

# Parenting and Youth Mental Health: You're Not Alone

Sunny Patel, MD, MPH  
Senior Medical Advisor  
Center for Mental Health Services

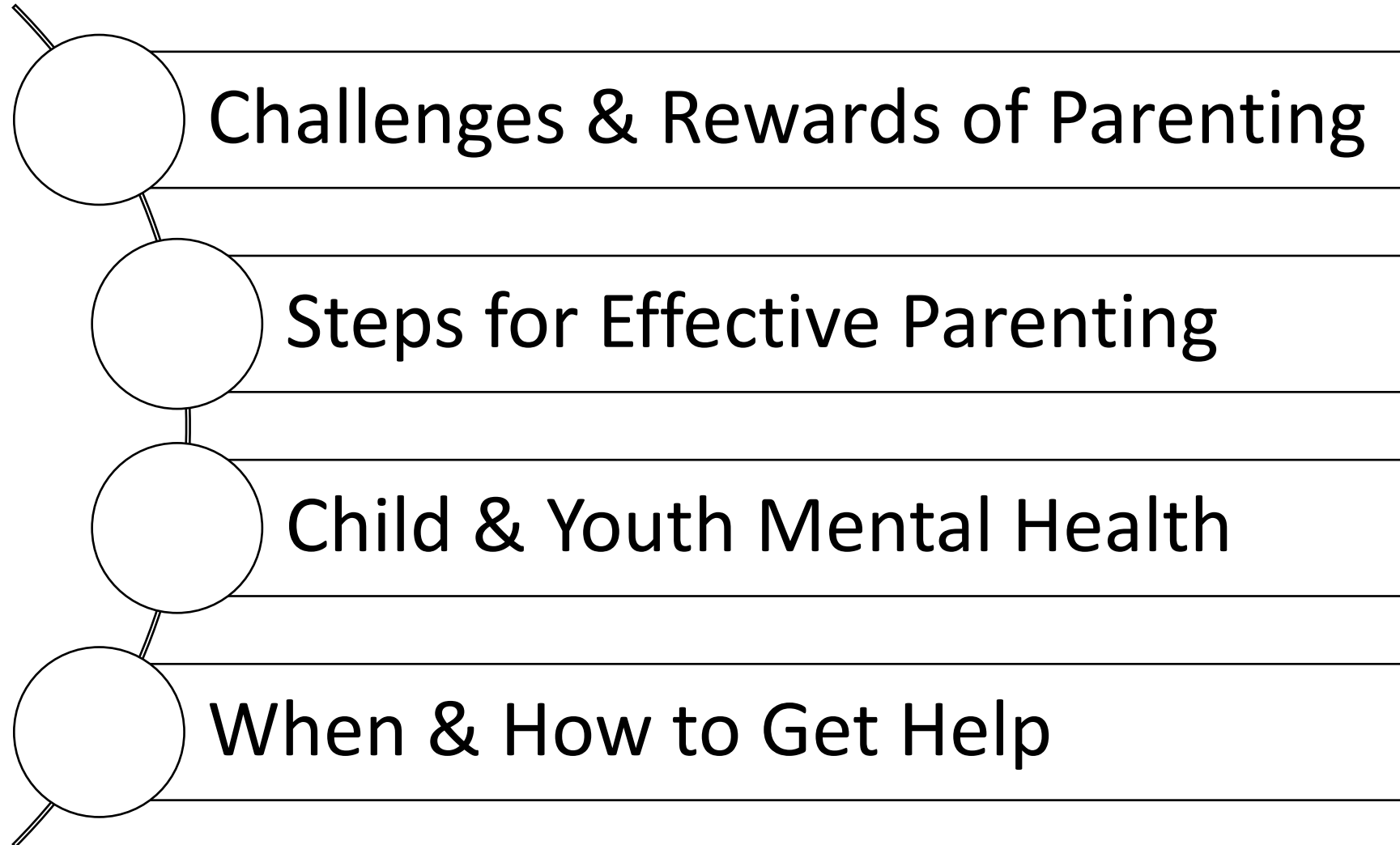
Liz Sweet  
Public Health Advisor  
Office of Recovery

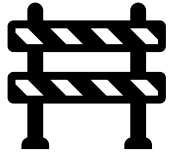
March 22, 2023



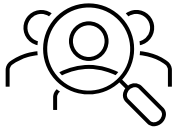
**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# Overview



