

# NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE

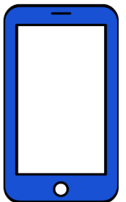
## *Let's Talk: Youth Mental Health*

**Wednesday, June 26, 2024 – 9:45 AM-11:00 AM PT**  
**Sam Gillis, Chief Program Officer**



# Introductory Discussion

1. Has anyone heard of **NRS** before or used NRS services?
2. Have you **heard** of the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*?
3. Do you currently **use** the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* in your program?



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## National Runaway Safeline

- NRS works to ensure that youth who have run away, are experiencing homelessness or facing crisis are safe and off the streets.
- Provides resources, educational tools and training opportunities focused on prevention and early intervention for young people 10-24, their families and supportive adults, including leading National Runaway Prevention Month each November.
- Operates the federally designated national communication system for young people 12-21 who are experiencing crisis, have run away or are considering leaving home, and are experiencing homelessness.
- National Youth Advisory Board of young people with lived expertise to guide programs, services and communications strategies.
- Each year, NRS makes over 125,000 connections to offer help through hotline, online and offline resources.



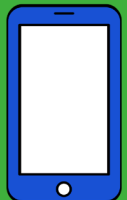
# Free & Confidential 24/7 Services

## 1-800-RUNAWAY:

- **Hotline calls**
  - Translation services available in over 200 languages
  - Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) for deaf or hearing-impaired contacts
- **Live texting**
- Trauma-informed, solution-focused crisis intervention
- Information and referrals
- Message Service
- Conference calls
- Home Free family reunification and transportation program

## 1800RUNAWAY.ORG:

- **Live chat, email, and online forum**
- Trauma-informed, solution-focused crisis intervention
- Information and referrals



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# NRS Resources & Referrals

NRS maintains a national database of approximately 6,500 agencies and services, including:

- Basic Centers/Shelters
- Transitional Living Programs
- Maternity Group Homes
- Street Outreach Programs
- Food Pantries
- McKinney-Vento Liaisons
- Legal Resources
- Mental Health Resources
- Medical Assistance
- Residential Treatment
- Substance Use Treatment
- Child Protective Services
- Law Enforcement
- Other Crisis Hotlines



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# Free Prevention & Educational Resources

## Available at [1800RUNAWAY.ORG](https://1800RUNAWAY.ORG):

- National, State & Community level data & reports
- Free Educational & outreach materials
- *Let's Talk*: Runaway Prevention Curriculum
- *Let's Talk* Podcast
- NRS blog
- National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM) resources (soon to be renamed)



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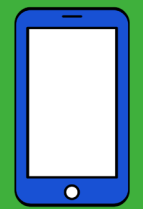
[1800RUNAWAY.ORG](https://1800RUNAWAY.ORG)



# The Importance of Prevention

- Nearly 4.2 million young people, ages 13 to 25, will experience homelessness in the U.S. each year
- Youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability may experience:
  - challenges finding consistent and healthy meals
  - struggle with their physical and mental health
  - face violent situations
  - be unable to attend or graduate from school
- Negative outcomes associated with homelessness include: abuse, mental health challenges, drug and alcohol abuse, and premature death

*Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America (2017)*

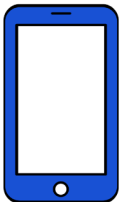
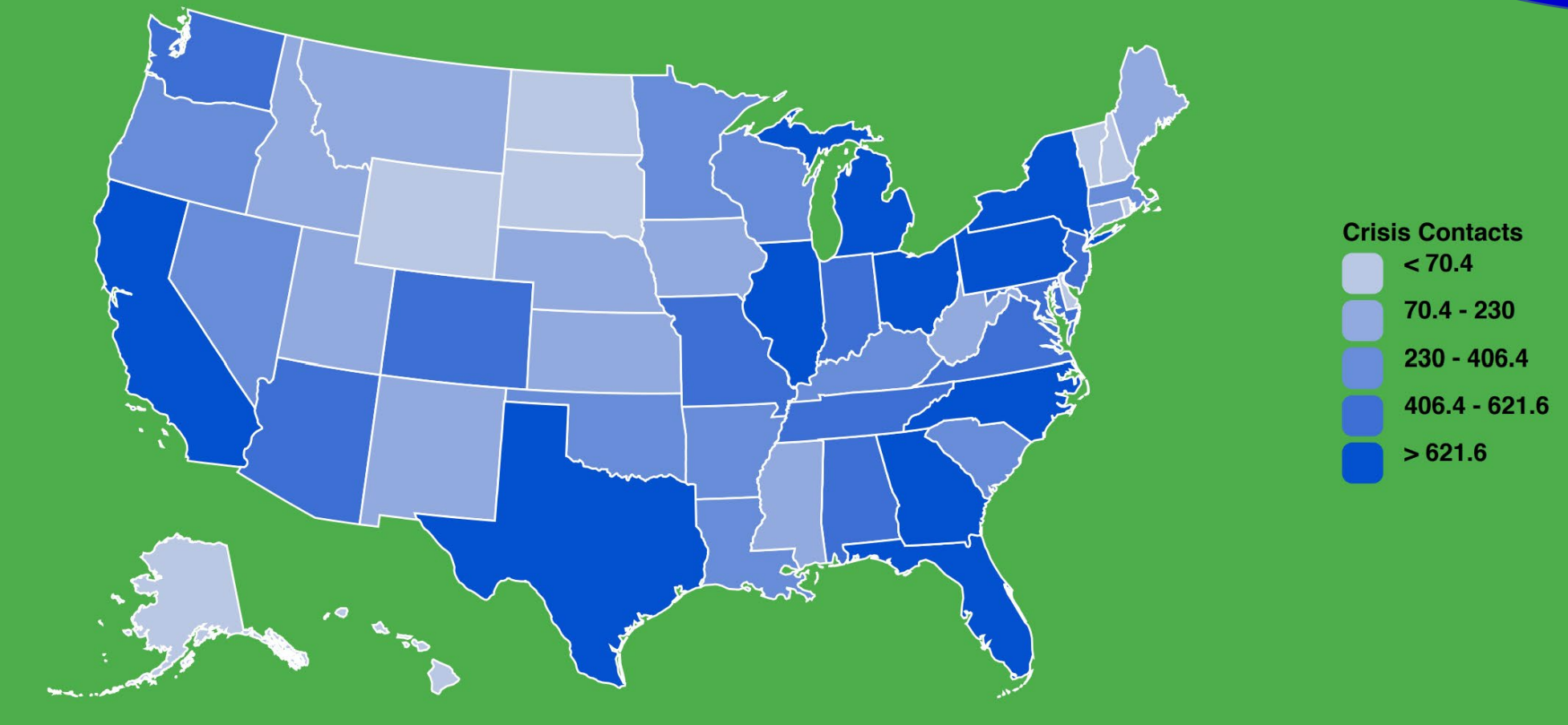


