

Mental Health toolkit

for parents and caregivers of children & young adults



A resource
for the Merrimack Valley region
 produced by the

SHINE Initiative
 with funding from
 SPEEDWAY
CHILDREN'S CHARITIES







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Introduction

From the time we enter the world we're connected to the healthcare system, first with a pediatrician and primary care provider.

As we grow from infancy to childhood and then adulthood, relationships continue to be formed with primary care doctors.

As youngsters we receive inoculations to protect us from various illnesses and diseases. We're encouraged to schedule routine physicals and "check-ups" and to call upon our "PC" doctor if a prolonged illness or matter arises that threatens our health and well-being.

But for most people, there is little or nothing to guide or prepare us for an initial encounter with a mental health professional.

We hope this "toolkit" will therefore provide its users with a better understanding and acceptance of mental illness as a "mainstream health issue."

Just as we've invited - and been invited - by young people to have candid and meaningful dialogue about "what is mental illness?", "what are its causes?", and "how can it be treated?", we invite everyone to add their voice to the conversation about mental illness.

Through this exchange of information and conversation we can reduce and eliminate stigma and other barriers to care and treatment, and we can become healthier individually and as a community.



The Shine Initiative mission is to be a leader in the effort to recognize mental illness in children and young adults as a mainstream health issue.

The SHINE Initiative proudly collaborates with schools, colleges & universities, youth-serving organizations, human services and social services agencies, hospitals, mental health agencies, and civic and business groups to promote mental health awareness and education.

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The SHINE Initiative is located at 9 Leominster Connector,
Leominster MA 01453

Phone: (978) 870-1494 Email: prichard@shineinitiative.org Fax: (978-870-1399.

www.shineinitiative.org.

The SHINE Initiative is funded entirely through contributions from businesses, civic groups, charitable foundations, corporations and individuals.



The SHINE Initiative will be a leader in the effort to recognize mental illness in children and young adults as a mainstream health issue.

About the SHINE Initiative

In 2003 the directors and employees of Fidelity Bank, based in Leominster MA, dedicated themselves to "shining a light on mental illness." In 2004 their vision came to life when the SHINE Initiative was established under the leadership and guidance of a community-based advisory board. In recent years the SHINE Initiative has honed its focus on the mental health of children and young adults.

Why?

Quite simply, because we know that half of lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.

Subsequently a concerted effort has been made to engage the community in conversation about mental illness. Not only has our mission captured the attention of thousands of people, but the invitation to "join the conversation" has been enthusiastically embraced by the very people recognized in our mission statement - *young people*.

This exchange of conversation and information has occurred in local and regional high schools, middle schools, colleges and universities, youth-serving organizations, hospitals and mental health agencies.







What you should know about mental illness

So what **IS** a mental illness?

Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions that affect your mood, thinking and behavior.

Examples of mental illness include: Depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorders, personality disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, alzheimer's, obsessive compulsive disorder, autism spectrum disorder.



Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when signs and symptoms linger and cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function. Symptoms may include changes in mood, personality, personal habits and/or social withdrawal.

In many cases, mental illness can be managed through psychotherapy, and/or medication. Nutrition, exercise and lifestyle changes can also have beneficial effects on mental wellness.

What Causes Mental Illness?

Mental illnesses, in general, are thought to be caused by a variety of genetic and environmental factors:

Inherited traits.

Mental illness is more common in people whose biological family members also have a mental illness. You may have a genetic vulnerability to developing a mental illness, and your life situation may trigger the actual mental illness if you're already at risk.

Biological factors.

Traumatic brain injury or exposure to viruses or toxins while in the womb.

Life experiences.

Challenging situations in your life, such as the loss of a loved one, financial problems and high stress, can play a role in triggering mental illness.

Brain chemistry.

Known as biochemical causes, changes occurring in the brain are thought to affect mood and other aspects of mental health.



Information contained on this page extracted from the Mayo Clinic.

