

Are you taking care of your Mental Health?



Violence-free childhood is everyone's right!



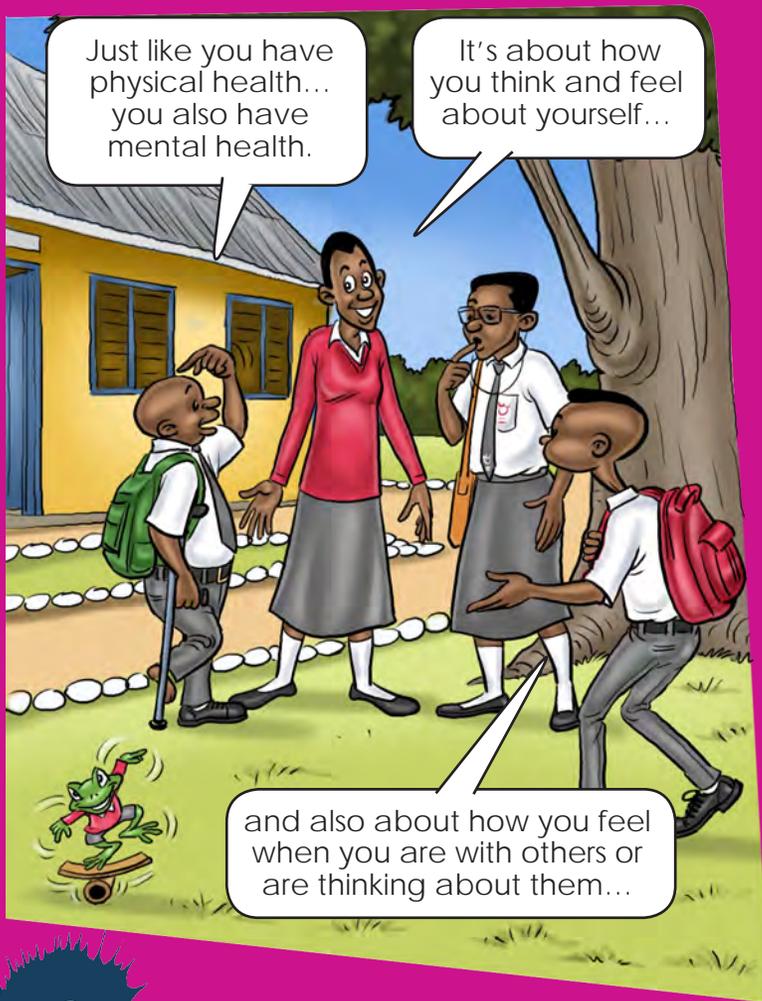
So we had a teacher talking about health today in our class.

Yes, she talked about mental health...

What, like when you go mad?

No, that's what the whole talk was about... mental health is not about going mad...

Then... what is it?



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Some of us are lucky. We may...

be the kind of person who does not worry about problems



feel confident that we can solve problems... or make friends... get respect from others.

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have people we trust who help us when we have a problem



have parents who do not make us afraid ... or ashamed of ourselves.



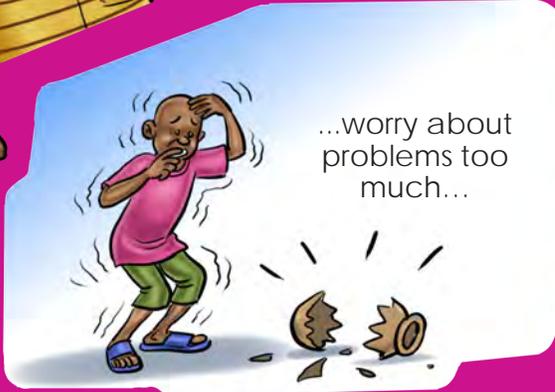
have been taught skills... how to solve problems... what to do when you feel angry...