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# 2023 Crisis Contact Map

2023



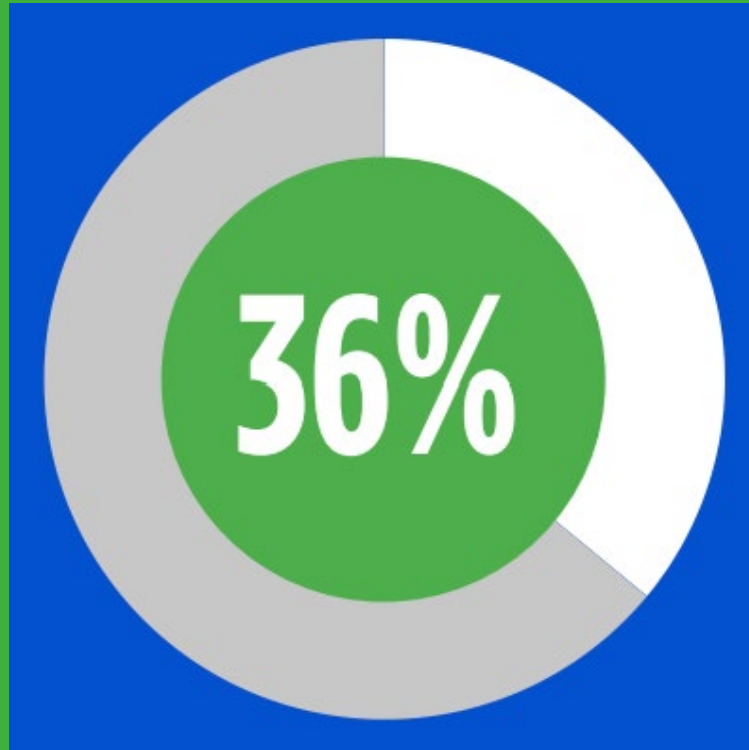
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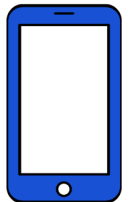


# Location of Crisis Contact

2023



of young people were still at home at the time of crisis contact



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# Status of Crisis Contact

2023

42% Youth In Crisis

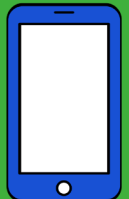
13% Homeless

26% Contemplating Running

3% Asked to Leave

16% Runaway

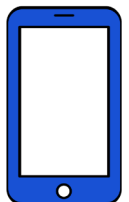
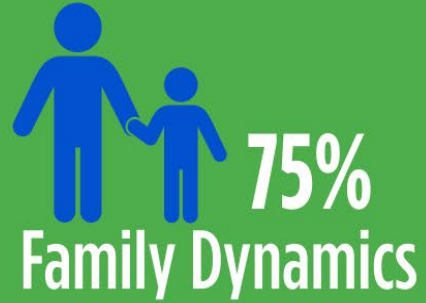
<1% Suspected Missing



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# Top Issued Identified

2023



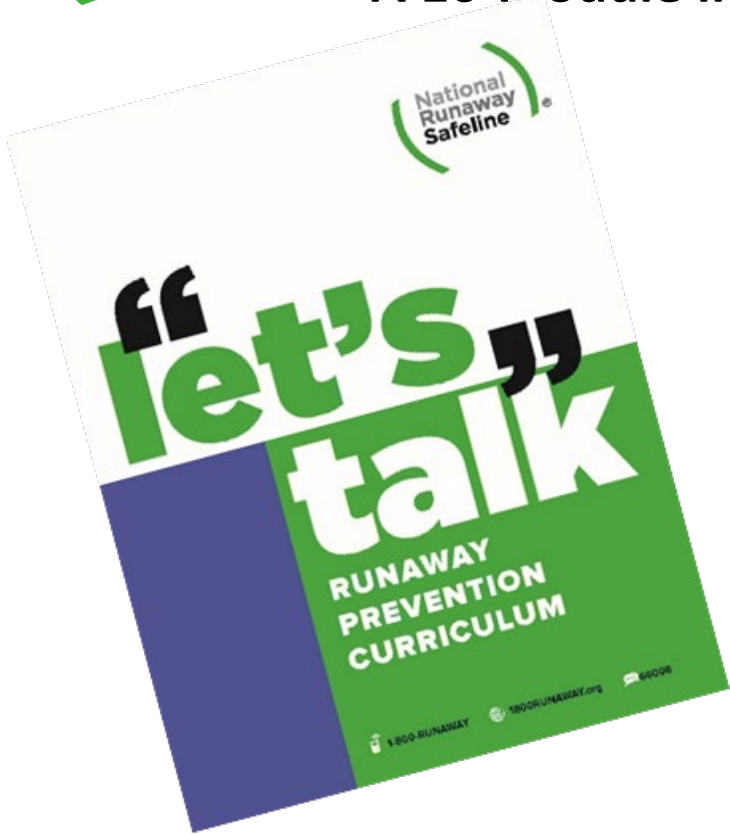
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# About the Curriculum

A 16-module life skills curriculum, available for download at [1800RUNAWAY.ORG](https://1800RUNAWAY.ORG).