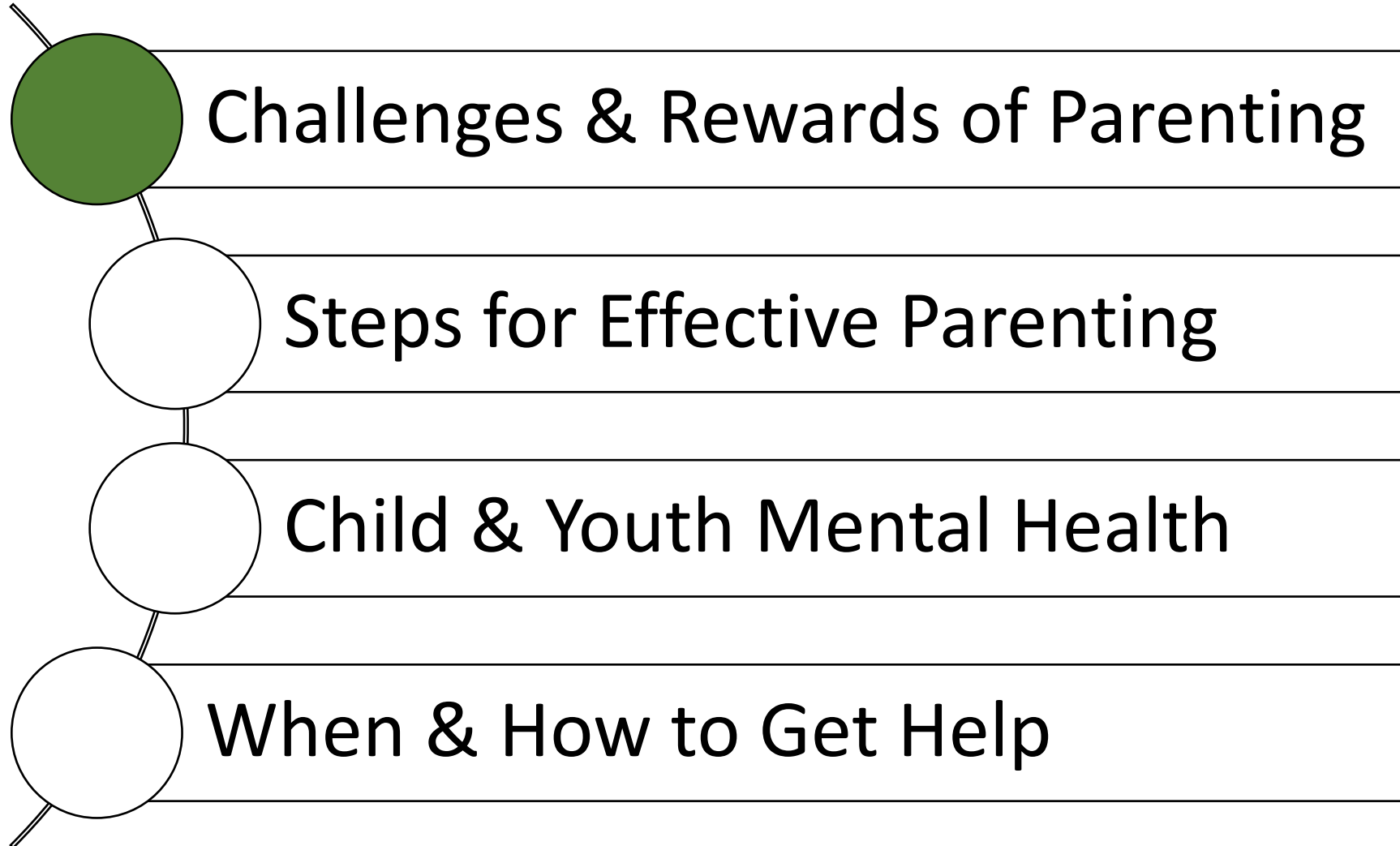


Disclaimer: For this presentation, “parenting” is used broadly to represent those who may fill those roles and “families” is also meant inclusively, referring to all individuals with responsibility for a young person (including parents, stepparents, guardians, foster families, grand families, kinship families, chosen families, older siblings, or other caregivers).

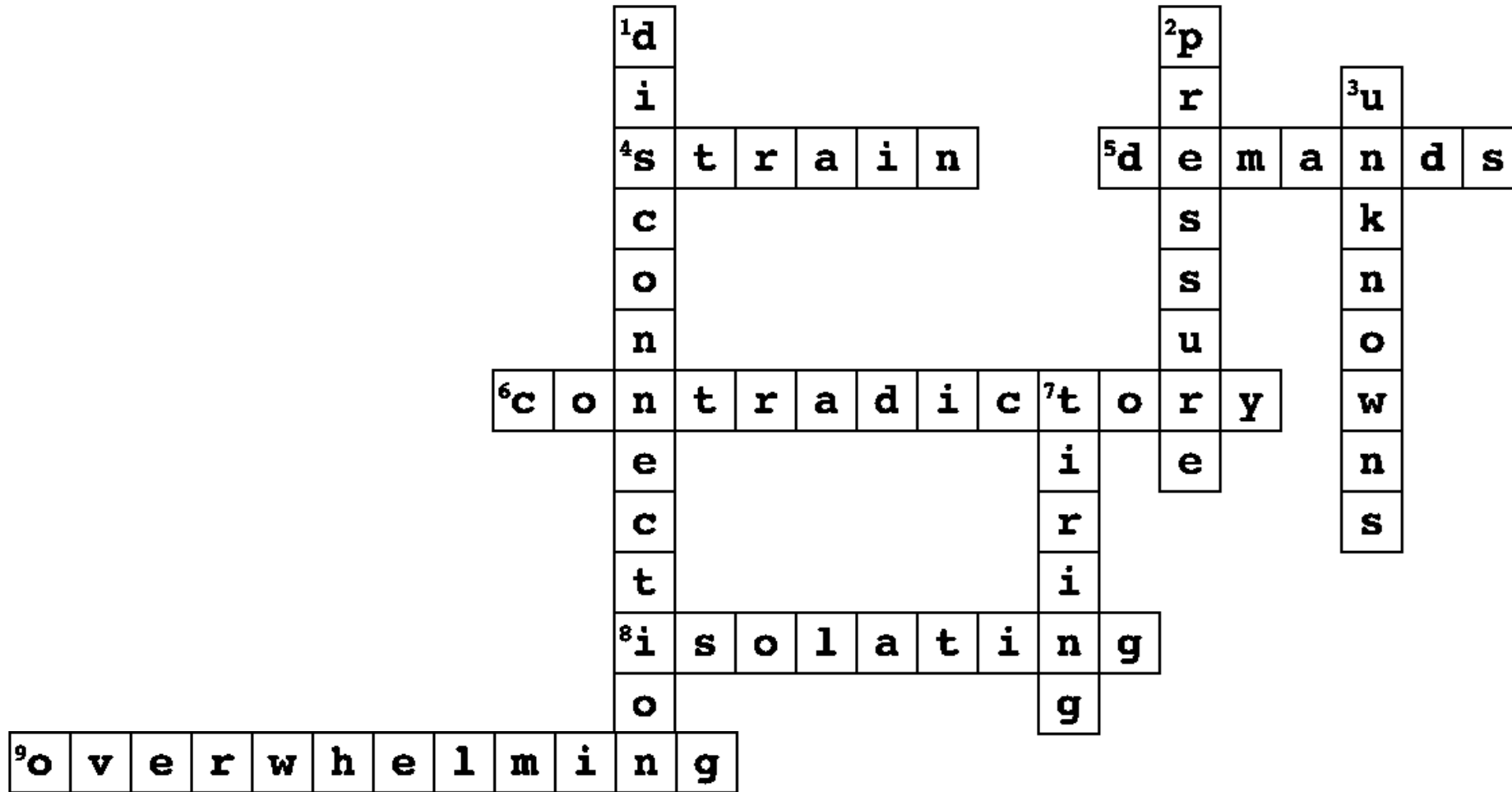


Purpose: Every child, every parent, and every family is unique and there isn’t one right way to parent. Caring for every child’s mental health is an important component of parenting, as positive mental health is essential to a child’s healthy development. Confident, well-informed parents make better parenting decisions, benefiting the family system. Today’s presentation will include information on children’s mental health and discuss how to get help should your family need.