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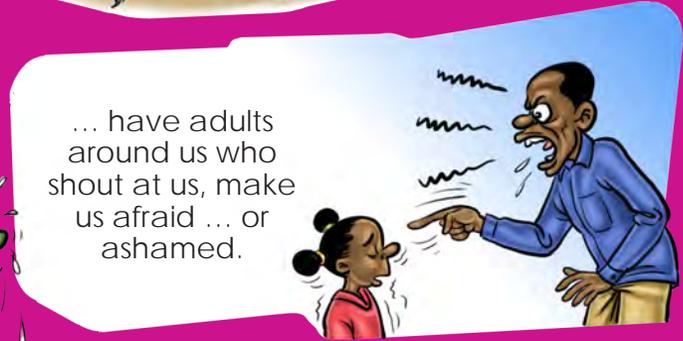
Some of us are not so lucky. We may...



...worry about problems too much...



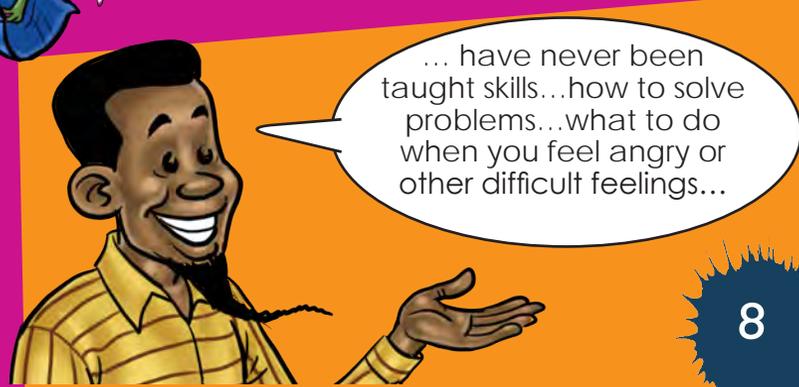
... feel like we may not have anyone to help us when we have a problem.



... have adults around us who shout at us, make us afraid ... or ashamed.



... feel anxious that we don't know how to solve problems... or make friends...or get respect from others.



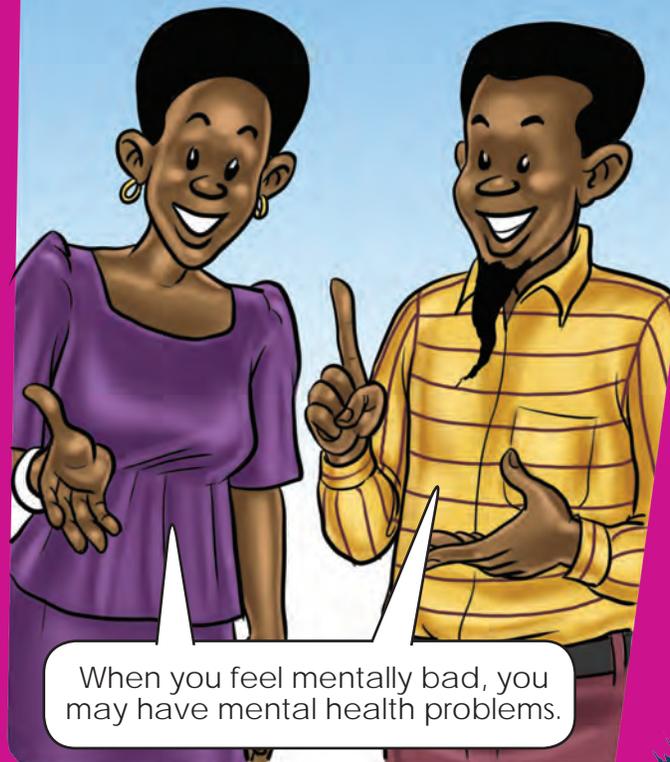
... have never been taught skills...how to solve problems...what to do when you feel angry or other difficult feelings...

As a result of these experiences we may believe that we are not clever or worthy of respect. We may feel hopeless or ashamed of ourselves.

We may think that people will laugh at us if we say anything ... or that no one will ever think we may be worthy of respect.



Just as when you feel physically bad, you may have physical health problems...



When you feel mentally bad, you may have mental health problems.

Sometimes you feel physically healthy... some days you don't.



Somedays we feel somewhat healthy physically...



Sometimes you feel mentally healthy... some days you don't.



Somedays we feel somewhat healthy mentally...

We all have physical health problems.