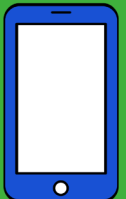


## Goals:

- Build life skills
- Educate young people about alternatives to running away
- Encourage young people to seek help from trusted adults
- Increase knowledge about prevention and resources

## Audience:

- Youth ages 12-20
- Available in English and Spanish
- For use in schools, after school programs, RHY programs, youth groups, etc.



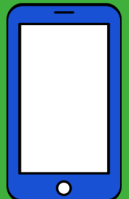
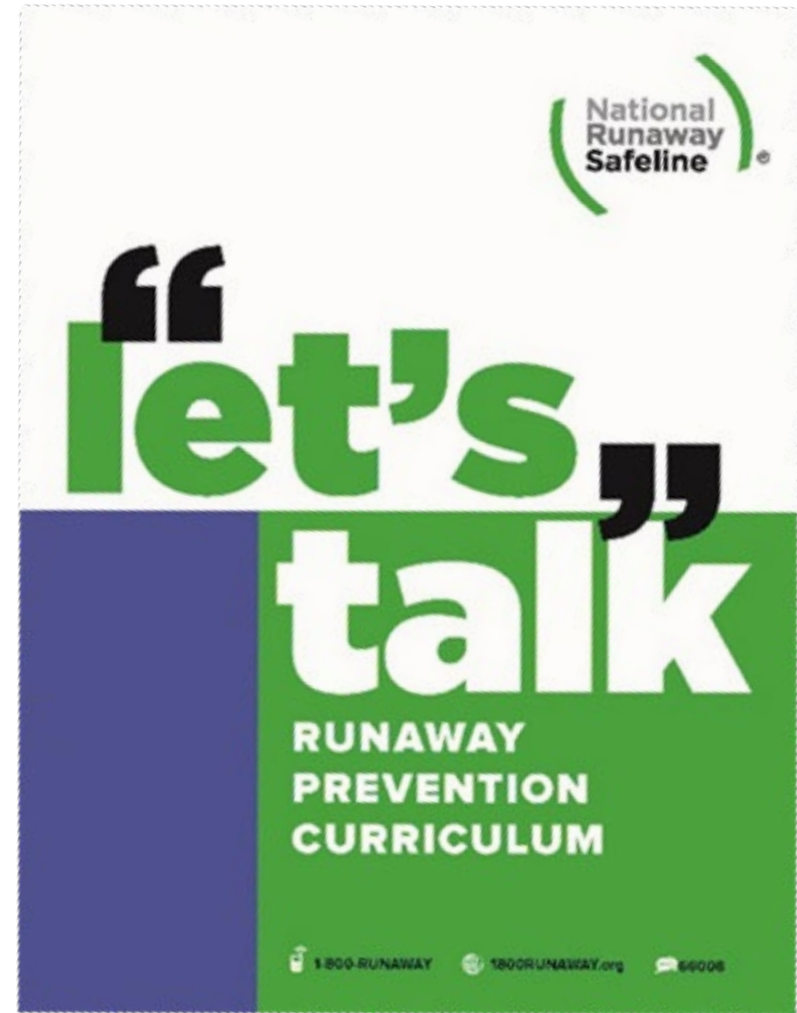
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# Benefits & Accessibility

- Free
- Evidenced-Based
- Download & Go
- Can be used by activity, module, or in its entirety
- User-friendly and adaptable
- Includes a Facilitator Guide
- Built-in Worksheets
- Pre- & Post-Tests



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# Original Module Topics

Introduction  
Module +  
14 Modules



Communication and Listening



Adolescent Development



Personal Influences



Peers and Healthy Relationships



Families: Roles and Responsibilities



Runaway Reality



National Safe Connections



Community Response and Responsibility



Anger Management



Stress Reduction



Drugs and Alcohol



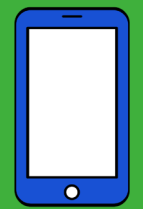
Sexuality and Sexual Orientation



Internet Safety and Fun



Future Life Planning



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# New Module Topics



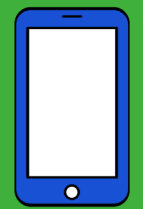
Internet Safety and Fun → Social Media and Internet Safety



Mental Health



Human Trafficking and Exploitation

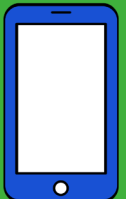


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# Consistent Module Layout

- Learning Goals
- Define the Issue
- Icons
- Module Activities
- Time Requirements
- Materials
- Module Activity Content
- Handouts and Worksheets
- References and Resources
- Pre- and Post-Tests



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MODULE **1**

# “let’s talk”


**COMMUNICATION & LISTENING**

**LEARNING GOALS**

During the introductory session, participants will be invited to:

- Learn one of the most important communication skills—active listening.
- Understand active listening and gain skills to use in conversation.
- Use real-life situations to examine runaway prevention from all aspects.
- Learn a variation of the NRS crisis intervention model that can be used in everyday situations.