# Parenting and Youth Mental Health: You're Not Alone



# Challenges of Parenting

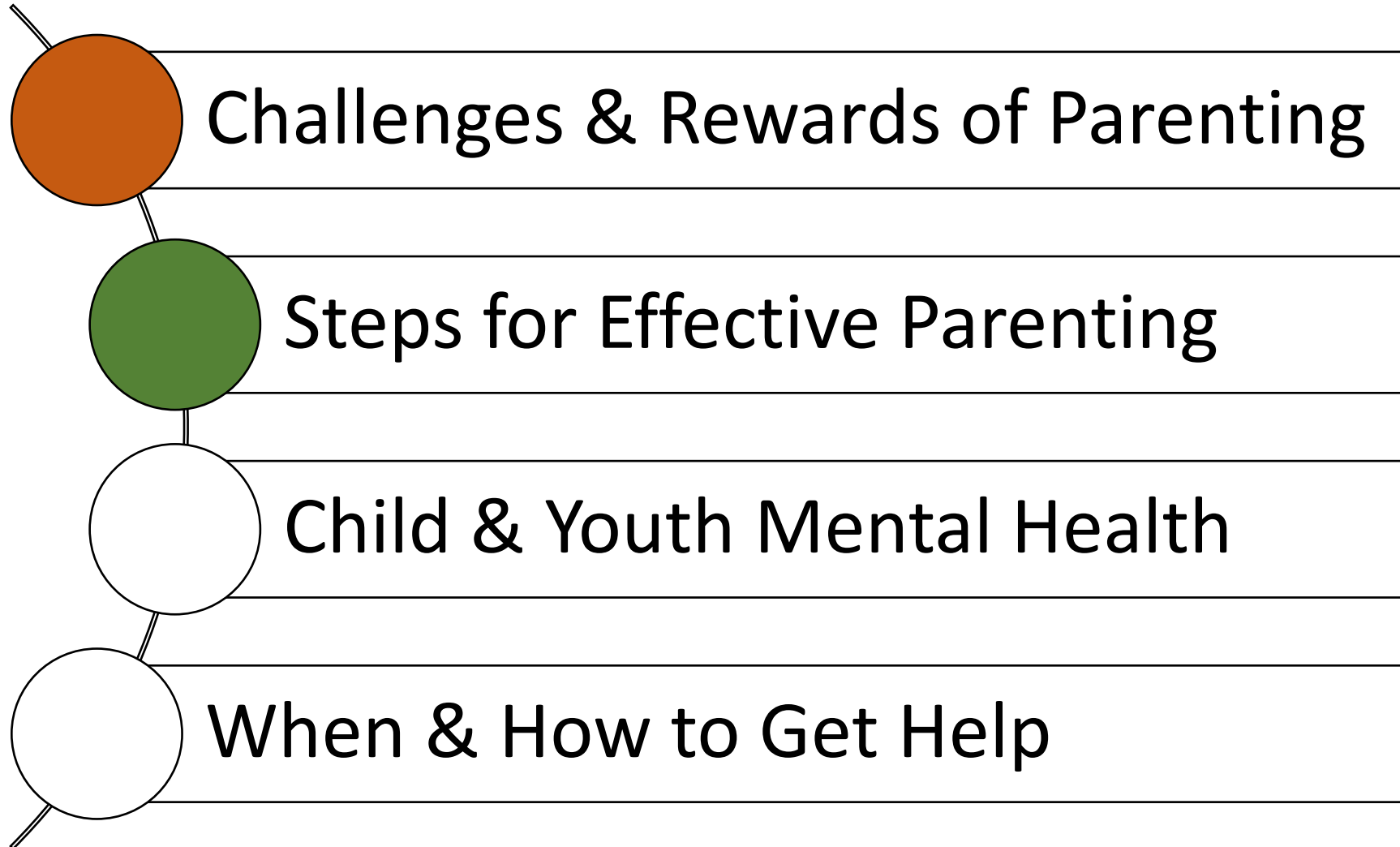


# Rewards of Parenting

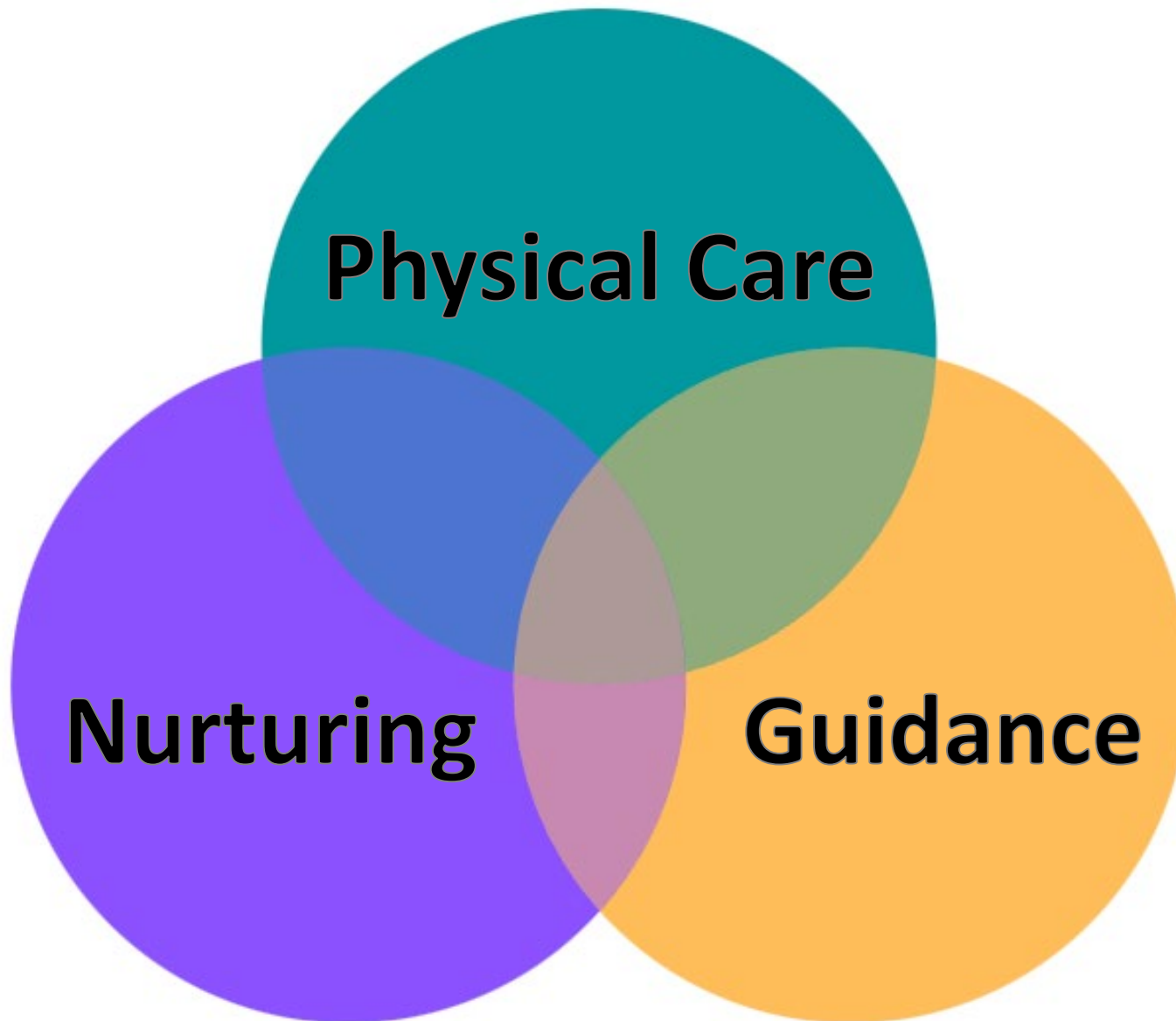
Parenting can feel unrewarding at times, but with challenges come moments of joy too.



