

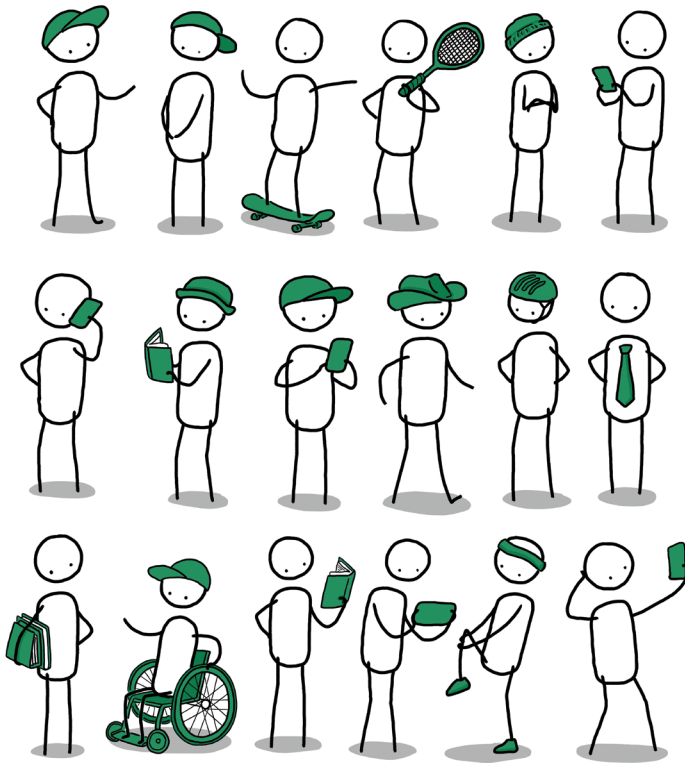
 **UNPLUGGED.**

DISCONNECT THE NOISE. RECONNECT WITH SCIENCE.

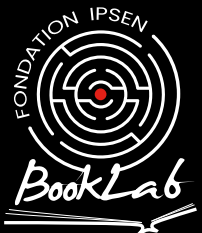
MENTAL HEALTH IN ADOLESCENCE

Scientific content by
Maria Melchior

Illustrations by
Chaz Hutton



with the kind collaboration of **FONDATION Inserm**

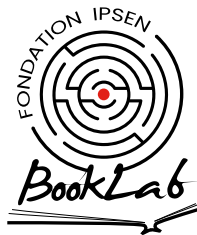



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MENTAL HEALTH IN ADOLESCENCE

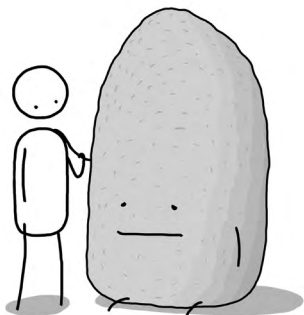
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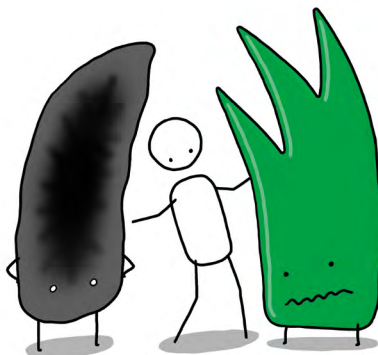


THE MOST COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS IN ADOLESCENCE

DEPRESSION



ANXIETY DISORDERS



ALCOHOL ABUSE



CANNABIS USE DISORDER



Adolescence is a time of **intense emotional, physical and social change**. It's also when **anxiety** and **depression** often begin to appear, when the **first signs of psychosis can emerge**, and when many teens **first experiment with substances** such as alcohol or cannabis. It's a vulnerable time of life that requires **special attention**.

