

The Reset

A one-page guide for parents and trusted adults. Your teen may come home with a small kit. Every path in it ends with an adult. This is for when that adult is you.

WHO WROTE THIS, AND WHO DID NOT

Students wrote this, with training in Psychological First Aid and Skills for Psychological Recovery, not a degree. It is not medical advice. It is what we wish the adults around us knew. A psychology professor at Bergen Community College reviewed it before it reached you.

THE HARD SEASONS

Some weeks are heavier than others. Fall brings college applications and early deadlines. Winter brings midterms. Spring brings finals, AP exams, and decisions. These stretches land on the whole house, not just the student who is applying or testing. Younger students watch it happen and wonder if that is their future. Most of them will not say so. Some of what looks like attitude is fear.

THREE THINGS THAT HELP, IN ORDER

- 1 Listen before you fix.**
When your teen says something is wrong, the first job is not to solve it. It is to make it safe to keep talking. Put the phone down. Sit. "Tell me more" does more than any advice.
- 2 Steady, then ask directly.**
Your calm is contagious. So is your panic. Once things are calm, ask plainly: "How bad is it?" and, if you are worried, "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" Asking does not plant the idea. It tells them you can handle the answer.
- 3 Connect to someone trained.**
You do not have to carry this alone, and neither do they. The school counselor, your pediatrician, and the numbers on the back are the next step, not a last resort. Making the call together is often easier than sending them alone.

THINGS TEENS HEAR IN A HARD WEEK

All of these are said with love. All of them close the door.

INSTEAD OF

"Everyone is stressed."

"You will be fine."

"Just work harder."

"When I was your age..."

"Where are you applying?" (again)

TRY

"That sounds like a lot. What is the heaviest part?"

"I do not know how this turns out, but I am here for all of it."

"What is the one thing due first? Let us just do that."

"I did not have to do this at your age. Show me what it is like."

One college-free dinner a week. Say it out loud so they can count on it.

SMALL THINGS THAT MATTER MORE THAN THEY LOOK

- **Guard sleep like it is a grade.** A tired brain reads every problem as bigger. Phones out of the bedroom at a set time, and yours too, so it is a house rule and not a punishment.
- **Break every 45 minutes.** Four straight hours at a desk produces less than three with breaks. Say it once; do not police it.
- **Move together.** A ten-minute walk around the block after dinner does more for a stuck mind than another hour of studying.
- **Take the clicker.** If you are offered one, keep it. It is a small thing to hold when your hands need something to do, and it tells your teen you are in this with them, not watching from outside.

! When it is more than stress.

Stress comes and goes. These do not. If any of them have lasted more than a couple of weeks, or if one of them frightens you today, that is the moment to bring in someone trained. You do not need to be certain first.

SIGNS WORTH ACTING ON

- Low, flat, or irritable most days, not just after a bad one, and it is not lifting.
- Pulling away from friends, activities, or family they used to care about.
- Sleep or eating that has changed a lot and stayed changed.
- Using something, or doing something, to avoid feeling.
- Talking about being a burden, about not wanting to be here, or about hurting themselves, even as a joke.
- A sudden calm after a long stretch of distress. This can be relief, and it can be a decision. Ask.

If your teen mentions hurting themselves

- 1 Stay calm on the outside. Thank them for telling you. Do not argue, bargain, or lecture.
- 2 Ask directly: "Are you thinking about suicide?" If yes: "Do you have a plan?" The answers tell you how fast to move.
- 3 If there is any immediate danger, do not leave them alone. Call or text **988** together, or call 911. Ask 988 how to make your home safer tonight.
- 4 The next school day, call the counseling office. Then your pediatrician. This is not overreacting. This is the job.

WHERE TO CALL



Emergency, danger right now
911



988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
988 call or text · 24/7 · free · confidential · parents can call for guidance too



Crisis Text Line
Text HOME to 741741



PerformCare · NJ Children's System of Care
1-877-652-7624 24/7 mobile response for youth under 21 in crisis, and the door to ongoing counseling. This is the number for parents.



2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline
888-222-2228 for your teen · ages 10 to 24 · any problem · 24/7



NJ Hopeline
1-855-654-6735 peer support and suicide prevention · 24/7

CLOSER TO HOME



Your child's school counseling office
Ask for the counselor assigned to your child's grade.



Bergen County Division of Mental Health
201-634-2750 the county office that connects residents to local services



Your pediatrician
Often the fastest referral to a therapist who takes your insurance. Say the words "mental health" when you call; it changes how quickly you are seen.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GET IT PERFECT. YOU HAVE TO STAY IN THE ROOM.

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Written by students of the Bergen County Youth Assembly, from six Bergen County high schools, as a companion to The Reset student kit. This is not medical or psychological advice. If you are worried about your child, please contact a professional or one of the resources above.