# Parenting and Youth Mental Health: You're Not Alone

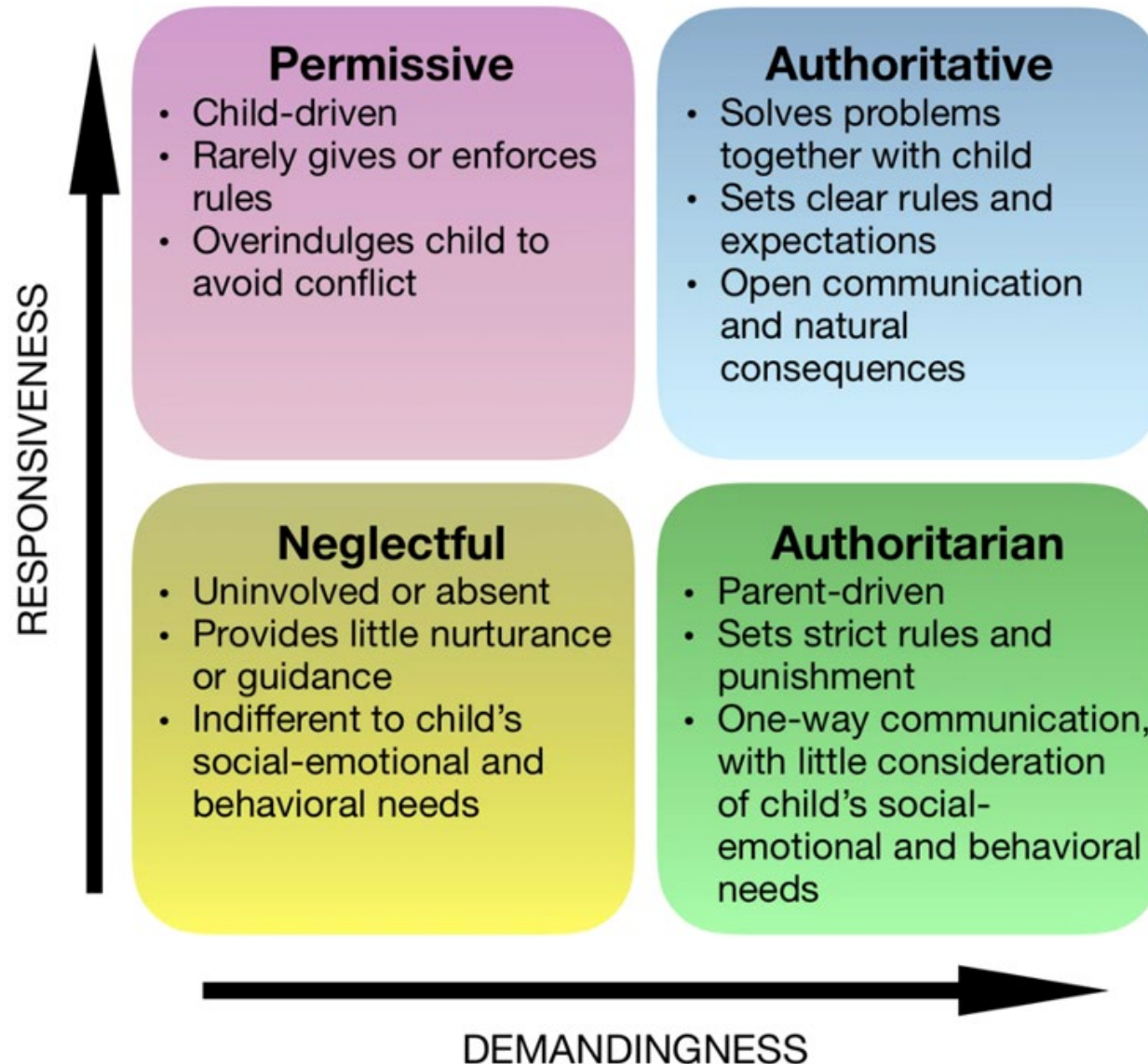


# The Three Tasks of Parenting





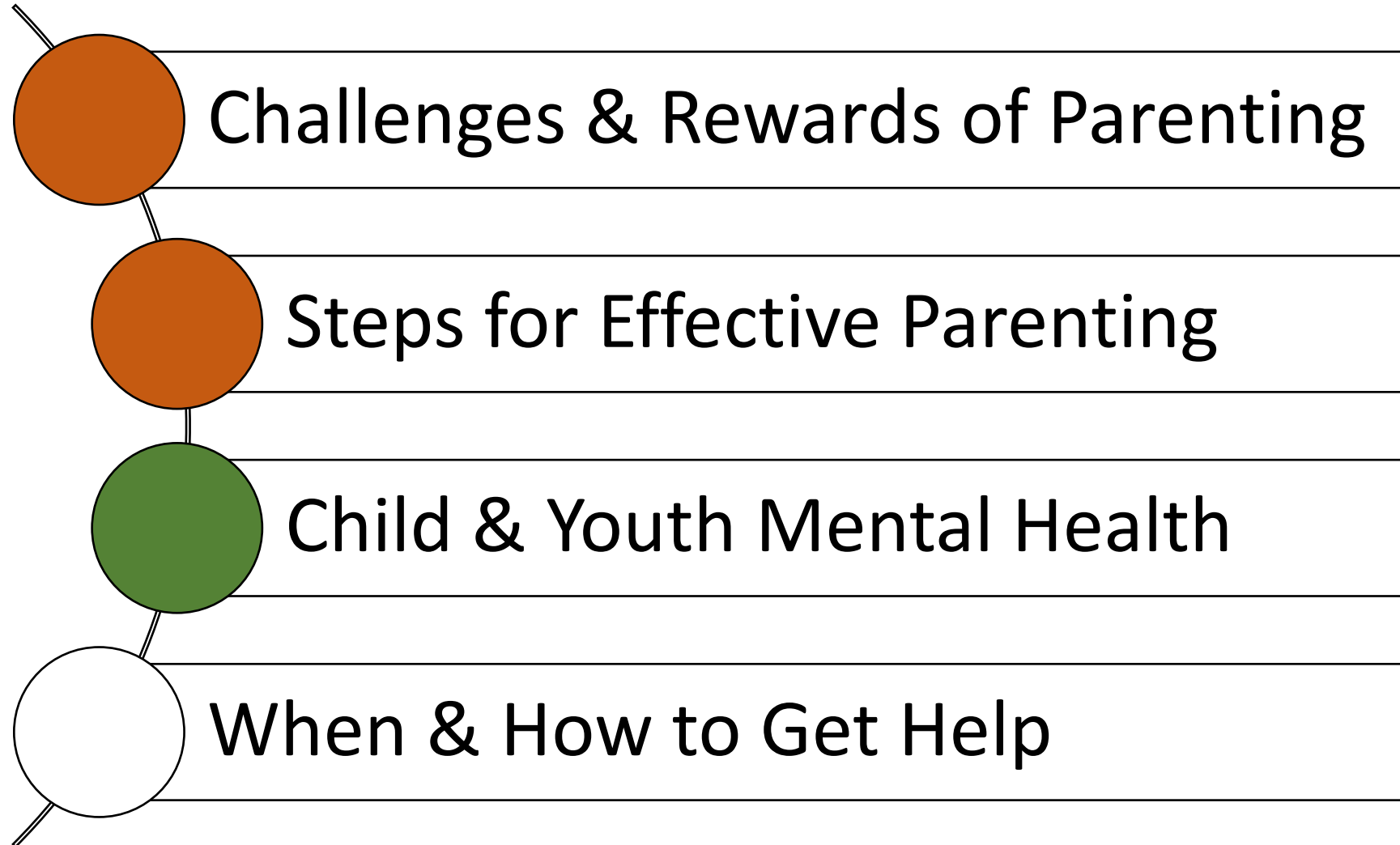
# Parenting Styles



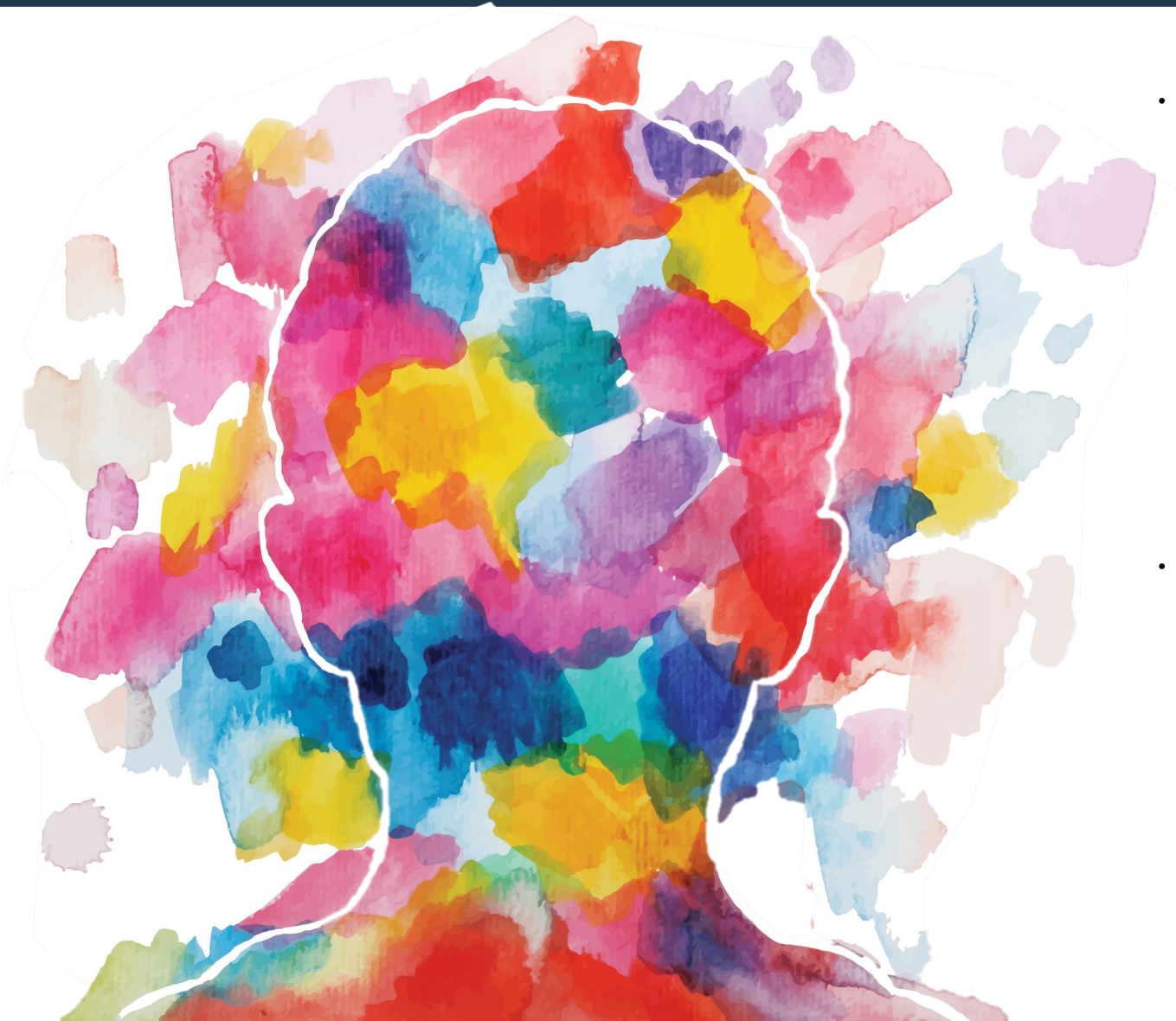
# Effective Parenting

- Praise accomplishments, however small, to boost child's self-esteem.
- Set limits and be consistent with your discipline.
- Make time for your kids.
- Be a good role model.
- Make communication a priority.
- Show that your love is unconditional.
- Know your own needs and limitations as a parent.

