KNOW YOUR MIND

My mind. My identity. My relationships.

A talk for school-going teenagers

Mental health is health



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KNOW YOUR MIND

Think of your mind as a team—not one single voice.

THINKING

Plan • decide

FEELINGS

Signal needs

YOUR MIND

MEMORY

Learn • recall

ALARM

Spot danger

A thought is not a fact. A feeling is not a command. You can pause, notice, and choose.





















Let’s start honestly

Raise your hand — no judgement

How many of you have checked your phone first thing in the morning—before saying good morning to anyone at home?

Kis kis ko lgta hai ghr pe sab bahot strict hain aur koi kuch nai samjhta ?

How many of you have looked at someone else’s marks, body, followers, or relationship and thought, “Why am I not like that?”

That feeling is comparison—and comparison is a terrible app update for the brain.

Meet Meera

A story about friendship, overthinking and feeling “not enough”

Meera and Riya were best friends.

- They sat together, ate lunch together, shared memes and told each other everything.
- Then Riya began sitting with another group.
- She read Meera’s messages but replied hours later.
- When Meera asked, “Did I do something wrong?” Riya said, “You are overthinking.”
- Then Meera saw a story: Riya laughing with the new group—caption: “Real ones only.”

Meera’s mind at 1 a.m.

Her brain became a full-time detective:

- “Did I say something wrong?”
- “Am I boring?” “Is something wrong with me?”
- “Should I message again—or act like I don’t care?”
- She checked Riya’s status again and again… and again.

Relationship stress does not always look like crying. Sometimes it looks like overthinking, checking your phone, or becoming a detective at midnight.

What is Adolescence?

WHO Definition

Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health.

Early (10–13)

- Puberty begins
- Concrete thinking
- Same-sex peers
- Growing independence

Middle (14–16)

- Rapid growth
- Abstract thinking
- Peer influence peaks
- Identity exploration

Late (17–19)

- Physical maturity
- Future orientation
- Intimate relationships
- Values solidify

What changes during adolescence?

- Body: puberty, energy shifts, body image and sleep timing change.
- Brain: emotion/reward systems can be highly responsive; planning and impulse control keep developing.
- Social world: friends, identity, belonging and independence matter more.
- Stress can temporarily make it harder to think flexibly—even for a smart person.



DEVELOPING ≠ BROKEN

You are not “too much.” You are learning skills your brain will keep strengthening.

Your brain has different jobs

- The emotional/reward systems help you notice what matters

and what feels exciting or threatening.

- The prefrontal networks help with planning,

weighing consequences and stopping an impulse.