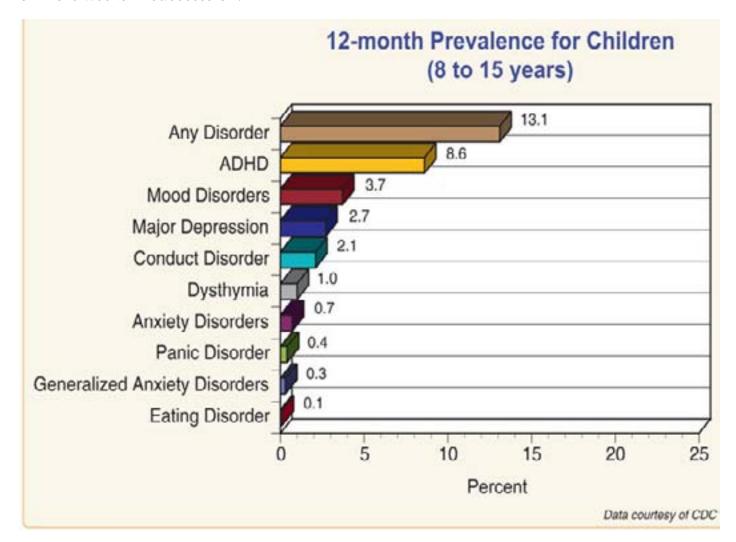
Mental illness in young people

Mental disorders are common among children in the United States. While mental disorders are widespread, the main burden of illness is concentrated among those suffering from a seriously debilitating mental illness.

Just over 20 percent (or 1 in 5) children, either currently or at some point during their life, will have a seriously debilitating mental disorder.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey includes prevalence data for children ages 8 to 15. These data show that approximately 13 percent of children ages 8 to 15 had a diagnosable mental disorder within the previous year. (See the graph below).

Also of note is that a 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of students in grades 9 through 12 in Massachusetts revealed that 22% reported feeling "sad" or "hopeless" almost every day for two or more weeks in succession.



Signs of Mental Illness



The following is a list of some of the key warning signs of a mental disorder.

Remember, the signs usually aren't one-time occurrences; they persist over several weeks.

- Marked change in school performance.
- Inability to cope with problems and daily activities.
- Noticeable changes in sleeping and/or eating habits.
- Many physical complaints.
- Sexual acting out.
- Depression shown by sustained, prolonged negative mood and attitude, often accompanied by poor appetite, difficulty sleeping or thoughts of death.
- Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Intense fear of becoming obese with no relationship to actual body weight, purging food or restricting eating.
- Persistent nightmares.
- Threats of self-harm or harm to others.
- Self-injury or self-destructive behavior.
- Frequent outbursts of anger, aggression.
- Threats to run away.
- Aggressive or non-aggressive consistent violation of rights of others; opposition to authority, truancy, thefts, or vandalism.
- Strange thoughts and feelings; and unusual behaviors.

(List compiled from "Fact for Families," American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP))

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Mental illness is NOT a sign of weakness. It IS an ILLNESS and can affect anyone at any time.

What do you do when you have a fever, body ache, chills, sore throat etc.?

Most likely you tell someone and most likely that someone is a parent or guardian or other caregiver.



The same routine should occur when you're experiencing mental discomfort or distress.

Mental health problems are not uncommon as they affect nearly as many people as do the common cold or an ordinary virus.

Did you know that approximately **1 in 10** children and teens live with a diagnosable mental disorder?

Did you know that approximately **60,000,000** adults and young people in the United States are living at some time in their lifetime with a mental disorder?

That's how common mental illness is in our society.



Approximately one out of five adolescents has a diagnosable mental disorder, and nearly one-third show symptoms of depression.

Warning signs aren't always obvious, but more common symptoms include persistent irritability, anger, or social withdrawal, as well as major changes in appetite or sleep.

Untreated mental disorders can disrupt school performance, harm relationships, and lead to suicide (the third leading cause of death among adolescents). Unfortunately, the stigma about mental illness inhibits some adolescents and their families from seeking help.

Effective treatments for mental disorders, especially if they begin soon after symptoms appear, can help reduce its impact on an adolescent's life.

It's important to know that treatment **does work** and people can learn to manage their illness.

If you or someone you know and care about is experiencing signs and symptoms of mental illness, confide in someone you can trust and seek professional help. To learn of professional help available in your community contact your primary care physician, pediatrician, school adjustment or guidance counselor, or health insurance provider.