THE MAIN MISCONCEPTION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN ADOLESCENCE

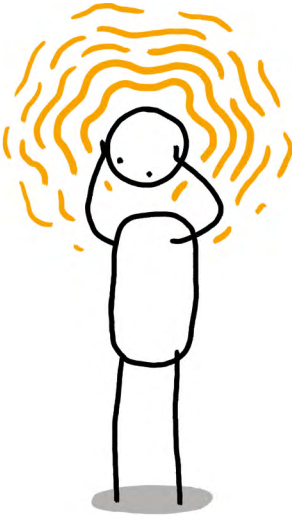
SADNESS



Many assume that feeling sad, worried, or angry is just part of being a teenager.

But when these emotions last too long or lead to withdrawal, isolation, or risky behavior, they may reveal something deeper: a mental health condition that deserves care, not dismissal.

WORRY



ANGST



3 REASONS WHY MENTAL HEALTH IS STIGMATIZED

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS



PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER

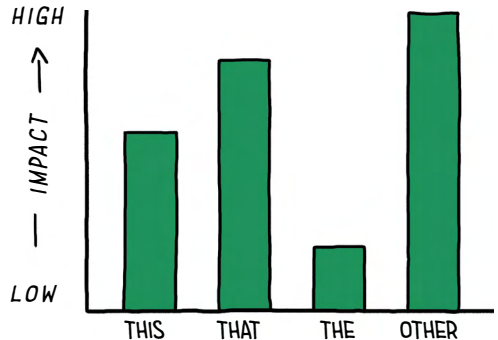


CONFUSION BETWEEN DISTRESS AND DISORDER

Feeling down after an argument or exam is not the same as living with depression. Yet **many still confuse short-term distress with psychological disorders** that deeply affect daily life.

IMPACT

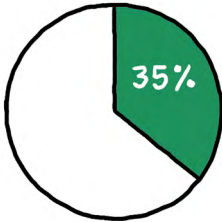
Mental health issues **influence every aspect** of a young person's life. Adults should **stay alert to patterns** like persistent isolation or repeated signs of distress. Recognizing persistent signs early can make all the difference.



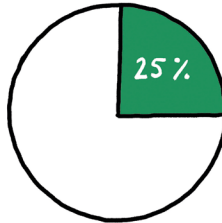
LOSING CONTROL

The idea of "losing control" over one's own mind **can be frightening**. That fear often **leads to rejection and stigma**, isolating those who **need understanding** more than anything.

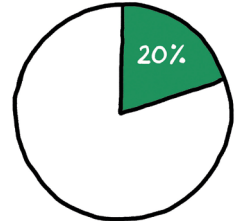
KEY STATISTICS ABOUT FRENCH ADOLESCENTS*



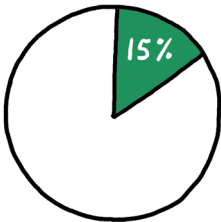
MISUSE ALCOHOL



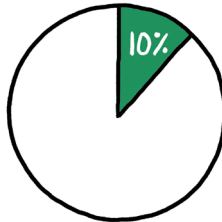
HAD SUICIDAL
THOUGHTS IN THE
PAST YEAR



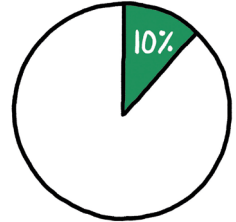
SHOW SYMPTOMS
OF DEPRESSION



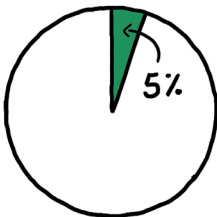
SMOKE
REGULARLY



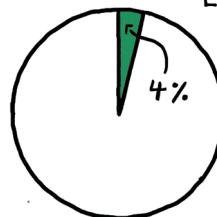
HAVE ATTEMPTED
SUICIDE



HAVE HIGH
ANXIETY
LEVELS



EXPERIENCE ADHD

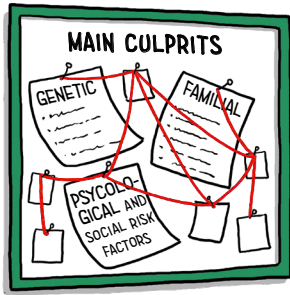


MISUSE CANNABIS

In France, as in many countries, **one in five adolescents shows signs of anxiety or depression**. Substance use is declining, but **excessive time spent on screens and playing video games**, often linked to isolation and inactivity, is steadily increasing.