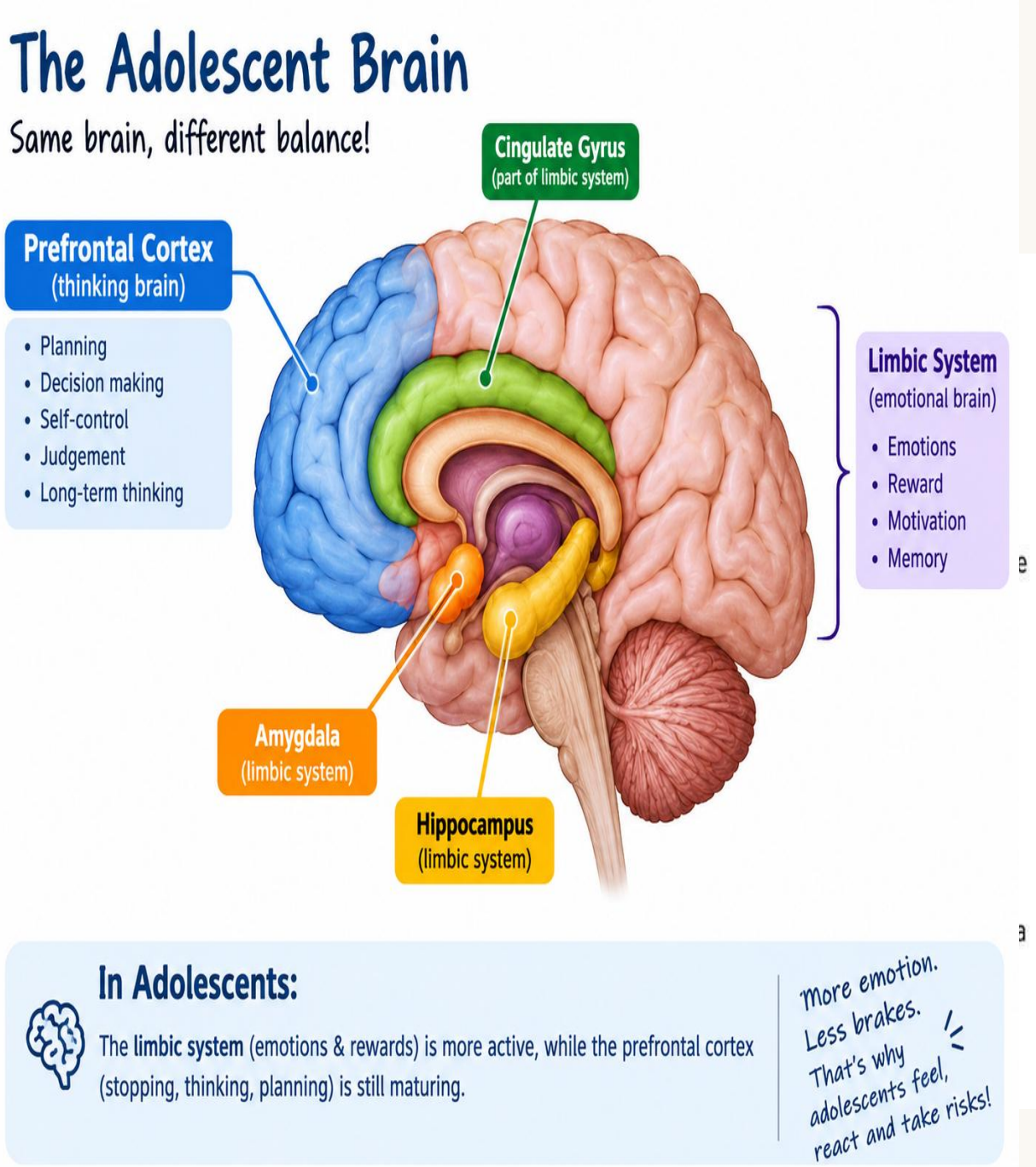
- Under pressure, sleep loss or peer attention

, the “pause-and-plan” system can be harder to use.

- Practical skill: create a small gap between the feeling and the action.

PAUSE → NAME IT → CHOOSE

Example: “I’m angry” is different from “I must send that message right now.”



Mental Health in Adolescents in India

Real challenges. Real people. It matters.

Healthy minds today, brighter futures tomorrow.



1 in 5 adolescents in India (ages 10–19) are estimated to have a mental health disorder.

(Source: WHO, 2023)

Common Conditions



Anxiety, depression and stress are the most common mental health issues among Indian adolescents.

Risk Factors



Academic pressure, excessive screen time, family conflicts and peer pressure can increase the risk.

Impact



These issues can affect learning, sleep, emotions and overall well-being if not addressed.

What Can Help



- Talk openly and listen without judgment.
- Encourage healthy routines (sleep, study, exercise).
- Seek professional help if needed.



Better mental health is possible.

With awareness, support and timely help, adolescents in India can thrive.

QUICK CHECK 1: What is the healthiest next step?

After a painful break-up, you want to send 30 messages and post screenshots. What helps most?

A Post everything publicly so everyone knows your side.

B Pause, avoid posting while upset, contact a trusted friend and decide later.

C Decide the break-up proves you are unlovable.



REAL-LIFE PROBLEM 1: Love, crushes & break-ups

- Scenario: your crush leaves you on “seen,” or a relationship ends. You replay every message and feel worthless.
- Remember: rejection hurts, but it does not measure your value.
- Avoid impulsive posts, revenge, repeated messages or sharing private photos/screenshots.
- Try: mute notifications for a while, talk to a trusted person, keep routines, and give yourself time.
- Healthy relationship = respect, consent, honesty, freedom to say no, and no pressure or threats.



