



Youth Advocate Resource Guide

**Supporting Wellbeing, Sustainability, and
Success in Advocacy**



Association for Children's Mental Health

~ Hope for Families, Shaped by Lived Experience. ~

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YOUTH ADVOCATE *Resources*

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About This Guide

Youth advocacy can be meaningful, empowering, and rewarding. It can also be emotionally demanding. Speaking up about issues that matter, sharing your experiences, supporting others, and working for change all take energy and commitment.

This guide helps youth advocates find trusted resources that support wellbeing, resilience, advocacy skills, self-care, emotional health, and community connection. Resources are grouped by color-coded category so you can quickly find what fits what you need right now.

Whether you are looking for stress-management tools, mental health support, advocacy training, self-compassion practices, or ways to stay connected, think of this guide as a starting place.

Remember: Taking care of yourself is not separate from advocacy. It is part of sustainable advocacy.

How to Use This Collection

- Find the color-coded section that matches what you're looking for. Every resource in this guide includes a clickable link.
- Each resource tells you who it may be most useful for, so you can quickly decide whether it fits your needs.
- If a resource has a cost, we'll let you know in the description.
- If you're in crisis or need someone to talk to, go to Crisis Support at the end of this guide for immediate support options.
- Resource information, eligibility, availability, and services may change. Some resources may not be appropriate for every situation. Please contact organizations directly for the most current information and to determine whether a resource or service is a good fit for you.

Need help right now? For emergencies, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

What Inside



Self-Care & Wellbeing

Resources to help you take care of yourself, build healthy habits, and practice self-compassion while doing work that matters to you.



Advocacy & Activist Wellbeing

Resources for taking care of your mental and emotional wellbeing while speaking up, creating change, and working for causes you care about.



Mental Health & Emotional Support

Resources to help you understand your mental health, work through difficult feelings, and find support when you need it.



Boundaries & Burnout

Resources to help you set boundaries, protect your energy, and recognize when advocacy or social media may be taking too much out of you.



Connection & Community

Resources to help you find community, connect with other young people, and learn how working together can create change.



Finding & Accessing Community Resources

Resources to help you find support in your community and figure out where to turn when you need help.



Michigan-Specific Resources

Resources created for or available to young people in Michigan, including mental health, climate wellbeing, community support, and crisis resources.

Self-Care & Wellbeing

Resources for taking care of yourself, managing stress, building healthy habits, and keeping balance.

Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-by-Step Guide to Wellness

Organization: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Format: Wellness guide (PDF)

Best for: Youth and young adults who want practical, self-paced ways to build healthier habits.

What You'll Find: Takes a broad look at the different areas of wellness: emotional, physical, social, financial, environmental, and spiritual, and offers ideas you can adapt to your own needs, abilities, and circumstances.

[Open the Guide →](#)

Six Strategies to Cultivate Self-Compassion

Organization: Michigan Minds

Format: Article and printable resources

Best for: Teens and young adults who want practical ways to build self-compassion and quiet their inner critic.

What You'll Find: Six simple practices: treat yourself like a friend, connect with others, respond to negative self-talk, notice positive moments, take compassionate action toward yourself, and use a short self-compassion break during hard moments. Includes a printable pocket guide.

[Explore the Resource →](#)

Self-Compassion Practices

Organization: Self-Compassion Institute / Dr. Kristin Neff

Format: Online resource collection

Best for: Teens and young adults who want simple self-compassion practices for everyday life.

What You'll Find: A collection of exercises, guided meditations, videos, and reflections that help you respond to yourself with more kindness and understanding. Free to explore at your own pace.

[Explore Self-Compassion Practices →](#)

Mindful Self-Compassion Resources

Organization: Center for Mindful Self-Compassion

Format: Free meditations, practices, courses, and workshops

Best for: Young people who want to explore self-compassion through guided practice and more structured learning.

What You'll Find: Mindful Self-Compassion, developed by Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer, combines mindfulness and self-compassion. Free meditations and practices are available, including options for beginners. Some courses and workshops have a cost.

[Open the Guide →](#)

Self-Compassion App

Organization: Balanced Minds

Format: Mobile app and online self-help resources

Best for: Young people who like guided practices they can use on their own.