* Sources: Studies "Escapad 2022" and "Enclass, April-June 2024"

3 MAIN CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS

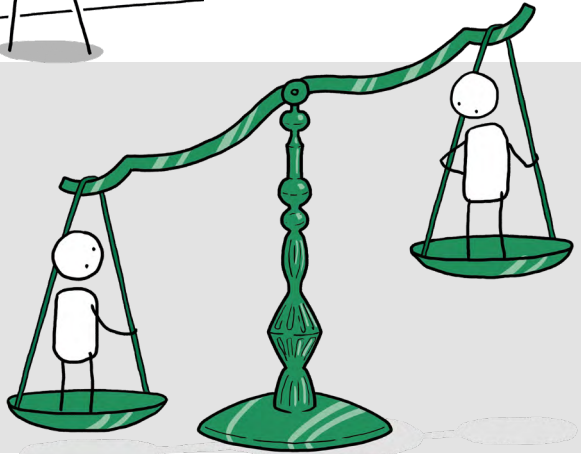


FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE

Growing up in a **difficult environment**, with parental mental illness, poverty, or abuse, can affect emotional health well into adulthood.

SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

Access to care and daily stress levels vary across **society**. Inequalities affect not only those living in poverty, but **people across all levels** of the social ladder.



GIRLS



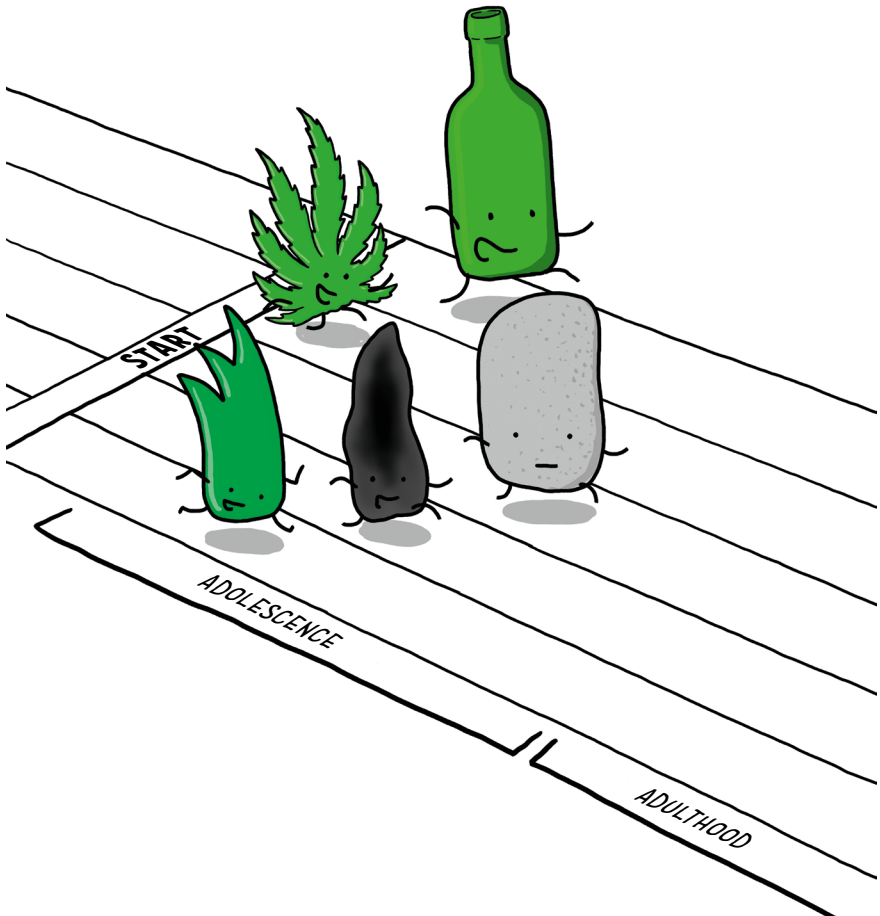
BOYS



GENDER DIFFERENCES

Girls are more often affected by **anxiety, depression, or eating disorders**. Boys tend to struggle more with **aggression or substance abuse**. Understanding these differences is key to effective prevention.