YOUR WORTH IS NOT A REPLY

Big Feelings, Real Messages

Emotions aren't the enemy — they're signals!

Anger

May signal a boundary was crossed.



Eg: Someone made a rude comment. Instead of shouting, say calmly, "Please don't say that."

Anxiety

May signal uncertainty or a perceived threat.



Eg: Exam tomorrow and feeling "I might fail". Pause, plan, take one step. You can do this.

Sadness

May signal loss, disappointment or a need for connection.



Eg: Friend spending time with others. It's okay to feel left out. Talk to someone you trust.

Jealousy

May point to fear, insecurity or a need to talk honestly.



Eg: Friend won a prize. Instead of comparing, ask: "What can I do to improve?"



Next time, pause and ask yourself:

1. What is this feeling telling me?
2. What response will help tomorrow-me?

Feel it.
Understand it.
Choose your response.

Feelings are messengers, not commanders.

QUICK CHECK 2: Panic is rising—what can you try?

Your heart is racing before a class presentation. What is a useful first step?

A Tell yourself you are weak and must hide it.

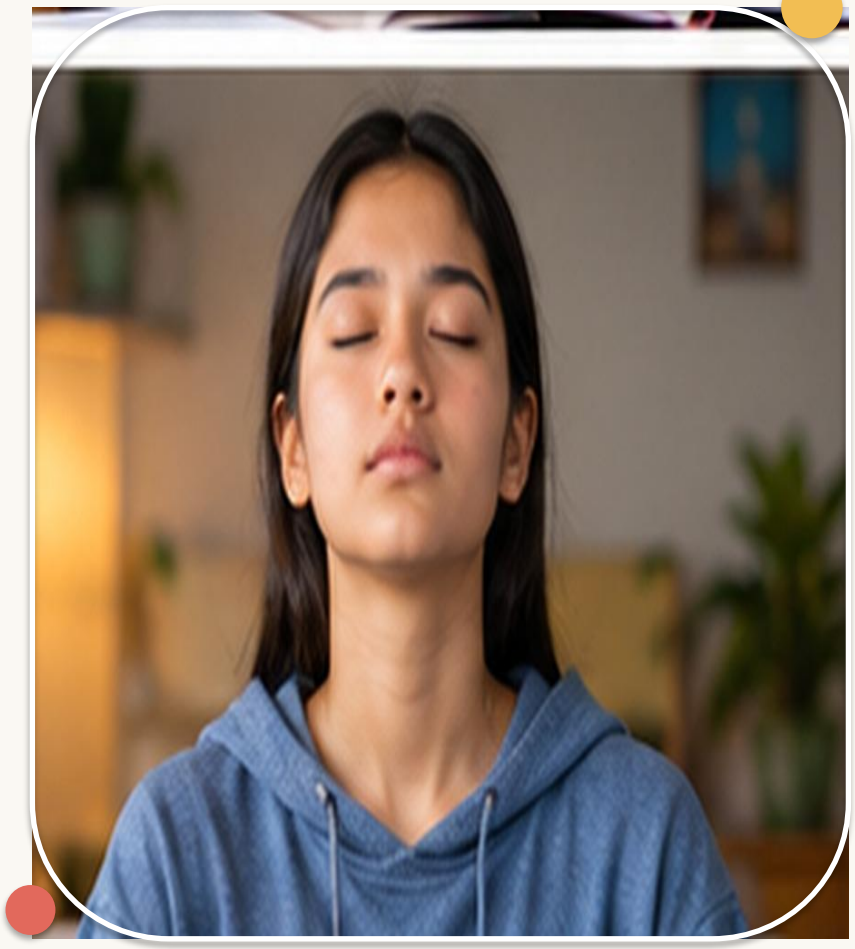
B Put both feet on the floor, orient to the room, breathe gently and ask for support if needed.

C Take someone else's medication to calm down.