We all have mental health problems.

It's no one's fault...



That's just how it is. Mental health affects everyone!

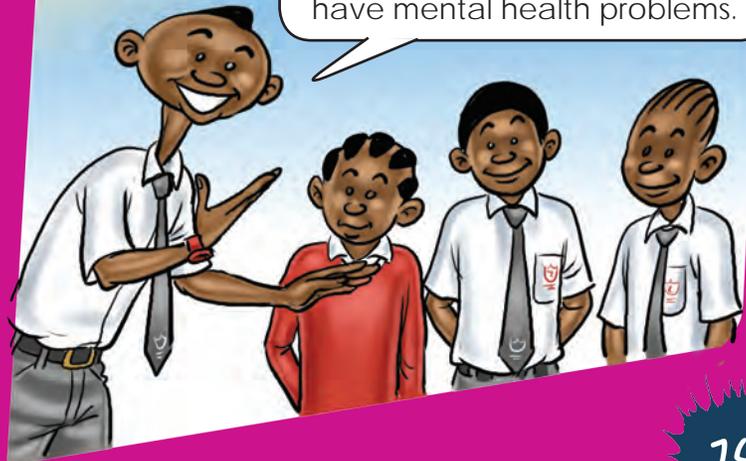
We know what it feels like to have physical health problems... You may feel tired... you may have temperature... you may be in pain...



But what does it feel like to have mental health problems?



Lets meet Aisha, John and Rehema who will help us understand what it feels like to have mental health problems.



Aisha's story...

Sometimes I feel hopeless.



I wake up and do not have energy. I wish I didn't have to go to school. I feel afraid my teachers will be angry with me.

I can't concentrate and feel afraid to speak in class or to anyone. I wish I could go and hide somewhere.



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No one understands how I feel.

You are not alone. Many students feel like this.



Yes, even adults can feel like that. It's just that we don't talk about it.

Yes, sometimes we don't even have words to describe what we are feeling.

Yes, this feeling is more common than we think. When you are feeling like this for more than a few days, it is called **depression**.



Don't lose hope. There is something you can do about it. See later in this book for some ideas.



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John's story...

I feel worried all the time. Even if nothing is wrong, I feel something bad is going to happen...



No one understands how I feel.



You are not alone. Many students can feel like this. It is more common than we think.

Yes, even adults can feel like that. It's just that we have learned ways to hide such feelings.



Yes, sometimes it is good to use words to describe what we are feeling.

I am afraid that the teacher will ask me a question and my brain will shut down...I feel stupid.



My stomach feels like it is turning somersaults. I can't concentrate. I can't even remember what the teachers is asking me.



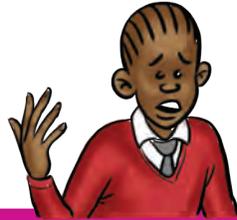
Yes, these feelings are common. It is called **anxiety**. It is nothing to be scared of, it is common and doesn't mean you are stupid or something is wrong with you.



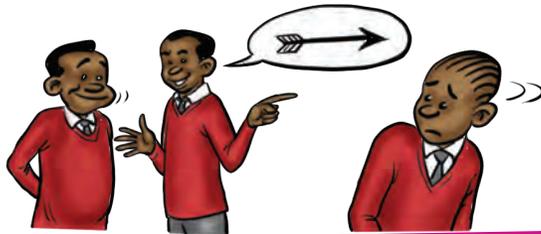
There is something you can do about it. See later in this book for some ideas.

Rehema's story...

I don't feel good about myself. Everyone teases me all the time.



Every time someone looks at me or says something about me, I feel so embarrassed. I feel like hiding or shrinking.



I am scared that if people really get to know me, they will never like me or want to be my friend.

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No one understands how lonely and alone I feel.



You are not alone. Many students can feel like this. It is more common than we think.

Yes, even adults can feel like that. It's just that we express it in other ways such as showing that we are angry or 'tough'.



It is hard to feel so alone all the time

Yes, this feeling is common. It is called **shame**. You don't have to suffer alone.



There is something you can do about it. See later in this book for some ideas.