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66008



MODULE 1 COMMUNICATION & LISTENING 2


**DEFINE THE ISSUE**

It can never be overstated how complicated and confusing it is to be a young adult. Navigating and managing decision-making, relationships, finances, new responsibilities, personal wellness, and educational attainment are a lot for anyone to handle, let alone young people who are still growing and maturing. It can be hard to communicate complex thoughts and emotions when experiencing these changes.

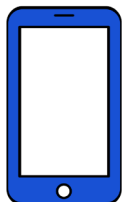
Those who reach out to the National Runaway Safeline (NRS) often cite communication, or a lack thereof, as an issue in their families. Learning to communicate more effectively will help all of us in our daily lives, whether at home, school, work or in relationships.

NRS’s frontline team members, including crisis services center staff and volunteers, learn a five-step, trauma-informed, solution-focused crisis intervention model to use with every person who calls the 24/7 hotline or uses our online services. NRS focuses on nonjudgmental and nondirective communication. Module 1 shares with participants the NRS model and active listening skills.

**ICONS**

For further details, see the Introduction Module. 

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**MODULE ACTIVITIES**

ACTIVITY	TIME	METHODOLOGY
 A. Listening to Communicate and Barriers to Communication	15 minutes	Discussion/Activity
 B. Active Listening	8-10 minutes	Discussion/Exercise
 C. Communicating During a Crisis	5-7 minutes	Discussion
D. Problem-Solving Scenarios	15 minutes	Discussion/Exercise

 Total time required: **45 minutes**

**MATERIALS**

- Poster paper or chalk/dry-erase board
- Markers or chalk
- “Good Listener/Bad Listener” worksheet
- “Active Listening” handout
- “Listening Journal” worksheet
- “Communicating During a Crisis” handout
- “Problem-Solving Scenarios” handout (copy and cut before distributing)
- “Problem-Solving Scenario Think Sheet” worksheet

 Contact the NRS Prevention & Youth Engagement Specialist at **773-289-1723** or [prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org) for support and technical assistance.

**ACTIVITY 1A**

**LISTENING TO COMMUNICATE AND BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION**

 **15 minutes**

**STATE** For the next few minutes we’re going to practice communicating with a partner. Each partner in a group of two will receive a different set of directions, and they must not tell their partner what their directions are for this activity to work.

**DIVIDE** Your participants into two equal groups.

**STATE** Group A, when you meet with your partner, I would like you to talk about something you are passionate about. Include as many details as possible, talk as much as you can about the subject, and of course have fun!

**STATE** Group B, when you meet with your partner, I would like you to use your absolute worst listening skills. Show your partner that you are not listening to what they are saying from only your actions, and of course have fun!

**HAVE** each participant PICK A PARTNER from the opposite group.

**ALLOW** 1 minute to complete the activity.

**STATE** Okay, great! Now, we’re going to switch things around. The person who talked last time will now be the listener. The other partner who was the listener previously will talk about something they are passionate about with as much detail as possible. Listening partners, your job will be to display your best active listening skills!

Speakers, pay close attention to your partner’s actions, because a person’s posture, gestures, and facial expressions can let you know if that person is really listening to you.

**ALLOW** 1 minute to complete the activity.

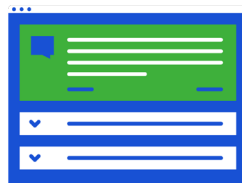
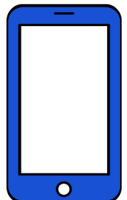
**HAND OUT** “Good Listener/Bad Listener” worksheet to each participant.

**STATE** On the worksheet I just handed you, please take 1 minute to write down or draw specific examples of how your partner displayed signs of listening or not listening. For example, “My partner wasn’t looking at me when I was talking,” or “My partner was nodding their head while I was talking.”

Also include how you felt when you were talking and you knew your partner was or was not listening.

**ALLOW** 1 minute to complete the worksheet.

ACTIVITY 1A →



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## HANDOUTS AND WORKSHEETS

- A. Good Listener/Bad Listener
- B. Active Listening
- C. Listening Journal
- D. Communicating During a Crisis
- E. Problem-Solving Scenarios
- F. Problem-Solving Scenario Think Sheet

## REFERENCES

National Runaway Switchboard. (2001). *Runaway prevention curriculum for classroom and community educators*. Chicago, IL: NRS.

## RESOURCES

Beyond Intractability, a website run by the Conflict Information Consortium, provides research and teaching about conflict and its resolution (<https://www.beyondintractability.org>).

Kids Helpline offers information and resources about family relationships ([www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)).

National Runaway Safeline (NRS), the federally designated national communication system for runaway and homeless youth, provides crisis intervention through its 1-800-RUNAWAY hotline and 1800RUNAWAY.org online services. NRS provides youth and families in crisis with support and access to resources 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (<http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org>).

Talking With Kids is a national initiative by Children Now that encourages parents to talk with their children earlier and more often about tough issues (<https://www.childrennow.org/talkingwithkids/>).

## Icons

- Notate helpful facilitation tips and recommended supplemental materials pertaining to certain modules/activities.



Contains discussions of a sensitive nature.



Activity may require more open space.



Helpful hint, facilitation suggestion, or supplement(s) to consider with the activity/module.



May need more time for this activity.



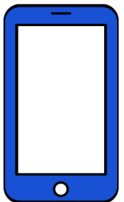
We encourage you to do this module with family members or guardians.



