



## Behavioral health support for teens and adolescents

Your health plan benefits include access to programs, resources and services designed to help your family through ongoing challenging times following the pandemic.

### Behavioral health during the formative years

Children begin creating the social and emotional habits that may affect their long-term mental health and well-being during the adolescent years (ages 10–19). It's also during these years that many may begin to experience behavioral health struggles.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic may have left adolescents and teens feeling more stress, uncertainty or anxiety—and those feelings may not just disappear when the pandemic nears its end.

### Providing emotional support when it's needed most

As a UnitedHealthcare member, you have access to a large network of behavioral health providers who specialize in adolescent and teen care, telehealth options and more. There are also programs and support options that may be available through your health plan at no additional cost to you,\* including:

- Self-help resources like the Sanvello™ app
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with 24/7 support
- Outpatient behavioral health therapy
- Behavioral health virtual visits

continued

\* Check your plan details for coverage on these and other forms of support.

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## Tips for supporting your teen

### Start with a conversation

Ask your teen how they're doing—and take their feelings seriously. The pandemic may have cancelled or impacted routines and events that may have been significant to your child, from in-person school and sports seasons to birthday parties and out-of-town tournaments. Acknowledge what they might have lost, tell them that it's OK to not be feeling great right now and understand that there may be uncertainty and anxiety about returning to “normal” soon.

### Explore options for telehealth counseling

Look for organizations—like the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)—that can connect you with resources, or connect with your EAP. The Sanvello app can be a convenient way to help reduce possible symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression.

### Move toward a healthier schedule

Encourage daily routines, keeping in mind that being active each day can have a big impact on mental health. So can sleep. One study of teens found that not getting enough sleep was linked to a 62% increased risk of depressed mood.<sup>2</sup>

### Evaluate screen time

Technology may be an essential way young people connect socially. Time spent on phone calls, texts, video chats and social media platforms can add up, so it's a good idea to make sure their screen time isn't negatively impacting their sleep schedule, daily routines or well-being. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns that increased online activity may put children at increased risk for online harms, such as online sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, online risk-taking behavior and exposure to potentially harmful content.<sup>3</sup>

### Be mindful of potential substance use

A study done in Canada showed teen alcohol use was up during the pandemic—and that teens are drinking with their friends while they connect on social media.<sup>4</sup>

Half of all mental health conditions start by

age **14**<sup>1</sup>

Suicide is the third-leading cause of death for

ages **15-19**<sup>1</sup>

Many mental health conditions first appear before

age **24**<sup>5</sup>

**Learn more**

Call the member phone number on your health plan ID card or sign in at [myuhc.com](https://myuhc.com)<sup>®</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. “Adolescent mental health.” <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>. Accessed June 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Short M, et al. The relationship between sleep duration and mood in adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Sleep Med. Rev.* August 2020; Volume 52. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S108707922030054X?via%3Dihub>. Accessed February 16, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). COVID-19 parental resources kit – adolescence. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/parental-resource-kit/adolescence.html>. Accessed February 16, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Dumas T, et al. What does adolescent substance use look like during the COVID-19 pandemic? Examining changes in frequency, social contexts and pandemic-related predictors. *J. Adolesc. Health.* September 2020; 67(3): 354–361. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1054139X20303311>. Accessed February 16, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Blakemore, Sarah-Jayne. Adolescence and mental health. *Perspectives. The Art of Medicine.* May 18, 2019; Volume 393, Issue 10185. 2030–2031. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)31013-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)31013-X/fulltext). Accessed June 2021.

This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 if you are in the United States or the local emergency services phone number if you are outside the United States, or go to the nearest accident and emergency department. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and all its components, in particular services to family members below the age of 16, may not be available in all locations and are subject to change without prior notice. Experience and/or educational levels of Employee Assistance Program resources may vary based on contract requirements or country regulatory requirements. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

The Sanvello Mobile Application should not be used for urgent care needs. If you are experiencing a crisis or need emergency care, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. The information contained in the Sanvello Mobile Application is for educational purposes only; it is not intended to diagnose problems or provide treatment and should not be used as a substitute for your provider's care. Please discuss with your doctor how the information provided may be right for you. Premium access is available for members at no additional cost as part of their benefit plan. Sanvello premium is not available for all groups in New York and is subject to change. Refer to your plan documents for specific benefit coverage and limitations or call the toll-free member phone number on your health plan ID card. Participation in the program is voluntary and subject to the terms of use contained in the Application.

The material provided through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is for informational purposes only. EAP staff cannot diagnose problems or suggest treatment. EAP is not a substitute for your doctor's care. Employees are encouraged to discuss with their doctor how the information provided may be right for them. Your health information is kept confidential in accordance with the law. EAP is not an insurance program and may be discontinued at any time. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against UnitedHealthcare or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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