1 REASON FOR EARLY PREVENTION

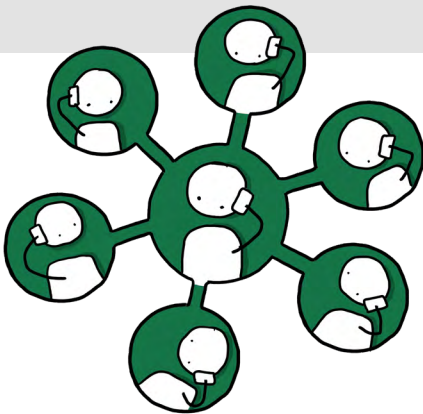


Most mental health conditions begin early, with **75% appearing before adulthood**. That's why **prevention in childhood matters**. The earlier we act, the better the chances of reducing long-term suffering and helping young people build lasting resilience.

3 KEY STEPS TO EFFECTIVE PREVENTION

START EARLY

Teach emotional and social skills at school. Encourage open discussion and **tackle bullying** before it takes root.



STAY CONNECTED

Strong bonds with family, friends, and teachers protect teens. **Equal access to education, housing, and opportunities** helps them build confidence and stability.

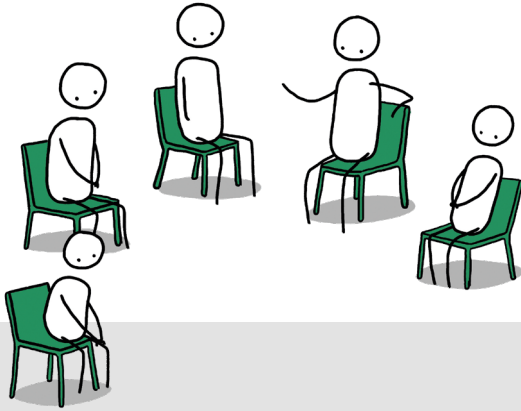
TEST WHAT WORKS

Evaluate programs, whether digital or in-person, to see what truly helps, and **make sure every young person**, regardless of background, **can benefit** from them.



1 REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE PREVENTION

In Australia, a **national school program** helps children and teenagers understand mental health and build everyday tools to protect it.

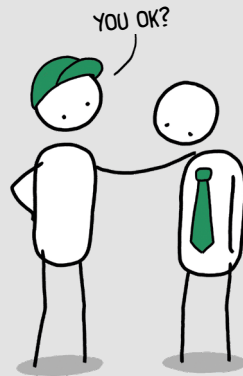


GROUP PROGRAM

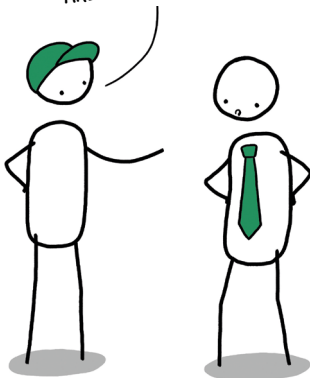
Talking about emotions helps. Workshops teach how to **recognize and express** them before problems escalate.

RECOGNITION

Knowing the signs matters. Spotting a struggling friend can **make a big difference**.



TAKE A BREATH AND LET'S CHAT.



COPING SKILLS

Simple strategies, like breathing calmly or talking about feelings, **strengthen confidence and emotional stability**.

References

Melchior M, *et al.* (2022) Labor market participation and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic among young adults (18 to 30 years): A nationally representative study in France. *Front Public Health*. 10:904665. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2022.904665.



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Santé Publique France (2024) Santé mentale et bien-être des adolescents : publication d'une enquête menée auprès de collégiens et lycéens en France hexagonale.