(Also see the insert contained in this toolkit for a partial list of mental health providers in the Merrimack Valley region of Massachusetts.)

How Do I Tell Someone I Need Mental Health Care?

Asking for Help is the **First** Step to **Getting** Help

Reaching out to a trusted caregiver to share with them what you're experiencing isn't always easy. But asking for help is the first and most important step any person can take to improving their mental health.



Caregivers are parents, grandparents, other family members, or guardians. Caregivers are people who love you and provide direct care to you. They play an important role in your health and well-being.

Qualities of a supportive caregiver

- Gives good advice when asked and needed.
- Respects someone's privacy and can be trusted.
- Allows an individual to talk freely about their feelings and emotions without judging, teasing, or criticizing.



Remember, You Know Best How You Feel.

Oftentimes a parent/caregiver can be confused or unsure how to react to a child's mental health issue. Simply know this: The person living with an illness knows best "how they feel." If someone reaches out to you for help, follow through on their behalf. Respond as you would if they were suffering from a respiratory ailment or a broken bone.

An Important Reminder

If you, or someone you know is in crisis and needs immediate help, we urge you to contact your therapist or primary care physician, or go to the Emergency Department of your local hospital.



Quick Tips to Improve Your Mental Health

There are many things that can affect your mental health.

These include lack of sleep, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and such stressors as school, social relationships, work and career, even family obligations. There are also several things everyone can do to help improve one's mental health.

These includes changes to your diet, sleep habits, and coping mechanisms. Some of these changes can easily be applied to anyone's daily routine.

1. Develop a Healthy Routine



Did you know that proper nutrition and exercise can benefit your body and your mind!

When your body and your mind are in good shape you're better equipped to manage routine

tasks, but also the stress that can be the result of new challenges and life experiences.

Did you know that depression and low selfesteem have been linked to poor nutrition and weight issues? The next time you think about reaching for the junk food, think about healthier alternatives. When you're bored go for a run or walk, or do yoga instead of turning on your game system!

2. Get Proper Sleep

Lack of sleep can interfere with focus and performance. Healthy amounts of sleep can boost your memory and improve your attention and performance in school, at home, or at work! Better rest can also help you to make better decisions and to think more clearly.

3. Do Some Positive Coping

Positive coping mechanisms can help relieve stress or anxiety. Some common positive coping mechanisms are: writing, drawing, meditating, baking, taking a walk, or talking to friends.

4. Ask For Help

If you find that our tips aren't helping, or your health concerns persist, it might be a sign of something deeper and you should ask for help.

Identify people in your life who you can trust and you know will help you. These people can be parents, caregivers, teachers, counselors, religious leaders, family, and friends.



We all get overwhelmed from time to time.
Our message is simple:
Don't be afraid to ask for help!

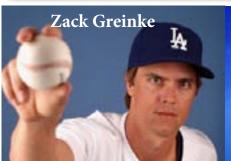
Say goodbye to stigma

Stigma is commonly defined as "a mark of shame, dishonor or disgrace."

It's also defined as a set of negative and <u>unfair beliefs</u> that a society or group of people have about something. Mental illness is commonly mentioned as a leading example of stigma and is often cited as the predominant reason that two-thirds or more of all people who suffer from mental illness refrain from seeking treatment.

That's why we've made awareness through education the cornerstone of the SHINE Initiative mission.

We believe the best way to diffuse stigma is by acquainting ourselves with mental illness, its causes, and most importantly, how to accept it as a mainstream health issue. After all, short of the common cold, few other illnesses affect as many people of all ages as does mental illness.







Mental Illness

DOES NOT define them. Do not allow it to define YOU.

The people pictured here have all lived with mental illness. Their respective diagnoses have included severe anxiety, bipolar, and depression.

But we know them for their talents and for what they've achieved and contributed as athlete, singer, astronaut, actress, author and president.





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Here's what young people in Central Massachusetts are telling us about mental illness.

"If someone is afraid to talk to me about my illness I tell them, be yourself and I'll be myself."

"It's okay to ask for help."

"It's a sign of strength to be able to talk about it and ask for help."