What You'll Find: Guided tools based on Compassion Focused Therapy to help you respond to yourself more kindly. Balanced Minds also offers free audio practices, videos, and self-guided courses on its website. App availability and features may vary by device.

[Explore the Resource →](#)

Teen Self-Compassion

Organization: Teen Self-Compassion

Format: Online resource collection

Best for: Teens looking for relatable, youth-focused tools for wellbeing and personal growth.

What You'll Find: A free, peer-curated collection of stories and step-by-step frameworks on resilience, values, healthy relationships, self-worth, emotional support, and setting meaningful goals.

[Explore Teen Self-Compassion →](#)

Teen Self-Compassion

Organization: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) – Stay Well Program

Format: Videos, worksheets, workbooks, audio exercises, and brochures

Best for: Michigan teens looking for free tools to manage stress, build coping skills, and practice mindfulness.

What You'll Find: Short videos on finding joy, mindfulness, boundaries, gratitude, grief and loss, and supporting a friend who is struggling, plus guided exercises, worksheets, audio recordings, and printable brochures. Use on your own or in a class or group.

[Explore Stay Well Resources →](#)

Advocacy Wellbeing

Resources made for youth advocates and changemakers so you can keep going without burning out.

Staying Resilient While Trying to Save the World (Volumes 1–3)

Organization: Amnesty International

Format: Graphic resource (comic) and workbooks

Best for: Youth advocates looking for practical ideas on self-care, wellbeing, and sustaining their advocacy.

What You'll Find: A three-part series created with young activists. Volume 1 is a comic-style fanzine about common pitfalls of activism. Volume 2 is a wellbeing workbook on caring for yourself and each other. Volume 3 uses child-friendly language and adds a new chapter on online wellbeing.

[Volume 1: Fanzine →](#) | [Volume 2: Workbook →](#) | [Volume 3: Workbook →](#)

Youth Activist Toolkit

Organization: Advocates for Youth

Format: Digital guide (PDF)

Best for: Youth who want to build advocacy skills and make their work sustainable.

What You'll Find: Walks you through developing a strategy, building collective power, organizing a campaign, and communicating your message. Also includes sections on self-care, resilience, group wellness, boundaries, and managing the emotional impact of advocacy.

[Explore the Resource →](#)

Mental Wellness as a Young Changemaker

Organization: UNICEF Youth-Led Action

Format: Online guide

Best for: Young changemakers who want to protect their mental wellbeing while working for change.

What You'll Find: Practical strategies for managing emotions, stress, and difficult experiences, setting boundaries, practicing self-compassion, asking for help, and building supportive relationships throughout your advocacy journey.

[Explore the Guide →](#)

Supporting the Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Young Changemakers

Organization: UNICEF Adolescent Mental Health Hub

Format: Training toolkit with facilitator guide, slides, and participant workbook

Best for: Youth leaders and organizations who want a structured way to learn about wellbeing in advocacy work.

What You'll Find: Builds skills in emotional awareness, stress management, healthy habits, boundary setting, problem-solving, communication, and knowing when and where to seek help. Great for running a group session.

[Explore the Training Toolkit →](#)

Your Voice Is Your Power Resource Hub

Organization: Active Minds

Format: Online resource collection

Best for: Young people building mental health advocacy skills while caring for their own wellbeing.

What You'll Find: Tools, stories, and activities organized around self-advocacy, community and school advocacy, self-care, digital wellbeing, and taking action – including advocacy burnout, setting boundaries, and supporting friends.

[Explore Your Voice Is Your Power →](#)

Mental Health Support

Mental health information, coping tools, and ways to find support when you need it.

Mental Health Resource Center

Organization: The Jed Foundation (JED)

Format: Online resource collection

Best for: Teens and young adults looking for practical information on coping, self-care, and finding help.

What You'll Find: Youth-friendly information organized around feelings and common challenges: stress, anxiety, loneliness, grief, relationships, social media, academic stress, helping a friend, and finding affordable mental health care.