For a complimentary activity or module, please see . . .



A must-do if you are short on time!



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# Trauma-Informed Approach

- Content written to avoid re-traumatization
- Provides facilitators with caution icons to alert them to sensitive content
- Provides facilitators with resources and information for additional support



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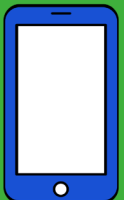


# Trauma-Informed Approach

## Example Content Caution:

Please note that the topics covered in this module have the potential to re-traumatize individuals that have experienced similar trauma. To address these sensitive issues, it is important to use a trauma-informed approach, which can include:

- Providing a listening ear free of judgment;
- Sharing content cautions throughout the module to flag specific content;
- Informing participants, they can excuse themselves if they need to, and providing support as needed;
- Monitoring participants for signs of reaction; and
- Creating a safe and supportive environment where participants feel comfortable opening up, should they choose to do so.



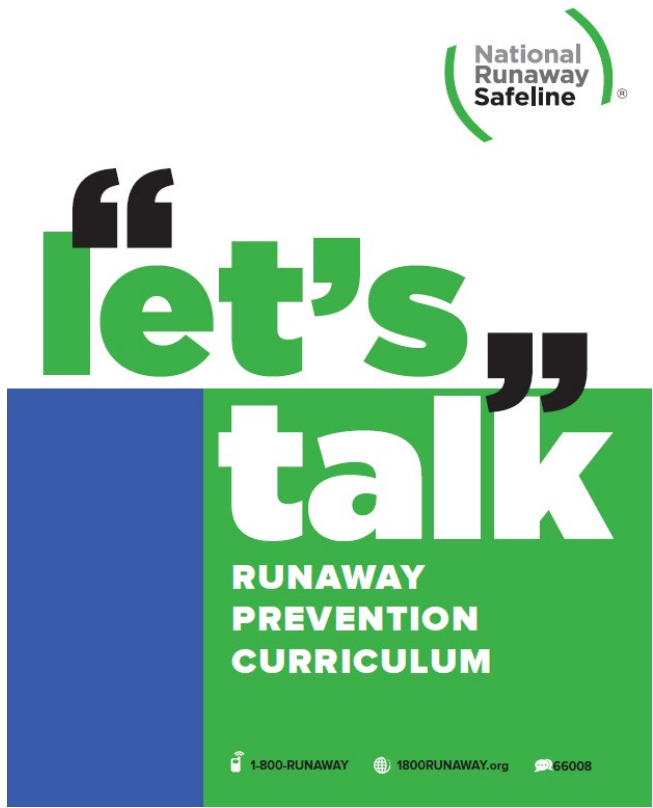
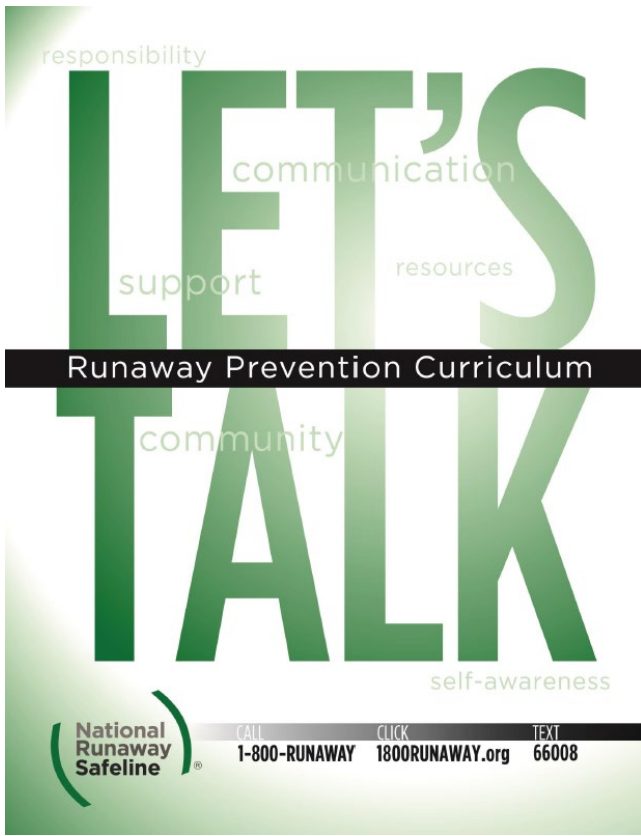
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# Let's Talk 1.5 Updates

2021-2022



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# Let's Talk 1.5 Updates

2021-2022

- Modernized look and feel throughout
- Consistent organization/layout across modules
- Updated language and terminology:
  - LGBTQIA2S+
  - Internet terms and sources
- Clearer icons, easier-to-read fonts and colors
- Updated worksheets with new, more user-friendly graphics



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# Let's Talk 2.0 Updates

2023

- Three new modules – will also be available in Spanish
  - New module development included youth and community engagement:
    - Three focus groups with 17 youth overall
    - Pilot testing with four youth-serving organizations, 20-35 youth per module
    - Evaluation
    - Implementation of feedback
- Updated to reflect inclusive, trauma-informed, strengths-based language
- Revised activities, worksheets and handouts
- Reordered modules for a more natural curriculum progression
- Updated Introduction
- Creation of a companion youth workbook



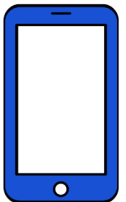
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# Discussion

Is **mental health** a common issue for young people who access your services to ask for support with?