"Mental illness is not a sign of weakness."

"You don't have to struggle with this by yourself."





Young people are adding their voices to the mental health conversation at numerous schools, colleges and universities, and youth-serving organizations.



At Leominster High School



At Boys & Girls Club, Leominster



At Monty Tech



At Mount Wachusett Community College

The SHINE Initiative is proud to collaborate with schools and organizations to promote mental health awareness and education. To learn how the SHINE Initiative can be of assistance to your school or organization, call 978-870-1494 or email prichard at shineinitiative.org.

The time has come for genuine Mental Health Parity

Mental Health America recently released a report entitled: Parity or Disparity: The State of Mental Health in America 2015, which estimated 6.2 million children in the United States live with an emotional behavioral or developmental (EBD) issue. The report also indicated that 2 in five children living with EBD do not receive mental health treatment.

As noted earlier in this toolkit, barriers to mental health treatment and care include affordability, accessibility, and inadequate numbers of licensed child psychologists.

A HealthStyles study in 2006 cited by the Centers for Disease Control revealed that only 25% of young people ages 18-24 believed that a person with mental illness can eventually recover. Furthermore, only 25% of adults with mental illness believed that people are caring and understanding of people with mental illness.

During the Kennedy Forum in Boston on October 24th, 2013, Dr. Herbert Pardes, retired CEO of New York-Presbyterian Hospital and a prominent figure in the field of psychiatry, opined that "citizen participation and citizen advocacy" are critical to achieving genuine parity and to improving access to care and treatment, and affordability for that care and treatment.

That's why we've made ongoing and public conversation about mental illness the centerpiece of the SHINE Initiative mission. The more voices we add to the conversation, the sooner we can reverse a history of stigma and neglect and make access to mental health services and treatment affordable and equitable for this and all generations to follow.

Ignoring mental illness has a significant impact

In several of the largest communities in Massachusetts nearly 1 in 5 public high school students are chronically absent - meaning they miss 18 or more days of school during an academic year. Many students tell us they recognize the importance of education, but issues such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral and emotional disorders make it difficult for them to attend school, and to focus when they attend school.



According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, one-fifth of college students experience a mental illness. Also, increasing numbers of students are seeking help for emotional problems that occur after they arrive at college.

Clinical depression often emerges for the first time in adolescence, at a time when young people are in high school, preparing or have entered college, or are beginning careers. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997).

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Selecting a mental health professional

Selecting the right mental health professional is important. Developing a comfortable and confident relationship with a clinician is key to successful treatment.

After all, the individual who is living with a behavioral, emotional or mental disorder knows best what they are feeling and experiencing. It's important, therefore, to be at ease with the mental health professional and to develop a mutually respectful and trusting rapport.



What is a psychiatrist, psychologist, clinician?

Psychiatrist.

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who specializes in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental health, including substance use disorders. Psychiatrists are qualified to assess both the mental and physical aspects of psychological disturbance. A psychiatrist has completed medical school and an additional four or more years of residency training in psychiatry.

Psychologist.

A psychologist has a doctoral degree (PhD, PsyD, or EdD) in psychology, which is the study of the mind and behaviors. Training provides a psychologist an education in evaluating and treating mental and emotional disorders. Licensed psychologists are qualified to do counseling and psychotherapy and provide treatment and evaluation for mental disorders.

Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).

LMHCs, LMFTs, and LCSWs are mental health professionals who have a master's degree in psychology, counseling, social work or a related field. In order to be licensed, the mental health professional also needs additional experience working with a qualified mental health professional after graduate school. Their licensure allows them to provide individual, marital, couple, family and group counseling and psychotherapy from a social work orientation. They are qualified to assess, diagnose and treat mental and emotional conditions and addictions, but cannot prescribe drugs.

Psychiatric or Mental Health Nurse (APRN).

Some nurses have had special training in providing mental health services (APRN). Depending on their level of training and certification, they can evaluate patients for mental illness and provide treatment in the form of psychotherapy.

Mental Health Resources



A SHINE Initiative guide to child, adolescent and family mental health services in the Merrimack Valley Region of Massachusetts







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Mental Health Resources

The following is a partial listing of providers of mental health services for children, adolescents and young adults and their families in the Merrimack Valley Region This listing is intended as a resource guide only.