[Explore the JED Resource Center →](#)

Mental Health Course for Young People

Organization: The Trevor Project

Format: Six-part video course

Best for: Young people who want to learn about mental health, self-care, and supporting friends.

What You'll Find: Introduces mental health and practical ways to care for yourself and others such as recognizing when someone may be struggling, understanding and communicating feelings, taking action, and finding resources.

[Watch the Course →](#)

Youth Wellness & Wellbeing Resource Library

Organization: Bridge to Resilience

Format: Online resource library

Best for: Young people building resilience and managing difficult emotions.

What You'll Find: A free library of plain-language, evidence-informed resources, quick guides, and printable activities. Also helpful for youth leaders and mentors starting conversations about wellbeing.

[Explore the Library →](#)

Asking for Help: Resources for Teens and Young Adults

Organization: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Format: Short videos

Best for: Teens and young adults who are struggling and not sure how to ask for help.

What You'll Find: Approachable tips for reaching out to someone you trust and starting a conversation about your thoughts, feelings, and mental health. One video is for teens; one introduces young adults to NAMI's supports.

[How Teens Can Ask for Help →](#) | [How Young Adults Can Seek Help →](#) | [Resources →](#)

Boundaries & Burnout

Recognizing stress, setting boundaries, sharing your story safely, and knowing when to step back.

Strategic Sharing Guide

Organization: Pathways Research and Training Center (Portland State University)

Format: Guide (PDF)

Best for: Youth advocates and peer supporters who share their lived experience.

What You'll Find: Helps you think through when, why, and how to share your personal story so sharing stays purposeful and you stay in control. Emphasizes healthy boundaries, self-awareness, and wellness.

[Open the Guide →](#)

Are You in a Healthy Relationship with Social Media?

Organization: Youth MOVE National

Format: Interactive experience

Best for: People ages 29 and under who want to check in on their relationship with social media.

What You'll Find: An interactive experience that helps you reflect on the role social media plays in your life and find ways to keep your digital wellbeing in balance. Find it in the Youth MOVE National resource collection.

[Find It at Youth MOVE National →](#)

Own Your Story & Be a Resource for Change

Organization: Youth MOVE National Peer Center

Format: Online course (Youth Peer Support 101)

Best for: Youth peer supporters and advocates using lived experience in their work.

What You'll Find: Explores how lived experience can create change and open meaningful career pathways, with attention to self-awareness, wellness, and healthy boundaries. Find it in the Youth MOVE National resource collection.

[Find It at Youth MOVE National →](#)

Connection & Community

Resources that help you connect with peers, mentors, supportive adults, and collective action.

Youth MOVE National Resource Collection

Organization: Youth MOVE National

Format: Online resource collection

Best for: Youth advocates, peer supporters, and youth-serving organizations.

What You'll Find: Tools on youth engagement and advocacy, empowerment, youth peer support, mental health and wellness, strategic planning, and supporting youth. Includes Peer Center courses, issue briefs, implementation guides, and webinars.

[Explore Youth MOVE National →](#)

7 Cups Teen Community

Organization: 7 Cups

Format: Online peer support community

Best for: Teens ages 13–17 looking for a place to connect with other young people, talk about what they're going through, and find support.

What You'll Find: A dedicated teen community with support rooms, chat, discussion topics, and opportunities to connect with other teens. The community includes teen listeners and trained adults who follow specific guidelines for supporting teens.

[Explore the 7 Cups Teen Community →](#)

Find a Mentor

Organization: MENTOR

Format: Online mentoring directory

Best for: Young people looking for a mentor or a local mentoring program.

What You'll Find: MENTOR's Mentoring Connector is a national database of mentoring programs that can help young people search for mentoring opportunities in their community. Mentors can provide guidance, encouragement, and connection with caring adults.

[Find a Mentor →](#)

Youth Era Resources

Organization: Youth Era

Format: Online resource collection and youth support resources

Best for: Young people and youth peer supporters looking for practical ways to build connection, manage stress, develop skills, and support wellbeing.

What You'll Find: Free, youth-centered worksheets and guides covering topics like self-care, burnout, boundaries, communication, advocacy, emotional awareness, and peer check-ins. Youth Era also offers drop-in spaces where young people can connect with peers, build leadership skills, and work toward their goals.