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Mental health problems can...

make you feel alone and ashamed.



make you feel that something is wrong with you.

make you feel that no one understands what you are feeling.



Make you feel that you are trapped and there is no way out of your situation.



It's OKAY!



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But remember... it doesn't have to be like that. Just like you can improve your physical health by taking care of yourself, you can also do things to take care of your mental health.

Really? We can improve how we feel, think and act?



How?

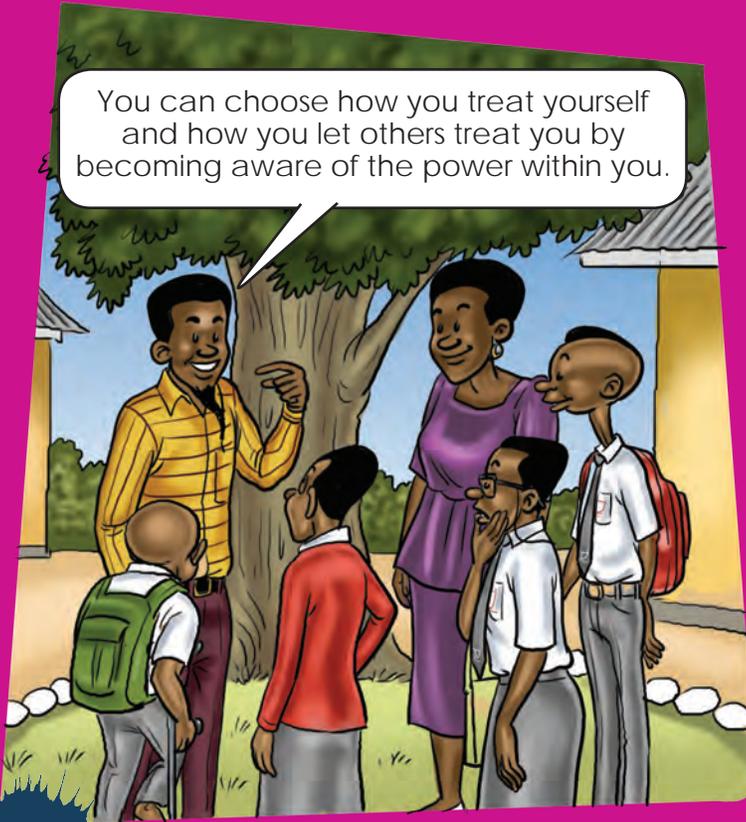
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You need **3** things
to come together to strengthen
Your mental health:



1. Discover the power you have within you

You can choose how you treat yourself and how you let others treat you by becoming aware of the power within you.



The power within you? what do you mean?



power within...



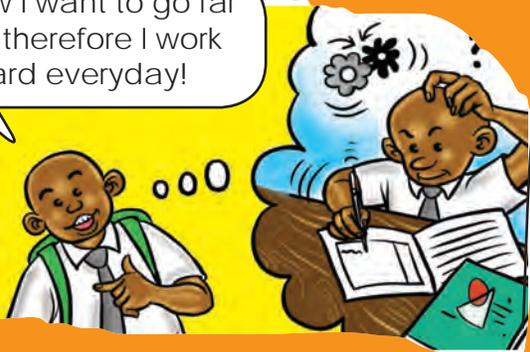
The person who uses the **power within** themselves does four things...



1.

They respect themselves. They take responsibility for their thoughts and actions.

I know I want to go far and therefore I work hard everyday!



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2.

They believe in themselves and think for themselves. They make their own choices instead of letting other people tell them what is good or right.

I decide who I am, not others.



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3.

They respect others. They do not abuse their friends or teachers and do not tolerate others abusing them.

I speak up if someone is not treating me right.



4.

They expect others to respect them.

I always respect someone who respects me!