Andover Counseling Center

(individual and family counseling) 565 Turnpike St Suite 81 North Andover, MA 01845-5922 (978) 682-1579 www.andovercounseling.com

Anna Jaques Hospital

(Emergency mental health services, inpatient care to adults and adolescents ages 17 and older) 25 Highland Ave., Newburyport, MA 01950 (978) 463 - 1000 www.ajh.org

Amesbury Psychological Center

(inpatient psychiatric services to children and adolescents ages 4-17) 24 Morrill Place, Amesbury, MA 01830 (978) 388-5700 www.ajh.org

Arbour Counseling Services

(Outpatient counseling for adults, children, and geriatric) 10 Bridge St, Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 453-5736 Also, 116 Summer St, Haverhill, MA01830 (978) 373-7010 Also, 599 Canal St, Lawrence, MA 01840 (978) 686-8202 Also, (Adolescent partial hospitalization (ages 13-18) 391 Varnum Ave, Lowell, MA 01854 (978) 322-5160

www.arbourhealth.com

Blueskies Wellness Inc.

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(Individual counseling) 232 Pleasant St, Methuen, MA 01841 (978) 655-1823

www.blueskieswellnessinc.org

Bridgewell Counseling Services

(Full-service outpatient behavioral health clinic) 35 Market St, Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 459-0389 www.bridgewell.org

Center For Family Development of Lowell

(individual & family counseling, diagnostic evaluations, psychiatric services) 81 Bridge St, Suite 215, Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 459-2306 www.cosicounseling.com

Challenge Unlimited at Ironstone Farm

(therapeutic horseback riding) 450 Lowell St (Rt. 133), Andover, MA 01810 (978) 475-4056 www.ironstonefarm.org

Children's Friend and Family Services

(in-home therapy, therapeutic mentoring, outpatient services, juvenile court services) 15 Union St, Suite 200, Lawrence, MA 01840 (978) 682-7289 www.childrensfriend.net

Counseling Associates of Dracut & Methuen

(Individual and Family Therapy) 14 Loon Hill Rd-Route 113, Dracut, MA 01826 (978) 934-9444 Also, 236 Pleasant St., Methuen, MA. 01844 (978) 683-0133 www.cadm-therapists.com

Creative Solutions Therapy

(individual, group and family therapy, play therapy, substance abuse therapy) 110 Haverhill Rd, Suite 502, Amesbury, MA 01913 (978) 792-5129

www.creativesolutiontherapy.com

Mental Health Resources

DBSA Merrimack Valley Support Group

(support group for depression, bipolar, anxiety and more ages 18+)

1195 Varnum Ave, Lowell, MA 01852 (888) 280-7773

www.dbsamerrimackvalley.org

Dracut Counseling Professionals

(Individual and family counseling) 149 Pleasant St. Suite 200 Dracut MA 01826 (978) 222-9004

www.dracutcounselingprofessionals.com

Family Continuity Programs

(outpatient therapy, in-home therapy, therapeutic mentoring) 360 Merrimack St Bldg. 9, 3rd Floor (Entrance J) Lawrence, MA 01843

(978) 687-1617

www.familycontinuity.org

Family Counseling and Guidance Center

(Individual and Family counseling) 152 Sylvan Street Danvers, MA 01923 978-774-6820 www.ccab.org

Family Counseling Associates of Andover

(Individual counseling services) 12 Essex St, Andover, MA 01810 (978) 222-3121 www.fca-andover.com

Family Services of the Merrimack Valley

(individual & family counseling, therapeutic mentoring) 430 North Canal St, Lawrence, MA 01840 (978) 327-6600 www.fsmv.org

General Psychological Associates

(individual and family counseling) 3 Dundee Park, Suite 203 Andover, MA 01810 (978) 475-3590 www.generalpsychologicalassociates.com

Justice Resource Institute- GRIP

(In Home Therapy and therapeutic mentoring) 319 Wilder St., Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 452-4522 www.jri.org

Key Program, Inc.

