangers of illegal use of prescription drugs, marijuana, alcohol and drug issues, date violence, bullying and distracted driving.

**RESPONSE REQUESTED:**

We supply these materials to you free of charge, in the hope that they support your efforts in reaching students with enlivened discussions about difficult situations and adolescent curiosity, insecurity and empowerment.

We ask in return that you let us know how you are using these materials so we can track the number of participants and the lives affected. A response page can be found at the end of this guide.

On behalf of Christopher Productions, we thank you for working with young people and helping youth make healthy decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Schueler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Schueler" clearly distinguishable.

Chris Schueler, President  
Christopher Productions, LLC

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# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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According to the World Health Organization, **“First onset of mental disorders usually occurs in childhood or adolescence, although treatment typically does not occur until a number of years later.”**

**“mental HEALTH”** will open discussion about behavioral health **especially in the youth community** so parents, educators and especially juveniles understand the wide continuum of mental health issues, **how to identify early troubles and where/when to seek help**. Because youth peers may be the first to see signs and symptoms of behavioral health issues, the program will help them identify these signs and understand the ways to help. **Communities, parents, and – most importantly – teen peers** can identify the early warning signs in young people and understand ways to help.

*Because teen peers are the most likely to have significant contact and knowledge about friends in trouble*, the primary target audience for this project are teenagers who are friends of those at risk of behavioral health issues including depression and suicide. The secondary audience is parents, educators - including coaches and activities leaders, business leaders, faith communities and others who deal extensively with young people.

The project has involved teens extensively in the production process. As youth helped to create the program and the social marketing aspects of the campaign, they have learned for themselves the various issues around mental health and wellness.

The project is centered on the creation of a 45 minute documentary which includes sections on youth, families and communities. There are also a series of short video projects and other marketing tools. In addition to information and research around mental illness signs and symptoms, we have included ways to stay mentally healthy and the latest findings regarding treatment and support. We hope this will help communities understand this issue and discover ways to discuss mental health/wellness in a thoughtful and helpful manner.

We encourage you to research this issue on your own for further information, especially about your community resources.

This show is meant to be a catalyst for discussion. The purpose is to encourage discourse so young people can discover, for themselves, how mental health and wellness can affect their lives and future. Young people should be encouraged to actively participate in exchanging ideas and researching related topics of interest.

# GENERAL INFO

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"It's not a character fault. It's not true that if people just had a stiffer upper lip, or if they prayed more, that this difficulty would go away. It's simply not that simple. Behavioral health issues, mental illness, addictions, those are health problems. Those are illnesses and we need to treat them accordingly and we need to recognize ourselves if we face those problems in ourselves or our families, that there's no shame in seeking treatment."

Dr. Paul Hopkins, LPCC  
Former Exec. Dir., Samaritan Counseling Center

This project seeks to change the perception of mental illness and its treatment. It is designed to address youth, family and community issues regarding this topic and to encourage discussion about how to stay mentally healthy in addition to seeking treatment and support for mental struggles.

We have been extremely careful in our presentation to not shame or use fear tactics but to explain as clearly as possible the information in a forthright manner.

Please read the script and watch the program prior to sharing it with students. This will make discussion with your students easier and more effective.

THE SCRIPT IS AVAILABLE THROUGH  
[www.ChristopherProductions.org](http://www.ChristopherProductions.org)

**Please download, read and have available prior to viewing program.**

This guide includes discussion and activity ideas for involving students at various levels of development. **Further information and a complete list of additional resources are included at the end of this guide.** We hope this is just the beginning, and that together we can make an important difference in our communities and in the lives of our children.

# V I E W I N G   S U G G E S T I O N S

- **Provide additional information and instruction.**

The information and stories in “mental HEALTH” are presented in a style that serves as a catalyst for thoughtful discussion. It is assumed by the creators of the program that more in-depth information and instruction will be provided by the group leader or teacher. Some of this information can be found in the resource section of this guide.

- **Discuss the content before watching the show.**

Many young people today are exposed regularly to situations in which they must make difficult decisions about their own behavior as well as that of their friends and peers. Most likely, they’re struggling to balance personal beliefs and social pressures in order to make good decisions. Briefly discuss the content before watching the show in order to make the discussion after the show more effective. Discuss the difference between a documentary (real people) and a fictional movie (created script) and how this is the former, not the latter.

- **Set ground rules prior to viewing.**

Teachers or group leaders need to be prepared to offset disruptions in order to guarantee respect for those students wanting to see the show. Talk to students ahead of time and agree on appropriate behavior during the viewing. This should include **no talking or asking questions** until the show is concluded. You should also supply or **have available paper and pens or pencils** so that students can **jot down ideas and questions during the viewing for later discussion**.