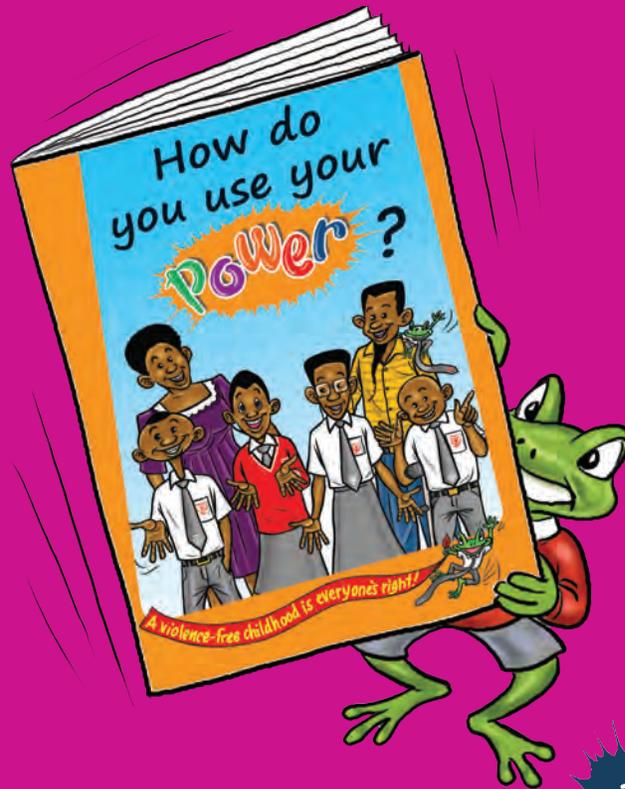
Yes... when you use the *power* you have *within* you well... you feel good about yourself.



How you use your *power* within determines who you are and who you become!



For more on how you can exercise **YOUR** power, see this booklet...



2. Practice new skills, and practice some more!

You can build skills to manage how you are feeling, thinking and acting

Skills are ways of thinking or behaving that allows you to achieve what you want to achieve.



When negative feelings arise, practice thinking positively about yourself; believe that you are good person



That's a mental skill!



Remember that you have a right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of who you are; rich or poor, small or big, boy or girl...



That too is a skill!



When you feel bad, it is okay! Feel the feeling, it will pass...hard feelings don't last forever.

A skill!



If you think positively... positive feelings may follow!



Skills!





These ways of seeing and understanding yourself are skills. You have to practice them and then after a while it will start becoming easier to do it...

Other skills you can practice...

Talk to a trusted friend or an adult. You will be surprised at how sharing a problem, even if there is no solution, can help.



All of them are skills!



Write down your feelings and thoughts. It will help you become clearer about how you feel.



Say positive things to yourself everyday... and soon you will start believing it.

I am a champion!



Become aware of the language that you use to talk about yourself. Use positive language to describe yourself.



Try to find words to describe what you are feeling and share it with others.

Anxious!



Sit quietly for a few minutes and breathe deeply. Instead of avoiding whatever you are feeling, be with it for a few moments. It may pass.



3. Create a supportive environment

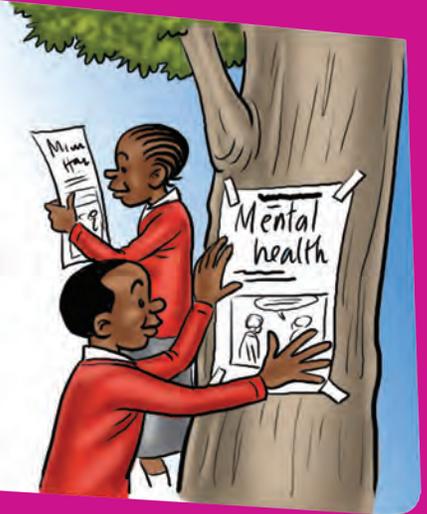
We all need an environment that will help us rather than make our problem worse.

No matter how positive we are, we all need support from people around us. We all need an environment that helps us feel better.

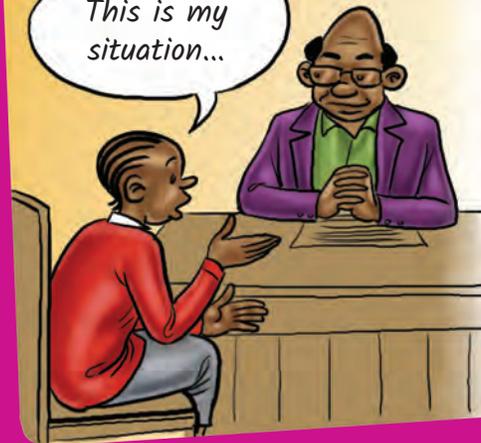


Work with others to create a positive environment at your school.