[Explore Youth Era Resources →](#)

Finding Resources

How to find, reach, and actually use the supports in your community – for yourself or a peer.

Connecting the Dots: Helping Youth Access Community Resources Effectively

Organization: Families Together in New York State

Format: Video training

Best for: Covers types of community resources, common barriers, communication strategies, and strength-based, culturally responsive resource navigation. It's made for New York, but the strategies work anywhere, including Michigan. It encourages you to build a personal resource map.

[Open the Guide →](#)

Key Strategies for Resource Navigation

1. Start With Strengths

Ask what is already working. Build from the supports, people, and preferences a young person already has before focusing on needs.

2. Create a Resource Map

List resources by area so you can find them easily later, including mental health and peer support, healthcare, school and education, housing, jobs and employment, transportation, and recreation and community.

3. Identify Barriers

Plan around what might get in the way such as transportation, cost, eligibility requirements, waitlists, technology access, lack of information, or stigma.

4. Practice Reaching Out

Build confidence by practicing by making phone calls, writing emails, asking questions, following up, and keeping contact information organized.

5. Follow Up

Check whether the connection actually worked. If it didn't meet the need, look for another option together.

Key Strategies for Resource Navigation

Areas	Place/Person	Phone/Website/Notes
Mental health		
Peer support		
School supports		
Housing		
Jobs		
Transportation		
Fun & community		

Key Strategies for Resource Navigation

- Your county's Community Mental Health (CMH) agency
- Youth Peer Support services
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services
- Michigan Works!
- School counselors and school social workers
- LGBTQ+ community centers
- Local health departments
- Family support organizations
- Drop-in centers and youth programs

Michigan Resources

Resources that help you connect with peers, mentors, supportive adults, and collective action.

Michigan Youth Peer Support

Organization: Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH)

Format: Youth peer support program and information

Best for: Michigan youth looking for connection with a trained Youth Peer Support Specialist who understands lived experience.

What You'll Find: Youth Peer Support (YPS) services connects eligible young people with trained Youth Peer Support Specialists (YPSSs) who use their own lived experience to provide support, encouragement, and help with self-advocacy and navigating challenges. Contact your local Community Mental Health (CMH) agency to learn more about YPSS services in your area and whether you may be eligible for YPS.

[Learn About Michigan Youth Peer Support →](#)

Michigan 211

Organization: Michigan 211

Format: Statewide resource directory and helpline

Best for: Michigan youth who are looking for local mental health, basic needs, community, or other support services.

What You'll Find: A statewide directory that connects people with local programs and services. You can search online or contact 211 to find resources in your area, including help related to mental health, housing, food, transportation, and other needs.

[Find Michigan Resources →](#)

Get Help Now: Behavioral Health

Organization: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

Format: Online resource map and service directory

Best for: Michigan youth who need help finding local behavioral health services.

What You'll Find: A county-by-county resource map with contact information for Michigan Community Mental Health Services Programs and regional Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans. The page also connects people with 24-hour crisis support through 988 and the Michigan Crisis & Access Line.

[Find Michigan Resources →](#)

Michigan Peer Warmline

Organization: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

Format: Peer support warmline

Best for: Michigan youth and young adults who want to talk with someone who has lived experience with mental health, substance use, trauma, or personal crisis.

What You'll Find: A statewide warmline staffed by certified peer support specialists who use their own lived experience to support and empower callers. The warmline is available seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. at 1-888-PEER-753.

[Learn About the Michigan Peer Warmline →](#)

Crisis Support – You Don't Have to Go Through It Alone

Call or text 988

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – free, confidential, 24/7 **988lifeline.org**

Michigan Crisis and Access Line (MiCAL)

Michigan's 988 partner - call or text 988 in Michigan
mical.michigan.gov

Text HOME to 741741

Crisis Text Line – free, 24/7 text support **crisistextline.org**

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Advocacy is important work. Making time for rest, connection, boundaries, self-compassion, and support helps make sure your voice can keep making a difference over time. For more support, please visit **acmh-mi.org**.