- **Use “Discussion and Activities” for your grade level.**

There are many ways to encourage open discussion. Since the need for facilitation and supervision will vary among ages, more age-specific suggestions are given on the following pages.

# P R I O R   T O   V I E W I N G

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**Instructors: Please keep in mind that this guide contains discussion questions that may be sensitive in nature and may cause uncomfortable feelings and emotions to surface for some students due to personal experience or other reasons.**

Have resource information readily accessible to students and discuss only those questions that you feel comfortable handling.

## PRIOR TO SHOWING THE DOCUMENTARY:

1. Be certain to preview the video and read through this guide.
2. Gather and have available print resources (reference resources list at the end of this guide).
3. Download and read the script of the video.
4. Determine how much time you will have and what the discussion goal will be.
5. If you can, ask a trained expert to assist with the discussion (perhaps your school counselor or someone from your local NAMI chapter).
6. Use clear guidelines. Avoid general, unstructured discussion.
7. Allow enough time to discuss the topics after the viewing.
8. Discuss only those questions that you feel comfortable handling

Go over the following with your group **prior to viewing**:

1. Explain: this is about staying mentally healthy and helping others do the same.
2. Be certain all cell phones and pagers are turned off.
3. Be sure everyone has pen and paper and encourage them to jot down notes, ideas, and questions. (perhaps review questions you'll be asking after the show – see "Discussion" Section.)
4. Explain the program is 45 minutes long (or just use a particular section of the program) and then a discussion about the program will follow.
5. Explain that the video was created with the help of teenagers and that all the **interviews and scenes are real**. If you haven't before, then explain the difference between a documentary (real stories and people) and a fictional film (written and "acted").
6. Tell your group that if they feel uncomfortable at any point they may choose not to watch (be sure to arrange for a place where they can go in advance).
7. Explain that the program is serious and to respect everyone's personal feelings.

# AFTER VIEWING

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Because it is important to protect everyone during the discussion, ask the group **not to use any names**, and set ground rules that include not using anyone's name but REFERRING TO THE PEOPLE IN THE VIDEO each time. This will allow a more open discussion for everyone.

1. **Give everyone a few moments to jot down ideas and questions they may have about the information in the documentary.**
2. **Explain that this is not about telling your own or others stories.**
3. **Say that this will be a discussion about the facts regarding mental health (illness and wellness).**
4. **Follow some of the ideas for discussion in this guide or other information you may have already gathered as group leader.**
5. **Be sure to leave enough time for adequate discussion. If time is short after the viewing (30 minutes or less), you may want to take just one of the discussion topics and leave the rest for later.**

# DISCUSSION

## **Middle School Students**

It is important that young people are provided with tools to begin to make smart, healthy decisions on their own. All discussions should be conducted with this in mind. Young people will make better decisions if they understand that their actions, or lack thereof, will have consequences.

Discuss what the experts in the video thought about

- 1) what age mental health issues appear,
- 2) what kind of signs are there regarding mental health issues and
- 3) when we should seek help and guidance.

Discuss

Why some people are afraid to ask or seek help?

How mental health is the same as physical health (heart disease, diabetes)?

What kinds of things make us Sad? Anxious? Upset?

How we can stay mentally healthy?

REVIEW THE SHORT VIDEO “Breaking the Silence”

Discuss: How do stressors affect mental health? How we can relieve stress? How can we help others when they are struggling?

REVIEW SHORT VIDEO “Health Leadership” Discuss how everyone can have a roll in helping others with mental health issues. Why it’s important to talk about this (and when to involve an adult)?

# ACTIVITIES

## **Middle School Students**

- Have the students write about signs of mental struggles:  
**Personality change, Withdrawing, Agitation, Lack of Self Care, Hopelessness.**
- Have the students do posters about how to relieve stress.
- Have the students roll play a friend who is depressed and starts to give away their things, withdraws and says “I just don’t see the point of living” But when their friends say they should talk to someone, the person says “Don’t tell anyone”. Be sure to have the friends say “This is a secret I can’t keep” and that they end of talking to the school counselor or a teacher and saving a life.

# DISCUSSION

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## High School Students

It is important that young people are provided with tools to make smart and healthy decisions on their own. All discussions should be conducted with this in mind. Young people will make better decisions if they understand that their actions will have consequences.

Initiate a discussion and then let the students direct its course. This will allow them to reach their own conclusions. However, ground rules will need to be set regarding respecting each other's opinions. Also, **don't allow discussion about their friends or people they know** but have everyone just refer to the people in the video. It is extremely important **not** to allow personal stories.

- Discuss why it's important for teens to talk about this? (most mental illness starts in the teen years)
- Discuss the wide range of mental struggles (from situational depression – a pet dies – to schizophrenia). Most everyone will deal with something related to sadness or mental health during their lifetime.