Join with others at your school to start raising awareness about mental health. Help create an understanding and compassion for people who may be experiencing mental health problems.



This is my situation...

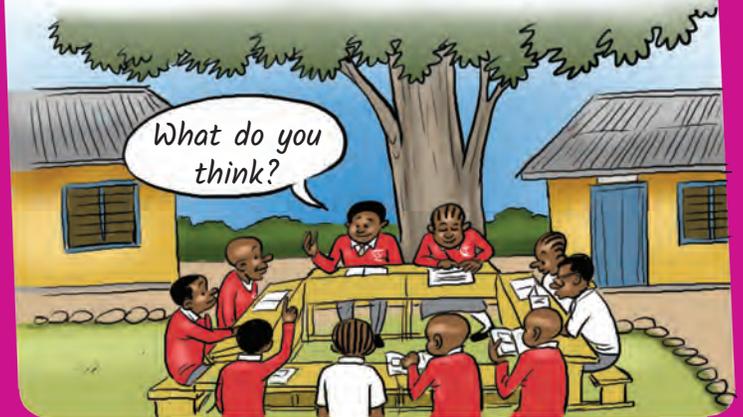


If there is a counselor or a friendly teacher, seek them out and explain your situation to them. Use their help to develop a plan on how you will solve whatever is worrying you.

Find time to make and be with friends. Laughing and playing with friends can really help.



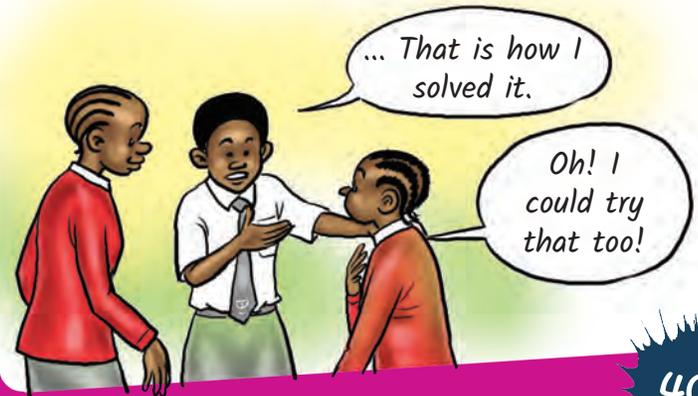
Start a club to discuss ideas in this booklet.



If there are others at your school who may be feeling similar things, start a group and listen to each other with respect about how you are feeling.



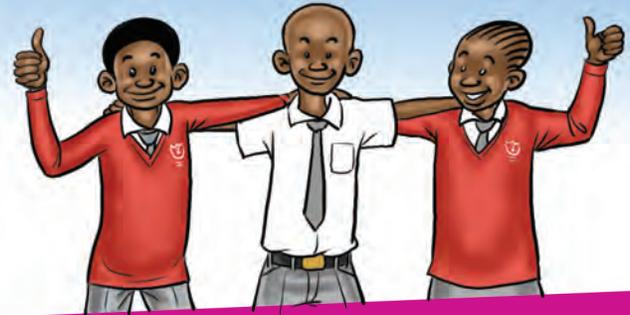
Find a way of learning from each other and be supportive of each other.



Help your friends stand up for themselves if others are bullying them.



Stand up for your friend when they are unable to stand up for themselves.



Support others around you who may be experiencing mental health problems. They may become your friends and be of help to you in the future.



I feel sad all the time.



I am so sorry. I used to feel the same. Do you want to talk about it?

Remember that...

Mental health problems are nothing to be ashamed of. Many people have them at different times in our lives.

Most difficult feelings pass over time. If they persist, do talk to a counselor or a trusted teacher at your school.

While you are feeling these things, be kind to yourself and exercise skills that you may have learned to manage them.

It is important to start a conversation about mental health in your school ... as teachers...as students...as friends... as peers.

we are here to help. Reach out to us!





 *Raising Voices*

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