# Parenting and Youth Mental Health: You're Not Alone

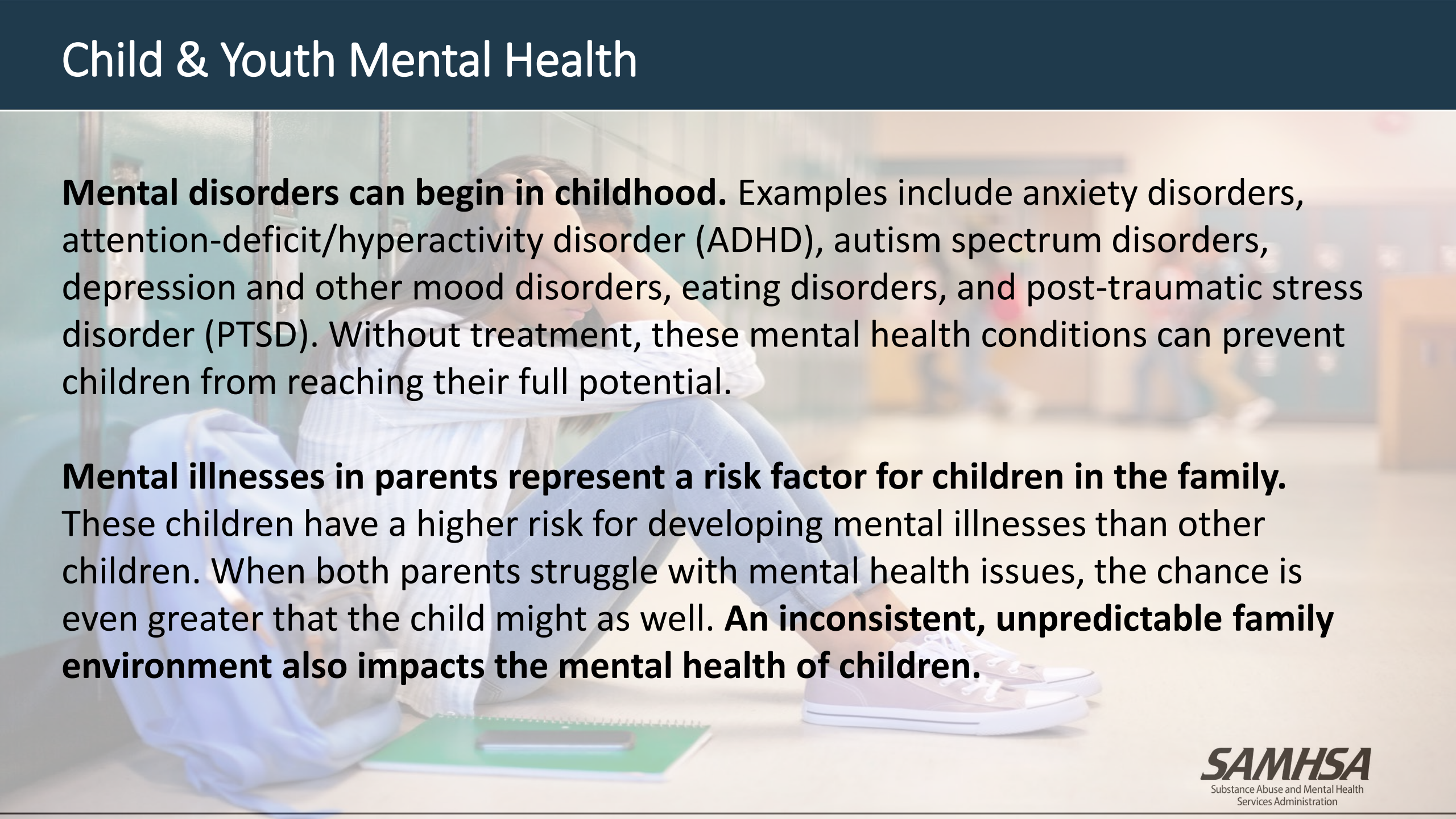


# Child & Youth Mental Health



- All children experience sadness, anxiety, and irritability at times, and they may occasionally find it challenging to sit still, pay attention, or interact with others.
- In most cases, these experiences capture typical developmental phases. However, sometimes the depth or duration of these behaviors may indicate a more serious problem in children.

# Child & Youth Mental Health



**Mental disorders can begin in childhood.** Examples include anxiety disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorders, depression and other mood disorders, eating disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Without treatment, these mental health conditions can prevent children from reaching their full potential.

**Mental illnesses in parents represent a risk factor for children in the family.** These children have a higher risk for developing mental illnesses than other children. When both parents struggle with mental health issues, the chance is even greater that the child might as well. **An inconsistent, unpredictable family environment also impacts the mental health of children.**

# The Data

- **~ 20% of children and adolescents have a diagnosable mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder.**
- **Half of all mental illnesses emerge by the time a child turns 14,  
– 75% by the time a person is 24.**
- **Death by suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals ages 10-34 in the United States.**

# The Data

**The CDC released a report on children's mental health using data from 2013–2019.**

- 1 in 11 children were diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety problems.
- 1 in 5 youth aged 12-17 had experienced a major depressive episode.
- About 7 in 100,000 children aged 10-19 died by suicide (2018-2019).
- Some populations are more affected due to social determinants of health such as poverty, access to education, and geographic area, resulting in health inequities.



# The Data

## The 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

### Findings among youth aged 12 to 17 in 2021:

- 20.1% had a past year major depressive episode (MDE).
- Of these, nearly 75% had symptoms consistent with severe impairment.
- More than half of these youth did not receive treatment in the past year.
- These youth were more likely than those without a past year MDE to have used illicit drugs in the past year (27.7% versus 10.7%).
- Nearly half (45.1%) perceived that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected their mental health “quite a bit or a lot.”

### Additional findings among youth aged 12 to 17 in 2021:

- 8.5% had a substance use disorder.
- 12.7% had serious thoughts of suicide.
- 5.9% made a suicide plan.
- 3.4% attempted suicide in the past year.

“Harnessing the power of data and evidence is critical to ensuring policies and programs have the greatest opportunity to achieve positive outcomes.”

---

MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, PH.D.



# The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

**The pandemic substantially worsened this pre-existing epidemic, particularly for children, youth, and families.**

- Depression and anxiety doubled in youth compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- More than 279,000 U.S. children have experienced the death of a primary or secondary caregiver due to COVID, with children of color disproportionately impacted.
- The CDC released new data from the Adolescent Behaviors and Experience Survey (ABES) indicating that more than 1 in 3 high school students experienced poor mental health during the pandemic and nearly half of students felt persistently sad or hopeless.

# Child & Youth Mental Health

**Talking to children about mental illness can be an opportunity for parents to provide their children with information, support, and guidance.**

**Learning about mental illnesses can lead to improved recognition, earlier treatment, greater understanding and compassion, and decreased stigma, particularly if the child and their family is part of a culture where talking about mental illness is considered taboo.**

# “Typical” or Not?

Parents are naturally concerned about the health and wellbeing of their children. Many parents correctly and comfortably see their child’s development and behavior as normal.

However, some parents worry whether their infant, child, or teenager has a problem. Parents, better than anyone else, know their child and know what is usual behavior for their child.

Keeping track of behaviors and being aware of common signs and symptoms of mental health issues can help you seek appropriate care to support your child.

