



## Seattle Expands Youth Mental Health Supports with Launch of Talkspace Virtual Therapy

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*Free online therapy currently available for local teens and young adults; additional telehealth provider partners to be announced mid-December*

SEATTLE--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 10, 2024-- Today, the City of Seattle announced a new partnership between the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) and [Talkspace](#), a leading online behavioral health care company, to expand virtual therapy and mental health services for local teens and young adults. This program will give more than 55,000 teens and young adults access to confidential, high-quality mental health support through Talkspace's secure digital platform, addressing the urgent need for accessible mental health care amidst a looming youth mental health crisis.

Free online therapy and virtual support from Talkspace are now available to Seattle young people ages 13 to 24. Effective immediately, eligible Seattle residents can sign up and get matched with a dedicated, Washington state-licensed provider and receive care through **unlimited, asynchronous messaging therapy**, as well as **one live video session per month**. They will also get **24/7 access to Talkspace Go**, a self-guided mental health program for additional resources tailored to issues facing teens and young adults. This suite of services is designed to help young people navigate the challenges of daily life, including stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. All care takes place on a secure and encrypted platform, compliant with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

DEEL's partnership with Talkspace is funded as part of the [\\$14.55 million joint investment from Seattle Public Schools \(SPS\) and the City of Seattle to expand mental health supports for Seattle youth](#). In August Mayor Bruce Harrell and SPS Superintendent Dr. Brent Jones announced new investments intended to align, strengthen, and expand student safety and mental health support for the 2024-2025 school year. Alongside school safety and violence prevention services, a core element of the proposed suite of supports is increased access to mental health resources including in-person counseling at school-based health centers and telehealth therapy services.

"Our young people are facing unprecedented mental health challenges, and my administration remains committed to building a comprehensive ecosystem of services to support the wellbeing of all Seattle students," said Mayor Harrell. "The City's [report](#) on the youth mental health landscape found that expanding free telehealth and virtual therapy options are impactful ways to improve mental health outcomes and allow students to match with providers who can offer culturally-competent care. This new partnership with Talkspace will remove barriers to accessing counseling and support, ensuring our students have the resources they need to build resilience and healthy coping skills to thrive in school and life."

With Talkspace, Seattle youth can access evidence-based online mental health care. This initiative builds on Talkspace's proven track record of partnering with schools, municipalities, and community organizations across the country to make mental health care as accessible as possible for the young people who need it the most. Beyond Talkspace, additional resources such as professional development and consulting, designed for educators, parents/caregivers, mentors, and other trusted adults, will be available in early 2025.

"Supporting the emotional well-being of Seattle's young people is a top priority for DEEL," said Dr. Dwane Chappelle, Director of the Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning. "We know that youth perform better academically, socially, and emotionally when they have the support they need. By partnering with Talkspace, we're expanding our capabilities to ensure our teens and young adults have greater access to free and convenient mental health care. With this unique resource we seek for our young people to cultivate the wellness to thrive not only in their learning, but in life."

[CDC](#) reveals rising rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among teenagers, with 40% of high school students feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row that they stopped doing their usual activities. As a generation, Gen Z, which includes both teens and young adults in their 20s, report the poorest mental health ([Walton Foundation/Gallup](#)). By offering flexible digital mental health solutions, this partnership seeks to eliminate the barriers to therapy, ensuring that high-quality mental health care is both accessible, convenient, and timely.

"Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning has taken another significant step towards creating accessible and affordable mental health care for teens and young adults," said Dr. Jon Cohen, CEO of Talkspace. "This initiative ensures that young people can now access high-quality mental health care in a way that's flexible, private, and empowering, enabling them to take control of their mental health journey."

To sign up for free online therapy now, Seattle residents ages 13 to 24 can visit [www.talkspace.com/seattle](http://www.talkspace.com/seattle).

Seattle youth also have access to Talkspace Go, a self-guided therapy app tailored for individuals. To get started, young people can download the Talkspace Go app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and visit [talkspace.com/seattle](http://talkspace.com/seattle) for more information.

The City will be announcing additional telehealth therapy providers for Seattle youth and young adults in the coming weeks. To receive timely announcements, visit DEEL's [website](#) for more information or [sign up for our email list](#) to get notifications about upcoming opportunities delivered to your inbox.

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For Talkspace, Miranda Hunter | [mhunter@sloanep.com](mailto:mhunter@sloanep.com)

For Seattle DEEL, Jonah Spangenthal-Lee | [jonah.spangenthal-lee@seattle.gov](mailto:jonah.spangenthal-lee@seattle.gov)

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