REAL-LIFE PROBLEM 2: Anxiety & panic

- Scenario: before an exam or presentation, your heart races, hands shake, breathing changes and you think, "I'm going to faint."
- Panic symptoms can be frightening; one panic attack does not automatically mean panic disorder.
- If symptoms are new, severe or medically concerning, tell an adult and seek medical assessment.
- In the moment: plant your feet, relax your shoulders, breathe gently with a slightly longer exhale, and name 5 things you see.
- Afterwards: notice triggers, protect sleep, practise gradually, and seek help if anxiety limits daily life.



SLOW THE MOMENT; DON'T FIGHT THE FEELING

QUICK CHECK 3: Your friends are pressuring you

At a gathering, someone offers you a vape and says everyone is doing it.

A Try it so nobody thinks you are boring.

B Say no, move toward a safe friend/adult and use your exit plan if pressure continues.

C Take an unknown substance to prove you trust them.

. If someone becomes unwell after using a substance, get urgent adult/medical help—don't leave them alone.



REAL-LIFE PROBLEM 3: Pressure to vape, drink or use drugs

- Scenario: friends say, “Just try it once—don’t be boring.” You worry they will exclude you.

- Nicotine can be addictive; alcohol and other drugs can affect judgement, mood, sleep and safety.

- A simple refusal works: “No thanks—I’m not into it.” Repeat once; change the subject or leave.

- Make an exit plan: a trusted person to call, safe transport, and a code word with a friend.

- If you already use substances, you are not a bad person. Talk to a health professional early—don’t manage it alone.



A REAL FRIEND RESPECTS YOUR NO

QUICK CHECK 4: A humiliating photo is spreading

Someone posts an embarrassing picture of a classmate and the group chat is laughing.

A Forward it so you are not left out.

B Do not share it; save relevant evidence, report it and check on the classmate.

C Tell the classmate they should have known better.

. Cyberbullying can leave evidence; a trusted adult can help stop it and keep the person safe.



REAL-LIFE PROBLEM 4: Bullying & cyberbullying

- Scenario: a group shares an embarrassing photo and classmates keep commenting. You dread checking your phone.
- You do not need to “toughen up” or handle it alone.

- Save evidence (screenshots/links), block or report the account, and tell a trusted adult or school safeguarding lead.

- Do not retaliate by posting private information. If there are threats, sexual images or immediate danger, seek adult help urgently.

- If you witness bullying: don’t forward it; check in privately; report it; include the targeted person.



DON’T FORWARD. SUPPORT. REPORT.

QUICK CHECK 5: One exam went badly

You get a lower mark than expected. Which thought helps you respond?

A “I’m useless at everything.”

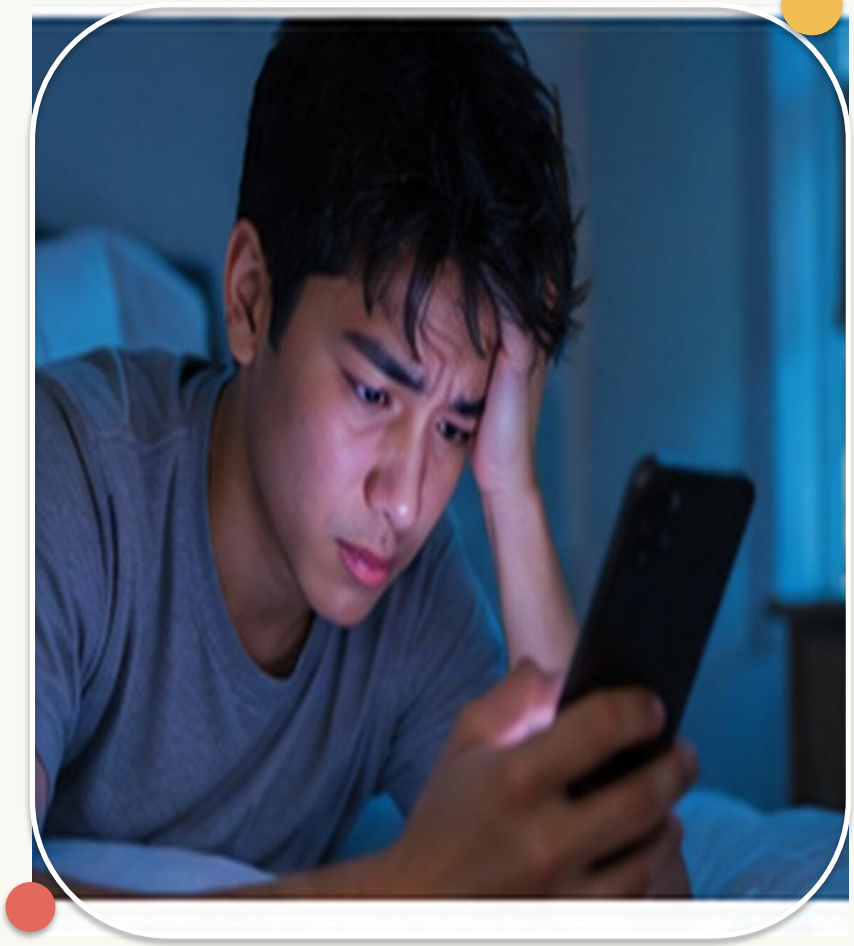
B “This result is disappointing; I can identify one topic to practise and ask for feedback.”