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# Module 7: Mental Health



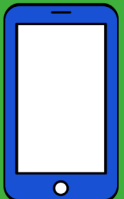
Total time required: **60 minutes**

## Learning Goals

- Describe key terms used to discuss mental health and mental illness.
- Recognize the stigma surrounding mental illness and the effects of stigma.
- Understand ways that mental health and mental illness can impact a person's life.
- Describe support and treatment a person may receive to promote positive mental health and well-being, and to recover from mental illness.

## Activities

- **The Importance of Optimal Mental Health (15 minutes)**
- **How to Start the Conversation about Mental Health (15 minutes)**
- Starting the Conversation (20 minutes)
- When Do I Involve an Adult or Professional? (10 minutes)



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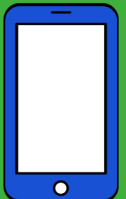


# Mental Health

## Define the Issue

Mental health and mental illness are two terms that are often used interchangeably. By definition, health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being and not the absence of disease. Mental health is not the same as mental illness. It is determined by a variety of factors including our genetics and the environment. It also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

Mental illness, on the other hand, is a health condition(s) that involves changes in emotion, thinking, or behavior (or a combination of the three). Mental illnesses can be linked to distress and/or problems functioning in society. A wide variety of mental illness diagnoses are common among young people including anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and depression or other mood disorders. Signs of mental illness in youth can be both physical and mental such as difficulty sleeping, changes in eating habits, withdrawing from social interactions, persistent sadness, and drastic changes in mood, behavior, or personality.



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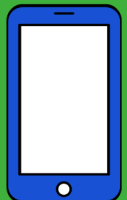
# Mental Health

## Define the Issue (continued)

Youth experiencing or at risk for homelessness have higher rates of mental health issues, with a lack of access to adequate mental healthcare. In addition to the day-to-day struggles of not having a place to lay their heads at night, youth experiencing homelessness face many challenges in their day to day lives, including high rates of trauma, abuse, victimization, marginalization, and oppression. Thus, it is not surprising that many youth experiencing homelessness struggle with poor mental health and higher rates of mental illness than the general population. They also face limited access to mental health care.

In addition, mental health is one of the most common reasons young people reach out to NRS for support, many while they are still at home. This underscores the need for mental health education and support services as critical tools that can prevent runaway episodes and homelessness.

In this module, participants will learn about mental health, self-care strategies to help manage their mental health, how to have conversations with their peers about mental health, and when to involve a trusted adult or professional in a mental health crisis.



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# Activity: The Importance of Optimal Mental Health



15 minutes

## Group Discussion

1. What do you think defines a mentally healthy person?



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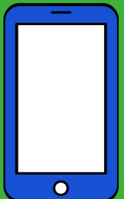
# Activity: The Importance of Optimal Mental Health



15 minutes

## Sample Responses May Include:

- Ability to handle stress and challenges
- Positive coping skills
- Supportive and healthy relationships
- Ability to function in daily life and handle associated activities (school, work, family responsibilities, etc.)



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# Activity: The Importance of Optimal Mental Health

## Self-Care Strategies Worksheet

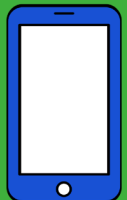
It is important to incorporate activities into our lives that make us feel centered and help us manage stress to maintain optimal mental health.

Strategies for managing our mental health and practicing self-care could include:

- Meditation or mindfulness
- Exercise
- Deep Breathing
- Engaging in activities you enjoy such as reading, writing, drawing, etc.
- Talking with someone you trust
- Connecting with community: reach out to friends, family, teammates, teachers, religious communities, etc.
- Taking information breaks: from social media, the Internet, news, etc.

**What strategies do you use to help manage your stress and/or practice self-care? List them below:**

- 
- 
- 



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# Activity: How to Start the Conversation about Mental Health



15 minutes

## Group Discussion

1. What things could potentially motivate someone to seek help, or tell someone about a stressful or difficult situation?
2. Why is the language we use when talking about mental health important?
3. What responses to someone telling you about a stressful or difficult situation could be potentially harmful?



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# Activity: How to Start the Conversation about Mental Health

## Sample Responses May Include:

1. What things could potentially motivate someone to seek help, or tell someone about a stressful or difficult situation?
  - They are overwhelmed
  - They want to change what they are experiencing
  - They are afraid for or concerned about someone else
2. Why is the language we use when talking about mental health important?
  - To reduce stigma
  - To make people feel heard
  - To make people feel safe and supported
  - To let people know they can talk to you again if they need to
3. What responses to someone telling you about a stressful or difficult situation could be potentially harmful?
  - That doesn't sound too bad compared to [some other situation].
  - Don't be so dramatic.
  - That can't be true.



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# Activity: How to Start the Conversation about Mental Health

## How to Start the Conversation Handout

It is important to let people know that you are willing to talk about mental health. Talking about it directly is a first step in discussing mental health concerns. **To start the conversation, share an expression of care followed by an observation.**

**DO...**

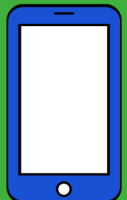
**Check in with yourself first.** It can be as simple as asking yourself “how am I doing?” (Yeager, 2022). Make sure you are in a mental place where you are able to provide support and put other things aside in order to pay attention. While it is important to be there for others, it is important to first be there for yourself. If you're not attending to yourself, it may be difficult to provide the support someone needs. When you are ready to be there for someone, here are important steps to take:

**Listen:** Listening is an important skill in all areas of life. Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal cues they may be reflecting. Listen without judging or jumping to conclusions.

**Be an advocate:** Let them know that you understand and that they are not alone.

**Keep things confidential:** Unless they are life threatening to themselves or others.

**Pay attention:** Putting everything aside to give complete attention to the person that is talking is a great way to practice active listening. Paying attention may take form in different ways; it may include eye contact, directing your attention to only the person talking, and waiting for your turn to speak.



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# Activity: How to Start the Conversation about Mental Health

## How to Start the Conversation Handout (continued)

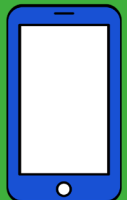
### DON'T...

**Minimize:** Be mindful of what others are experiencing. Confiding in someone is not always easy and saying that it could be worse is unhelpful and hurtful.

**Argue:** Listen to understand instead of arguing back or trying to convince or change someone's beliefs. They may not realize that they are experiencing symptoms of a mental health concern.

**Use stigmatizing language:** When talking about mental health concerns, using person-first language prevents the use of stigmatizing language that labels people and affirms that a person's identity is more than the circumstance or situation they are currently experiencing. For example, rather than saying, "She's depressed", you should say, "She is dealing with depression".

**Force someone to talk to you:** While it is important to make it known that you are there to support someone going through a struggle, it can take time for someone to feel comfortable discussing their experiences.



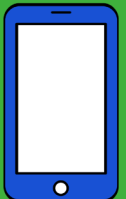
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# Facilitation Tips

- Allow youth to participate as they feel comfortable by offering different options for involvement.
- Allow enough time for discussion.
- Be prepared to give definitions or explain concepts.
- Be prepared with examples to help generate discussion.
- Be a good listener – ask follow-up questions and provide supportive statements.



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## Facilitation Tips

- Consider room layout, especially for activities that require movement.
- Establish classroom guidelines for behavior in order to create a safe space for participation and sharing.
- Give students time to process and respond – silence is okay.
- Group size and energy may determine format of activity.
- Some activities ask students to read aloud – be aware of individual skill level.



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## Facilitation Tips

- Some conversations may bring up trauma or intense emotions for some young people. Be prepared to have a follow-up plan in place.
- Take note of the facilitator tip icons for each module.
- Know when and how much personal information to share – young people may like to hear life experiences, so know what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Don't be afraid to modify to meet your specific group's needs.



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# Sample Facilitation Questions

- What do you think?
- Who else had the same reaction? Who had a different one?
- What does that suggest to you?
- What can we conclude from \_\_\_\_\_?
- Does this remind you of anything?
- Do you see a pattern, common ground, or connections? What about any differences?



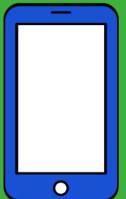
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# Sample Facilitation Questions

- How can you use that information?
- What are the consequences of doing or not doing \_\_\_\_\_?
- What do you think that means?
- What was significant about what you did/heard/saw?
- Why is that important?
- Why do you think that is?



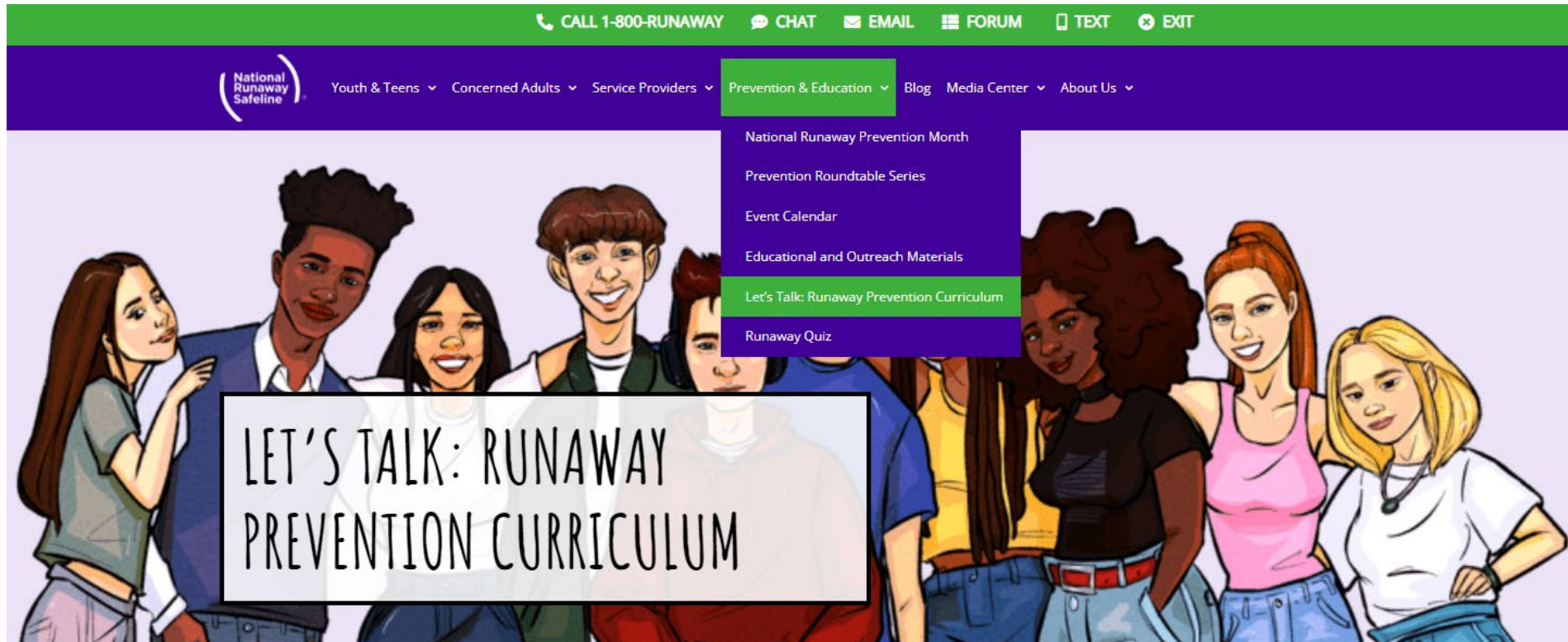
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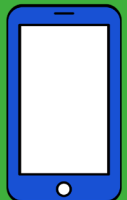




# Accessing *Let's Talk*



<https://www.1800runaway.org/prevention-education/lets-talk-runaway-prevention-curriculum>



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# Online Access & Downloads

National Runaway Safeline Educational Materials & Online Learning

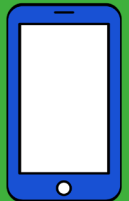
DOWNLOAD OUR FREE CURRICULUM



Current Status	Price	Get Started
NOT ENROLLED	Free	Login to Enroll

### Course Content

- Complete Runaway Prevention Curriculum
- Let's Talk Introduction
- MODULE 1: Communicating & Listening
- MODULE 2: Adolescent Development
- MODULE 3: Personal Influences




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# Facilitator Tips Also Available to Download

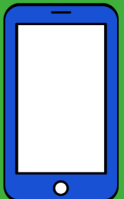
Our facilitator tips sheets include suggestions and discussion questions to help maximize your use of *Let's Talk*. You can download them below:

 GENERAL TIP SHEET

General tips and facilitation questions

 VIRTUAL TIP SHEET

Ideas for modifying *Let's Talk* for an online audience



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# Education & Outreach Materials

Download our free materials or complete the order form and we will mail you the requested items in 4 to 5 weeks:

[1800RUNAWAY.org/outreach](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/outreach)



## MATERIALS ORDER FORM

**NAME** •

FIRST  LAST

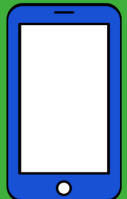
**EMAIL** •

ENTER EMAIL  CONFIRM EMAIL

**ORGANIZATION NAME**

**ORGANIZATION LOCATION**

CITY  STATE



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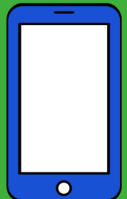
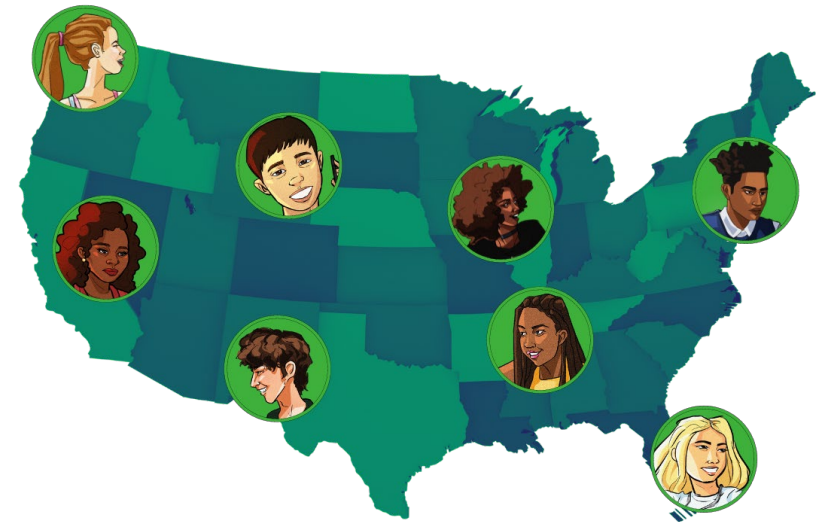


# Service Providers: Join the NRS Resource Database!

Submit a request to be listed as a trusted resource in our national database of youth-supporting organizations or update information about your program at:

[1800RUNAWAY.org/database](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/database)

- Drop-in Centers
- Street Outreach Programs
- Basic Centers/Shelters
- Transitional Living Programs
- Maternity Group Homes
- Afterschool Programs
- School Support Services
- Mental Health Services
- Support Groups
- Substance Use Services
- Legal Resources
- Child Welfare
- Law Enforcement
- Other Crisis Hotlines



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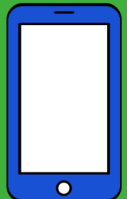
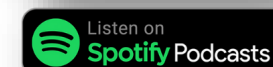
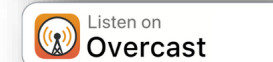
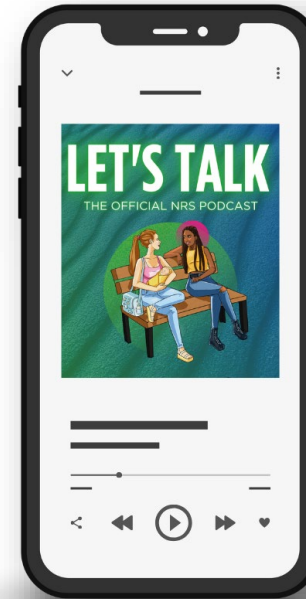




# Stay Updated: Let's Talk Podcast!

Hear real stories from young people with lived expertise and learn about different programs across the RHY community!

[1800RUNAWAY.org/podcast](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/podcast)



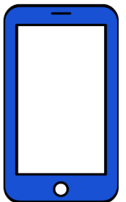
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# Thank you for listening.

For additional questions, please email:

Sam Gillis  
Chief Program Officer  
[sgillis@1800runaway.org](mailto:sgillis@1800runaway.org)



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# Session Evaluation

Please complete a brief evaluation form for all workshop, forum and networking sessions by scanning the following QR code or visiting the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2024Evaluations>



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