- View Breaking the Silence, short video and then:

Discuss the warning signs for serious depression and potential suicide.

Discuss ways to approach a friend who may be struggling with depression and when to seek guidance from a trusted adult or professional.

- Ask the students the following:
  - According to the show, what are the signs of struggles.
  - According to the show, can mental health issues be addressed medically? (early treatment, like any physical illness, is crucial)
  - Are treatments for mental illnesses effective? (80% of youth say that they are better off after treatment)
  - What are some of the myths of mental illness? (violence, etc)
  - Do mental illnesses run in families and why?
  - How can you help friends or family who may be struggling with depression?

# A C T I V I T I E S

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## High School Students

ROLE PLAY: **NOTE: Only use this with a mature group.**

Set up a scene with a teen at a friend's house. The visitor can't get their friend to go with them to the movies. ASK FOR VERY SUBTLE ACTING.

**\*CHECK 13 reasons why tool kit in resources list before doing this \***

Actor One: Exhibits the following: a **personality change**, from what they used to be and things they used to like. **Withdrawing** from activities they used to enjoy. **Agitation**, they used to be able to handle stress, now they're not able to. **Lack of self care**, in terms of clean clothing and **hopelessness** with their situation.

THE FIRST TIME (Actor One finally just asks their friend to leave)

DISCUSS:

- What were the keys that there is a mental health issue?  
(highlight the item listed above)
- What are some of the things the friend might have tried?  
(volunteering to stay with the friend at home, staying calm, listening)
- What are some of the steps the friend needs to take to help?  
(Do not judge, ask if they are suicidal, tell a trusted adult)

THE SECOND TIME (Actor One talks about no one missing them when they are gone).DISCUSS:

- Why it is extremely hard to "get over" depression? When should the friend tell a trusted adult and why?  
(if the depression lasts longer than a few days, if the person seems hopeless, if the person discusses death, **review listed resources**)
- How can the friend support actor one? (go with them to seek help, tell them that they care about them, tell a trusted adult)

CREATE:

Make a list of ways to break the silence around mental health and wellness. (Contact Breaking the Silence New Mexico for a presentation)

Create a personal list of ways to stay mentally healthy.

Create a media campaign about mental wellness and discussing mental health for your school.

# DISCUSSION

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## PARENTS

Initiate a discussion and then let the parents direct its course. As with all discussion, ground rules will need to be set regarding respecting each other's opinions. As with the students say up front that you DO NOT want personal stories or names during the discussion and to ONLY REFER TO PEOPLE IN THE VIDEO.

### DISCUSS:

How information AND treatment of mental health struggles has changed.

Why it is important to show adolescents that you care about them (review video Photo Voice and the statistics regarding Youth who have seriously considered suicide if they think: No Adult Cares 30% attempt suicide / One Adult Cares 4%-5% attempt suicide.

When mental health issues usually manifest themselves: (adolescents) and what those signs are (review Families video/script)

How media has affected the stigma around mental illness (violence related, "he/she was mentally ill", when most people with mental illness are NOT violent. (review Breaking the Silence video/script)

### REVIEW THE FAMILIES SHORT VIDEO

### DISCUSS:

Why it's important to discuss mental health with your children? (they will see signs first in themselves and their friends)

Why it's important to know your family medical history? (mental illness is sometimes genetic and EARLY detection and treatment can be crucial)

Why it's difficult to have conversations about these things with your kids? (the historic connection to stigma around this, BUT the treatments now available)

How can you initiate a discussion about this with your family / kids?

# A C T I V I T I E S

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## PARENTS

- Pick a date and time to talk with your children about this program or a time to watch it with them. Use the Facts section of this guide to discuss how to stay mentally healthy.
- Meet with school officials and discuss showing the video in health classes or for a school assembly.
- Create an event for youth in your school that could highlight how to identify the warning signs of severe depression and what to do to help.
- If it's possible, help your school create posters or flyers about the signs of mental struggles and where to go to get help.
- Find a way to highlight the New Mexico Crisis and Access line:  
855-NM-CRISIS or 855-662-7474 New Mexico Crisis and Access line (24/7),  
Peer to Peer warm line is 855-466-7100 (6pm to 11pm).

# F A C T S   t o   D I S C U S S

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Ideas on how to stay mentally healthy: Exercise, Diet, Sleep, Mindfulness, Feeling Connected. “Then there's something else called **eudamonic happiness**, which is the feeling that you get when you've done something meaningful.”

Rhoshel Lenroot, M.D.  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Of adolescents who have seriously considered suicide if they think:

No Adult Cares   30% attempt suicide

One Adult Cares   4% to 5% attempt suicide

Shawn Singh Sidhu, M.D.  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Over 30% (32.5) of high school students in New Mexico felt sad or hopeless (almost every day for 2 or more weeks in the past 12 months).