C “There is no point trying again.”



REAL-LIFE PROBLEM 5: Exam stress & feeling “not enough”

- Scenario: one low score in one test makes you think, “I’m a failure. My future is over.”
- Spot the thought trap: all-or-nothing thinking turns one result into a whole-life verdict.
- Replace it with a balanced thought: “I’m disappointed. I can review what went wrong and plan one next step.”
- Use short study blocks, breaks, practice questions, sleep and asking for help early.
- If stress makes you unable to sleep, eat, attend school or function, tell someone and seek support.



PROGRESS > PERFECTION

What Meera needed

- Not: “Just ignore her.”
- Not: “You are too sensitive.”
- Not: “Stop overthinking.”
- Yes: “This hurts because friendship matters to you.

Let’s understand what is happening.”

Meera spoke to her school counsellor.

With support, she learned to set boundaries, stop chasing, and spend time with people who made her feel calm.

Emotional & psychiatric conditions in adolescence

- Anxiety disorders: generalised anxiety, social anxiety, phobias, panic disorder.
- Depressive disorders: persistent low mood, loss of interest, hopelessness and changes in functioning.
- Neurodevelopmental conditions: ADHD and autism spectrum condition (often present earlier; needs vary).
- OCD and related disorders; trauma-related conditions, including PTSD.
- Eating disorders; substance use disorders; disruptive behaviour disorders.
- Less common but important: bipolar disorder and psychotic disorders.
- Self-harm is a sign of distress—not a diagnosis by itself.

A LABEL IS NOT A PERSON



When should you seek help?

- Symptoms last for weeks, worsen, or keep returning.
- Sleep, appetite, concentration, school attendance or relationships are affected.
- You stop enjoying things, withdraw, feel hopeless or use substances to cope.
- Panic or anxiety makes you avoid normal activities.
- You are being bullied, threatened, coerced, abused or feel unsafe.
- You think about self-harm or suicide—or you are worried about a friend.