About Maria Melchior

Maria Melchior is a renowned epidemiologist and is currently Research Director at Inserm (the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research). Her work lies at the intersection of mental health, addictive behaviors, and social inequalities. She is widely recognized for her expertise in studying the developmental trajectories of mental disorders from childhood to adulthood, as well as their intergenerational transmission. At Inserm, Maria Melchior plays a key role, particularly within the Pierre Louis Institute of Epidemiology and Public Health, where she serves as Deputy Director. She is also affiliated with the ESSMA team (Social Epidemiology, Mental Health, and Addictions).

Her research is primarily focused on the following areas:

- The study of social inequalities in mental health
- The use of longitudinal cohorts
- Mental health and addictive behaviors
- The impact of major life events
- Public engagement and knowledge transfer
- Institutional responsibilities

Maria Melchior has received multiple awards for her scientific contributions, including the Research Prize from the European Psychiatric Association and the Early Career Award from the International Society of Behavioral Medicine. Her work plays a crucial role in informing public health policies aimed at reducing mental health disparities and improving population well-being.

About Chaz Hutton

Chaz Hutton is an Australian illustrator and cartoonist known for his funny and insightful illustrations. His cartoons about everyday life gained a large following on Instagram, which in turn led to the publication of books in multiple countries. He has also regularly collaborated with a variety of brands such as Disney, Uber & Uber Eats, and Zopa, in addition to providing illustrations for various books, films and magazines, including *The New Yorker*. Chaz's work has also appeared in multiple exhibitions, both in Europe and Australia.

Chaz's work often aims to be both humorous and informative, and he's spoken about this approach to illustration at both Google and TEDx in the past. His style and approach predominantly focus on how best to utilise fun, simple, and informative drawings to engage, entertain, and educate.



Visit him at www.chazhutton.com

About Fondation Ipsen BookLab

Dedicated to the greater good and committed to fostering a more equitable society, Fondation Ipsen BookLab publishes and distributes books free of charge primarily to schools and associations. Through collaborations between experts, artists, authors and children, our publications span all age groups and are available in multiple languages. Our work is centered on education and awareness of topics pertaining to health, disability and rare diseases.



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About Fondation Inserm

Fondation Inserm is a partnership-based foundation of general interest that works to support the research missions of Inserm, the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research, by mobilizing private resources from individual donors or sponsors (companies and corporate foundations). Its role is to promote health and biomedical research, as well as to encourage the dissemination of scientific knowledge, in the interest of everyone's health. The Fondation Inserm is working to strengthen existing research momentum and promote interdisciplinary collaboration—in areas such as public health, therapeutics, diagnostics, and basic research—with the aim of contributing through research to meeting new societal challenges.



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About the collaboration

In today's climate of mistrust toward science, some scientific advances remain poorly understood and often controversial, even though they stand at the heart of contemporary biomedical research.

To address this, Fondation Ipsen, Fondation Inserm, and artist Chaz Hutton are launching an original, eye-catching, and engaging collection of books. The aim of this collection is to give everyone the tools to better understand today's scientific challenges, particularly in the field of rare diseases, where misinformation can have direct human consequences.

The books in the collection "Unplugged. Disconnect the noise. Reconnect with Science" are designed to:

- Challenge misconceptions and fight scientific misinformation.
- Explain major health advances, including those that are controversial or anxiety-inducing, clearly, simply, and without bias, using validated facts and expert insight.
- Spark curiosity and strengthen understanding among general public, young people, and families.

Book# 15.1
Have your say!



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UNPLUGGED. 

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How can we support adolescent mental health? Anxiety, sadness, social pressure, identity struggles ... adolescence can be overwhelming.

In this illustrated book, epidemiologist Maria Melchior and artist Chaz Hutton cut through the myths to explain what shapes young people's mental well-being, how early experiences and social inequalities matter, and why prevention is key.

Clear, engaging, and hopeful, this book helps teens, parents, and educators understand, talk about, and support mental health without stigma.

With the kind collaboration of

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