# Children's Mental Health

**“Mental health disorders in children are generally defined as delays or disruptions in developing age-appropriate thinking, behaviors, social skills or regulation of emotions.**

**These problems are distressing to children and disrupt their ability to function well at home, in school or in other social situations.”**

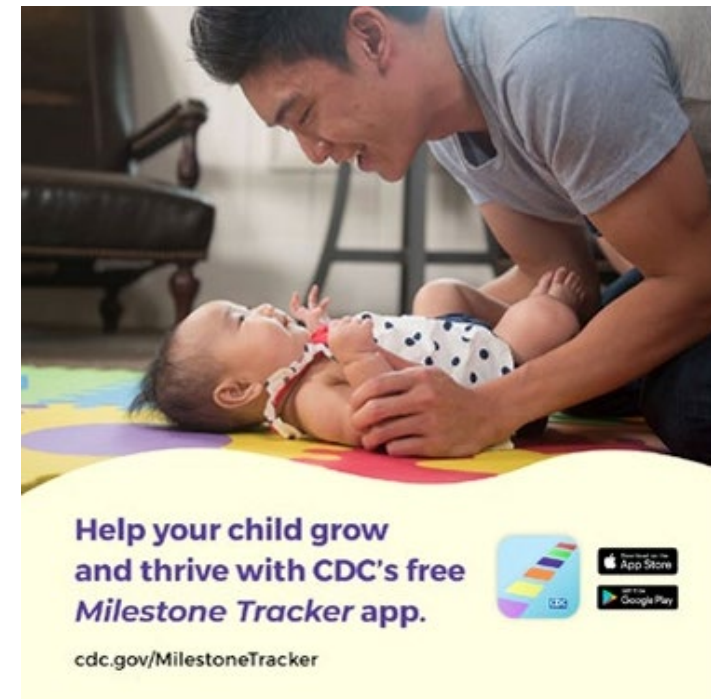
**Mayo Clinic**

# Developmental Milestones

Your child's early years are very important. Tracking how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves helps you support their development. The [CDC's Milestone Tracker](#) provides a fun and easy way for parents and caregivers to track and support their child's early development, as well as share progress with professionals and act early if concerns arise.

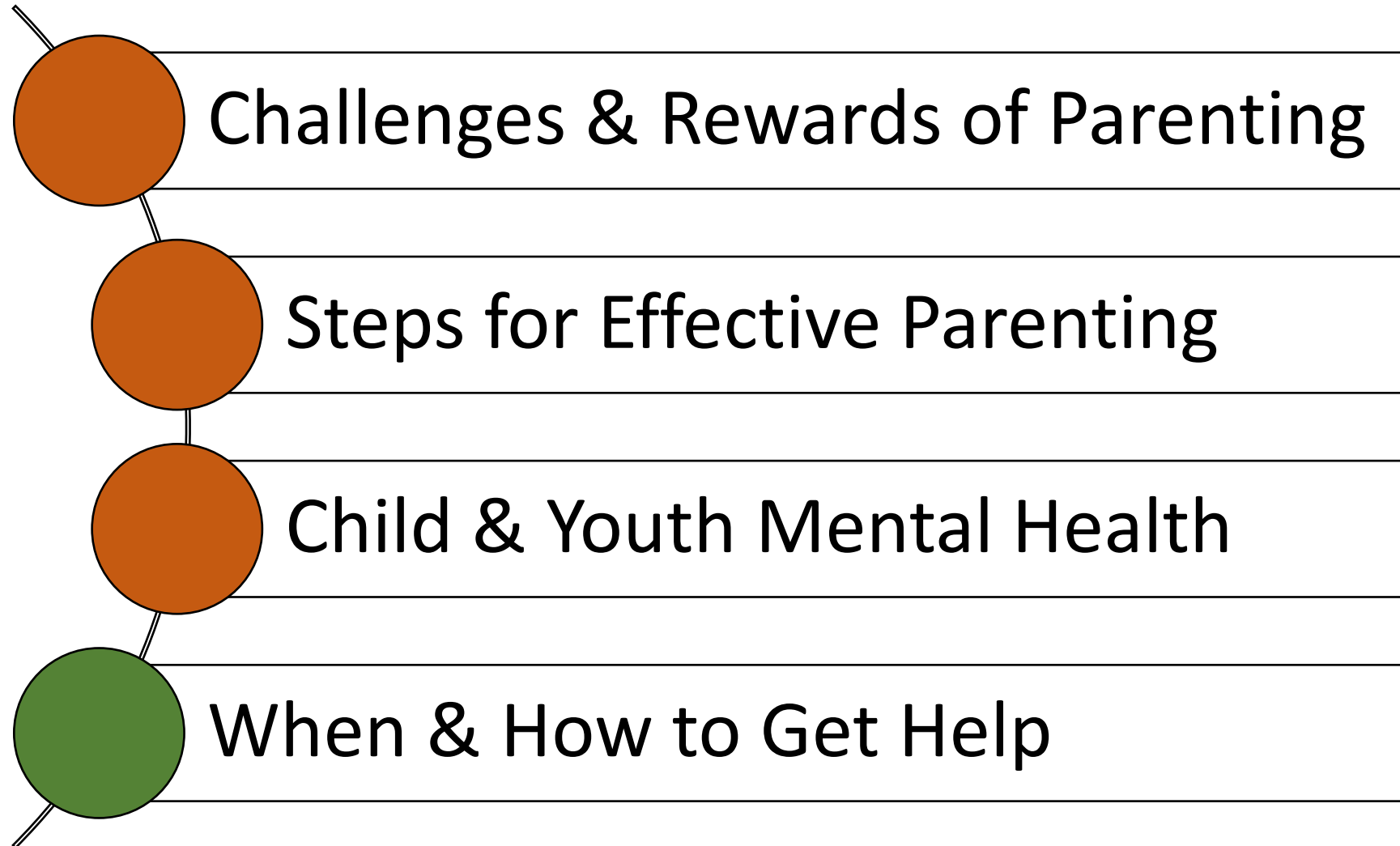
## The website & app feature:

- Milestone checklists in multiple languages for children ages 2 months through 5 years;
- The ability to complete a checklist using corrected age for children born prematurely;
- Photos and videos to help parents and caregivers recognize milestones;
- Tips and activities for supporting early development;
- An easy way to share developmental progress with their healthcare provider and others; and
- Appointment and developmental screening reminders.



Tell your child's medical provider if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for your child's age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state's public early intervention program.

# Parenting and Youth Mental Health: You're Not Alone



# Signs & Symptoms

**Children can develop the same mental health conditions as adults, but their symptoms may be different. The following signs may indicate the need for professional help:**

- Drastic changes in mood, behavior, or personality;
- Changes in eating habits and/or weight;
- Difficulty sleeping, oversleeping, or having nightmares;
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches;
- Difficulty concentrating;
- Changes in academic performance;
- Avoiding or missing school;
- Persistent disobedience or aggression;
- Frequent temper tantrums;
- Persistent sadness that lasts two weeks or more;
- Withdrawing from or avoiding social interactions;
- Increased risky behaviors; or
- Hurting oneself or talking about hurting oneself or others.