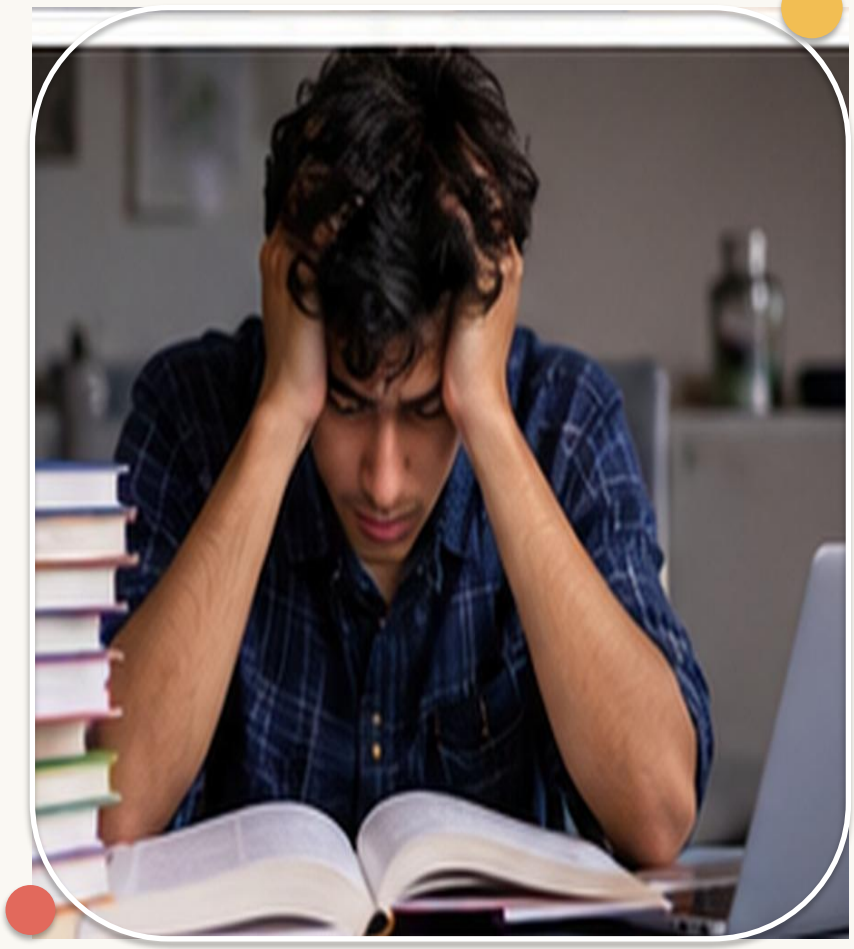


TELL A TRUSTED ADULT • SCHOOL COUNSELLOR • DOCTOR

If there is immediate danger or someone may act on suicidal thoughts: stay with them, involve a safe adult and seek urgent emergency help.

A 2-minute reset you can practise anywhere

- 1. FEET ON FLOOR: notice the support under your feet and the chair beneath you.
- 2. GENTLE BREATH: breathe comfortably; let the exhale be a little longer than the inhale for 5–8 cycles. Stop if dizzy.
- 3. 5–4–3–2–1: name 5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste (adapt as needed).
- 4. NAME IT: “I notice anxiety/anger/sadness. It is a feeling; it will change.”
- 5. MICRO-MOVE: stretch shoulders, unclench jaw, or walk for two minutes.



PRACTISE WHEN CALM, SO IT’S EASIER WHEN STRESSED

Build your mind’s daily maintenance routine

- SLEEP: keep a steady wake time; reduce late-night scrolling; protect enough sleep.
- MOVE: walk, dance, play a sport or stretch—choose something you can repeat.
- CONNECT: speak to one person you can be yourself with.
- FUEL: eat regularly and drink water; avoid using caffeine/energy drinks to replace sleep.
- DIGITAL PAUSE: mute accounts that trigger comparison; take screen breaks.
- MEANING: spend time on something enjoyable, creative, spiritual or useful to others.



A ROUTINE IS SUPPORT, NOT A CURE-ALL

How to help a friend who is struggling

- Say: “I’m glad you told me. Do you want me to listen or help you find someone?”
- Ask directly and calmly about safety if you are worried they may hurt themselves.
- Do not promise to keep danger secret. Involve a trusted adult, counsellor or clinician.
- If they may act soon or are in immediate danger, stay with them if safe and get urgent help.
- India: Tele-MANAS mental health support 14416 / 1800-89-14416; emergency help 112.



CARE + CONNECTION + PROFESSIONAL HELP

Your mind can learn new ways to cope

NOTICE IT.

NAME IT.

TALK ABOUT IT.

TAKE ONE NEXT STEP.

You deserve support before a problem becomes a crisis.