(Children's behavioral health, in-home therapy, and mentoring) 2 Gaythorne Rd, Suite1U Methuen, MA 01844 (978) 685-0194 www.key.org

Lahey Health Behavioral Services

(outpatient counseling, medication services, emergency psychiatric services, in home therapy, therapeutic mentoring) 12 Methuen St, 3rd Floor, Lawrence, MA 01840

(978) 683-3128

Also,

60 Merrimack St, Haverhill, MA (978) 373-1126

Also,

(wraparound services) 10 Howard St, Haverhill, MA (978) 374-0414

Also,

(in home therapy)

6 Concordia Dr., Haverhill, MA

(978) 373-3086

www.nebhealth.org

Lowell Community Health Center

(individual, group, & family counseling, addiction counseling, and psychiatric services) 161 Jackson St, Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 937-9700 Also,

(Metta health services and behavioral health services)

135 Jackson St, Lowell, MA 01852

(978) 441-1700

www.lchealth.org

Mental Health Resources

Lowell House Inc.

(group and individual counseling with an emphasis on co-occuring disorders, addiction counseling ages 18+)

555 Merrimack St, Lowell, MA 01854

(978) 454-2997

(978) 937-3087

www.lowellhouseinc.org

www.mspcc.org

Massachusetts MENTOR & IFCS

(Therapeutic mentoring)
12 Methuen St First Floor, Lawrence, MA 01840
(978) 794-7966 www.ma-mentor.com

Mass Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

(Counseling services)
439 South Union St, Lawrence, MA 01843
(978) 682-9222
Also,
126 Phoenix Ave, 3rd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852

Mental Health Association of Greater Lowell

(individual, family, and group counseling services) 99 Church St, Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 458-6282 www.mhalowell.org

Merrimack Valley Catholic Charities

(counseling for individuals and families)
70 Lawrence St, Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 452-1421 www.ccab.org

Merrimack Valley Trauma Services

(trauma-focused counseling for individuals and families)

267 Boston Rd, Suite 26, North Billerica, MA 01862 (978) 362-1695 **www.mvtraumaservices.com**

NFI Massachusetts

(residential program for children with behavioral and mental health needs, ages 12-18)
(978) 374 8199 www.nfima.org

South Bay Mental Health

(Individual and family therapy, early intervention, crisis intervention, and trauma therapy services) 22 Old Canal Dr, Lowell, MA 01851 (978) 453-6800 www.southbaymentalhealth.com

St. Ann's Home, Inc.

(individual & family therapy, play therapy, and psychiatric services) 100A Haverhill St, Methuen, MA 01844 (978) 682-5276

Steward Health Care System

(comprehensive behavioral health care)

Holy Family Hospital

70 East St. Methuen, MA 01844 (978) 687-0151 Also,

Holy Family Hospital at Merrimack Valley

140 Lincoln Ave. Haverhill, MA 01830 (978) 374-2000 www.holyfamily-hospital.org

Team Coordinating Agency, Inc.

(individual, group and family counseling, addiction counseling)
76 Winter St, Haverhill, MA 01830
(978) 373-1181 teamca.net

The Center for Hope and Healing

(individual, group and family counseling services) 144 Merrimack St, Suite 304, Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 452-7721

www.centerforhopehealing.org

Vinfen

(Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic) 599 Canal St, 6th Floor, East Side, Lawrence, MA 01840 (978) 681-9652 www.vinfen.org

Wayside Youth & Family Support Network

(In Home Therapy, Care Coordination and Family Support)
73 E. Merrimack St, Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 221-6923

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Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

Central Office

Department of Mental Health Central Office

25 Staniford Street Boston, MA 02114

Direct Dial: 617-626-8000 Operator: 617-626-8000 TTY: 617-727-9842

Local Service Sites

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Tewksbury, MA 01876-0387
Phone (978) 863-5000
Fax (978) 863-5091
TTY (978) 640-1193

To learn more about the Department of Mental Health, its policies, resources and services, please visit: www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dmh.

www.waysideyouth.org



A leader in recognizing mental illness in children and young adults as a mainstream health issue.

The SHINE Initiative
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This mental health toolkit has been prepared by the SHINE Initiative as a community service.

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