# Signs & Symptoms

**The observable behaviors can help you decide what action to take.**

- Keep a list of behaviors that are of concern;
- Speak to your child or teen about the main concerns;
- Listen to their responses without interrupting; and
- Let your child or teen know that you will help work through the difficulties together.



# How to Get Help

**Early treatment can help prevent more severe, lasting problems as a child grows up.**

**If you are concerned about your child's mental health, you can start by talking with others who frequently interact with your child.**

# How to Get Help



**SAMHSA**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

For help finding treatment: [800-662-HELP \(4357\)](tel:800-662-HELP)

Search SAMHSA.gov

Search

Home

Search For Treatment

State Agencies

Facility Registration

FAQs

Help

About

Contact Us

## Millions of Americans have mental and substance use disorders. Find treatment here.

Welcome to FindTreatment.gov, the confidential and anonymous resource for persons seeking treatment for mental and substance use disorders in the United States and its territories.



### Find a Treatment Facility i

Enter your address, city, zip code, or facility name

Search

**SAMHSA**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# How to Offer Support



## REMEMBER MENTAL AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS ARE TREATABLE

People can, and do, recover. Family support can make all the difference. For more information, visit [www.SAMHSA.gov/families](http://www.SAMHSA.gov/families).

## TALK TO YOUR LOVED ONE

Express your concern and tell them that you're there to help. Create a judgement-free and loving environment to foster conversation and openness.



## BE OPEN

Discuss your family history of mental illness or drug and alcohol use, if relevant. It may help your loved one feel less alone.



## SHOW COMPASSION

Be patient as you help your loved one locate resources and treatment services.



## BE SURE TO CARE FOR YOURSELF TOO

Being a caregiver can be highly stressful and emotionally draining.



## SEEK SUPPORT

If you or a loved one needs help, call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for free and confidential information and treatment referral.



# Additional Resources

For more resources related to child, youth, and family mental health, the following websites contain useful articles, guides, toolkits, and webinars.

- [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry \(AACAP\)](#)
- [American Psychiatric Association \(APA\)](#)
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) Developmental Milestones Tracker](#)
- [Child Mind Institute's Parenting Guides](#)
- [Mental Health America's \(MHA\) Fact Sheets & Toolkits](#)
- [MentalHealth.gov](#)
- [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill \(NAMI\)](#)
- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network's \(NCTSN\) Resource Page](#)
- [National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health's \(NIMH\) Brochures and Fact Sheets](#)
- [The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's \(SAMHSA\) Resources Page](#)
- [The Trauma & Grief \(TAG\) Center at The Hackett Center for Mental Health's Virtual Learning Library](#)

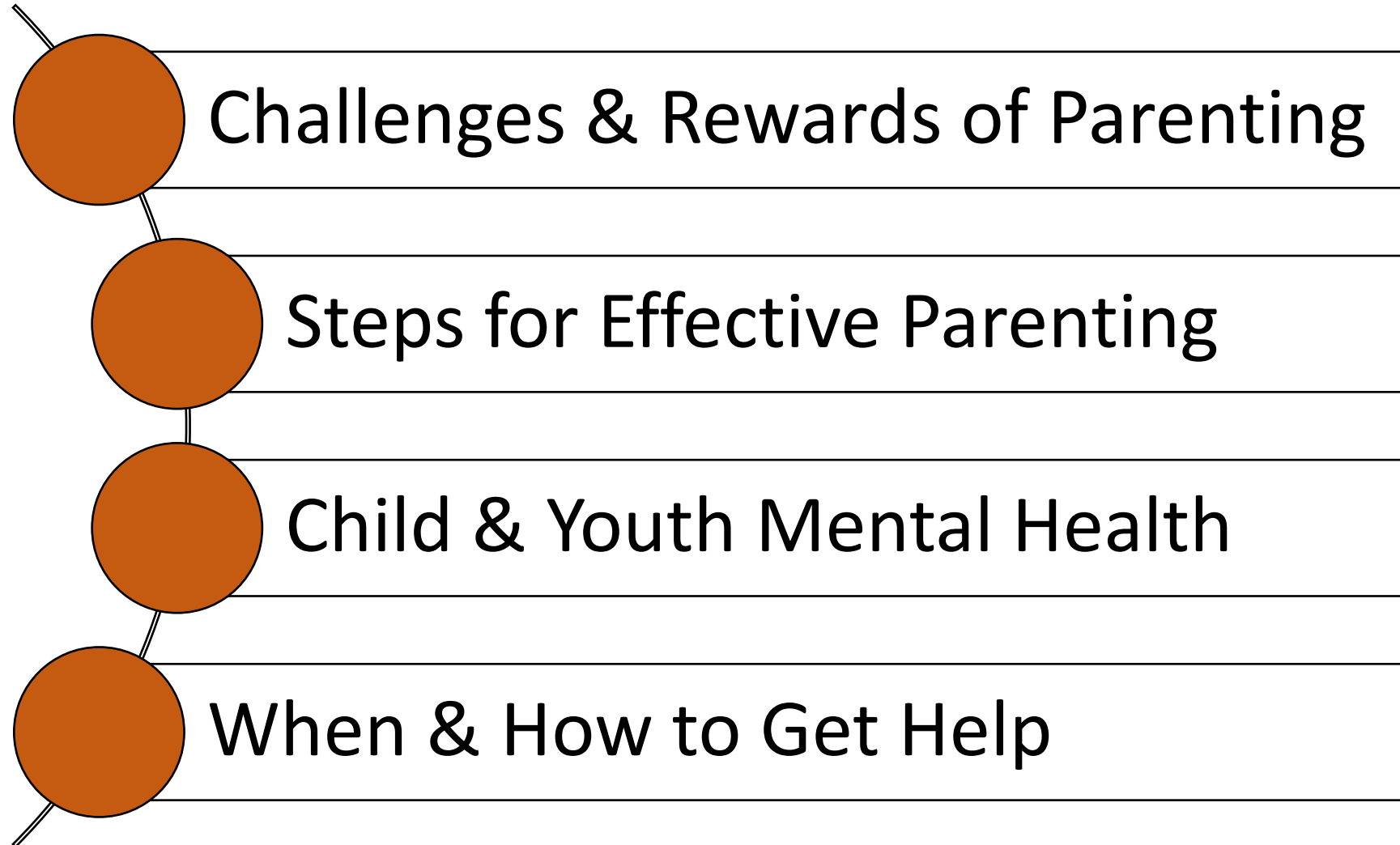
# The Good Enough Parent is the Best Parent



# IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD



# Parenting and Youth Mental Health: You're Not Alone



# Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance use and mental illness on America's communities.



[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)