Over 20% (20.2%) of 6 to 8th grade students in New Mexico have seriously considered suicide.

Almost 1 in 10 (8.6%) high school students in New Mexico have attempted suicide.

High School Girls were twice as likely as Boys to:

Feel sad or hopeless (42.3% vs. 23.0%) Seriously consider suicide (21.4% vs. 11.6%)

Make a suicide plan (19.0% vs. 10.3%) Attempt suicide (12.4% vs. 6.4%)

New Mexico Youth and Resiliency Survey 2015

In New Mexico, about 19,000 adolescents aged 12–17 (11.5% of all adolescents) per year in 2014– 2015 had at least one Major Depressive Episode within the year prior to being surveyed.

SAMHSA

90% of people who die by suicide have an undiagnosed or undertreated mental illness.

50% of people who use drugs and alcohol are self-medicating a mental illness.

Breaking the Silence, New Mexico

# Q U E S T I O N S   t o   A S K

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START BY SAYING: “I need your help on this. See what you come up with.” CONTINUE TO ASK “why?” and “why not?” and “can you explain that? ” after each answer.

- Are mental health issues stigmatized and if so, why?
- Should mental health issues be discussed and if so, why?
- Why is this issue important?
- Are mental health issues really a problem in our (school, community, state)?
- Whose problem is it?
- Is it a teenage problem?
- Is it a parent problem?
- Is it a community problem?
- What do we mean by a continuum of mental health issues? (from situational depression to schizophrenia)
- Why should youth understand and discuss this? How?
- What role do parents play in helping kids in these situations?
- What role do teachers/mentors play in helping kids with this?
- Why is family medical history so important to discuss with everyone in the family? (mental health or illness as with many health issues, can run in families)
- What are the biggest fears regarding mental healthy?
- Does stress relate to mental health and wellness? In what way?
- How can we help each other stay mentally healthy?

# R E S O U R C E S

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New Mexico Crisis and Access Line (24/7)  
Peer to Peer Warmline (6-11pm)

855-NM-CRISIS or 855-662-7474  
855-466-7100

Breaking the Silence New Mexico

To arrange a school presentation, email [info.breakingthesilence@gmail.com](mailto:info.breakingthesilence@gmail.com)

13 Reasons Why TOOLKIT

[www.13reasonswhytoolkit.org](http://www.13reasonswhytoolkit.org)

National Alliance on Mental Illness

[www.NAMI.org](http://www.NAMI.org)

Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255

[www.crisischat.org](http://www.crisischat.org)

LGBTQ Youth 1-866-488-7386

[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

Teens Helping Teens 1-800-852-8336 (6-10pm Pacific time)

[www.teenlineonline.org](http://www.teenlineonline.org)

Agora Crisis Line 1-855-505-4505

[www.agoracares.org](http://www.agoracares.org)

The National Institute on Drug Abuse

[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

National Institute of Mental Health

[www.nimh.nih.gov/](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/)

Parenting Skills Website

[www.parentingteens.about.com](http://www.parentingteens.about.com)

Life Skills Training, Institute for Prevention Research

[www.lifeskillstraining.com](http://www.lifeskillstraining.com)

Parenting Adolescents Wisely, Ohio University

[www.familyworksinc.com](http://www.familyworksinc.com)

SMART Moves Program, Boys & Girls Clubs of America

[www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

SafeTeen New Mexico

[www.SafeTeen.net](http://www.SafeTeen.net)

Christopher Productions Social Issues Information

[www.ChristopherProductions.org](http://www.ChristopherProductions.org)



christopher productions  
Television to Touch the Heart

## mental HEALTH

**Order Form** Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Documentary 45 minutes, Shortened Version, Educational Segments**

Number of DVD's X \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTE: YOU CAN ORDER AND DOWNLOAD THIS  
VIDEO FOR \$5 ON LINE AT  
[www.mentalHEALTH.info](http://www.mentalHEALTH.info)**

**TOTAL COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: To Keep Costs Down WE DO NOT ACCEPT PO'S or CREDIT CARDS**

Your payment includes shipping costs (call 505-843-7231 for expedited service fees).

**Send this form** along with a **check or money order** for the total cost, to:

**Christopher Productions, LLC**  
**12301 Oakland Ave. NE**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87122

NEW MARIJUANA:

## RESPONSE FORM:

Please take a moment to fill out the information below and then  
EMAIL to us as a word doc: [Chris@ChristopherProductions.org](mailto:Chris@ChristopherProductions.org)

Thanks for letting us know how you're using the materials.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Which materials were used (documentary, curriculum):

Date(s) materials used:

Group(s) using materials (i.e. Class, Club, Group – what kind?)

Number of people using the materials:

Youth:

Adults:

Other comments about the materials and your discussion: