

Cultural Daily

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The Fight Against Anxiety and Depression

Angela Cohan · Sunday, November 27th, 2022

The state of our mental health is on everyone's minds these days. A *Los Angeles Times* article by education reporter Paloma Esquivel ([September 30, 2022](#)) highlights a survey by the California Endowment — a statewide health foundation — young adults in California have experienced mental health challenges in the past year. The survey polled 800 young Californians between the ages of 18 to 24. Thirty one percent reported having suicidal thoughts and 16% reported having thoughts of self-harm. Experts say this trend of worsening mental health among young people was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is extremely important for us to overcome the stigma of mental health problems as a taboo subject and to normalize it. Parents can help their children seek help when faced with challenges.

Some ways to deal with anxiety and depression are exercise, limiting social media use, meditating (or using a mantra such as "All is Well"), practicing gratitude, practicing good sleep hygiene and talking to family and friends (source: Kathleen McClary).

If your schedule or your child's schedule does not allow meeting with a therapist regularly, look into the option of online therapy on sites like Better Health where you can talk to a therapist online.

Finally, it's important to eat well and to naturally boost mood and emotional well-being. Dr. Uma Naidoo, a nutritional psychiatrist at the Massachusetts General Hospital and author of *This is Your Brain on Food*, suggests adding avocados to your diet. Loaded with omega-3's and monounsaturated fatty acids which help inflammation, avocados are rich in fiber which help nurture the microbiome for a reduced risk of depression. Avocados are an excellent source of Folate, a vitamin that helps regulate neurotransmitter function whose deficiency has been linked to depression.

Dr. Naidoo and other physicians also recommend avoiding ultra-processed foods like packaged snacks, sugar-sweetened beverages and reconstituted meat products. Ultra-processed foods can introduce inflammation in the gut and body — which correlates with depressive and anxiety symptoms.

Please contact the following resources if you need additional support.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- 1-800-273-TALK

- or call or text **988 for free mental support**
- For Spanish speakers: 1-800-273-8255
- For LGBTQ youth: 1-866-4-U-TREVOR
- Another free and confidential helpline is 1-800-662-4357

(Services provide referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups and community-based organizations.)

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