

# Parenting with Mental Health in Mind

A Parent's Guide for Every Kid



# Welcome

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There is something we know about you—you really love your kid. And since you picked up this course then chances are you want to better understand and help navigate their world of mental health.

Good news, we created this just for you.

Understanding mental health can feel overwhelming, especially if you have a child who is currently struggling with a mental health challenge. But one thing is true (and you will hear us say it often): There is always hope—hope that tomorrow can be different. And with a few more tools in your parenting tool belt, you will play a role in influencing healing when your kid faces mental health challenges.

Together, we will break down practical tools that will help the kids and teens you love battle despair, anxiety, and mental health challenges. Many of the concepts we discuss are based on the latest in brain research, the science of attachment, and trauma-informed care.

One last thing before we jump in—sometimes having the right tools can remind us about the times we’ve blown it. The times we’ve said the wrong thing or done things we regret. But the good news is, there is grace. Grace for me, and grace for you, too. We don’t have to be perfect. There’s no way we can get it right every time.

Please know that no matter how many times you think you’ve messed up, you can still make a difference with the kids in your life. You don’t have to execute these tools perfectly in order for them to work. Each intentional decision you make matters. In fact, researcher John Gottman concluded that if you respond the “right way” two out of every five times, it’s enough to positively influence your child’s emotional state.

You don’t have to be a perfect parent, you just have to be intentional. One step, one conversation, at a time. Thanks for allowing us to be your friends and guides in the world of mental health.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Chinwé Williams and Will Hutcherson**



**Will Hutcherson** is a national speaker, the founder of Curate Hope, and a Next Gen/Youth Pastor of 15 years.

Over the past several years, he has become passionate about finding practical ways to bring hope to kids and teens who are facing increasing amounts of anxiety, depression, and despair. This led him to start Curate Hope, a non-profit that focuses on suicide prevention, mental health awareness, and partnering with educators and parents to help heal despair in teens. Will seeks to build a bridge between the local church and the schools and families who are navigating this mental health crisis.

Every year, he speaks to thousands of teenagers in public schools across the country, offering a message of hope. In his roles on executive teams at multi-site churches, Will has helped train and develop many ministry leaders as well as coach and consult other pastors around the country. He has spoken at events like Orange Conference, Orange Tour, and Florida Business Professionals of America Student Leadership Conference.

He's also been featured on numerous podcasts, including Life.ChurchParents and National Community Church. He lives in the Sunshine State with his wife Arianne and three kids, where you might find him listening to 90s R&B or hunting alligators.



**Dr. Chinwé Williams** is a Board-Certified Counselor (NCC), Certified Professional Counselors Supervisor (CPCS) and a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in the state of Georgia.

Dr. Williams has worked in the area of counseling for over fifteen years and counselor education and training for ten years. She has served as a college and high school counselor, group facilitator, executive coach, and currently works as a therapist and consultant in schools, non-profit, faith-based, and corporate work settings. Her expertise lies in areas of stress/anxiety management, trauma recovery, the intersection of faith and mental health, diversity and inclusion, and youth and adult wellness.

Dr. Williams has previously taught at Georgia State University, Argosy University, University of Central Florida, and Rollins College and is a member of Licensed Professional Counselors Association (LPCA) and an active member of the American Counseling Association (ACA).

Dr. Williams is also a published journal author and a frequently featured expert blog and podcast contributor on topics related to child, adolescent, and adult mental health and wellness. She is also a speaker at local, national, and international conferences and the owner and principal therapist at Meaningful Solutions Counseling & Consulting, where she maintains a growing private practice in Roswell, Georgia, serving adolescents, young adults, individuals, and families.

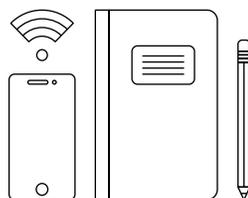
**Parent Cue** is a team of family experts and everyday parents working together to support parents in raising their kids in faith and character.

Parent Cue creates content and community that inspires, encourages, and equips parents and guardians with resources to be the parent they want to be. For parents and guardians who are interested in Christian discipleship resources, Parent Cue offers a free app that delivers weekly Bible story videos they can watch with their kids along with cues to have meaningful faith conversations during routine times at home together.

Visit [theparentcue.org](http://theparentcue.org) to find out more about Parent Cue.

**What You'll Need**

- Computer, tablet, or smartphone
- Wifi
- Notebook
- Writing utensil



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## Section One

# Introduction



The statistics are staggering: *One in five kids suffers from an anxiety disorder.* Anxiety is on the rise among our kids, and so is depression, self-harm, and so many other mental and emotional health challenges.

## 01

Introduction

A kid's inner world has the power to shape everything—their social lives, academics, and their overall mental state. But parents also have power: Parents can make a big difference in a kid or teenager's life who is hurting on an emotional and mental level.

Research shows one of the best predictors of a kid's success in life is having at least one consistent, supportive, and caring adult in their lives—and that's you. After taking this course, you'll feel more confident and equipped to help your kid or teen navigate any current or future mental health challenges.

**More specifically, in this course:**

- #1 We'll help you understand the psychology of what's going on in your kid's brain—especially if they're experiencing a mental health challenge like anxiety, despair, or depression.
- #2 You'll learn why some of the things we say and do to help—even with the very best intentions—don't always work and can sometimes make things worse.
- #3 You'll learn five science-backed, practical tools to connect and support a kid who is struggling with mental health issues.
- #4 We'll teach you how to recognize when your kid may be in need of support and where to find that support.
- #5 You'll find comfort in knowing there is always hope.

**Mental health discussions often have stigmas attached to them. So, remember:**

- God made our brains.
- Mental health is no different from other forms of physical health, like eye health, heart health, or dental health. The brain is an organ of our bodies just as much as our hearts, our eyes, or our teeth.

- Having mental health challenges doesn't indicate a lack of faith. Neither are the practical steps we take toward improving our mental health, like therapy, medication, or self-care.
- Lean in early if your kids are showing signs of anxiety or depression. If left unchecked, they can spiral and become debilitating, leading to an even deeper sense of desperation and hopelessness.

**If you're afraid your kid may want to hurt themselves:**

Ask them directly about it. You won't be planting an idea in their head that's not already there.

**If your kid has already self-harmed or has expressed thoughts of suicide:**

Stay calm, but act fast. Get professional help.

- Call your kid's pediatrician or your primary care physician to walk you through next steps.
- If you're in the United States, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or text the Crisis Text Line by texting "TALK" to 741741 to speak to or text with a trained counselor.
- If you're afraid your kid is in imminent danger to themselves or others, call 911.



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