

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for downloading Mental Health America's 2022 Back-to-School Toolkit.

If you are reading this, then you probably have a vested interest in the nation's children as they start another school year. As we continue living with the lingering pandemic, gun violence, and social unrest – all of which unfairly and disproportionately affect BIPOC communities – it is imperative to remember that our youth are also dealing with the intense influences and emotions of growing up in a rapidly changing digital age, which we do not fully understand.

Now, more than ever, school-age children need our support, and MHA remains committed to this undertaking. Early-in-life experiences, including adverse experiences and trauma, shape a person's future. Knowing and addressing the early signs of mental health conditions – and understanding the roots of resilience and positive coping – can increase the chances for well-being, recovery, and positive outcomes. In this toolkit, we hope you find ways to interrupt negative feelings and behaviors and promote positive life skills for mental health.

MHA created each of these resources for both the adult – parent, caregiver, teacher, coach, school administrator – and the child. While some of these topics span generations of common experiences, such as a hard home life, losing someone, or fitting in with peers, others, such as dealing with the pressures and temptations of social media, are new to our younger cohorts. In this toolkit, we delve into a variety of feelings and behaviors and offer suggestions to help young people thrive.

One of the easiest ways to help a child is to validate that their emotions are real and that they are worthy of our respect and attention. MHA assembled these resources with empathy for all children and caregivers, without judgment or criticism, but with compassion and hope.

Children look to the adults in their lives for cues on how to react and deal with tough events. If you are an adult caregiver, remember to take care of your emotional health, too, and seek help or guidance when things are overwhelming.

We thank you for your commitment to the mental health of all youth.



Schroeder Stribling

Schroeder Stribling, President & CEO
Mental Health America

This year's toolkit includes:

Key Messages

Drop-in Article

Social Media Post Samples and Images

Virtual Events

Resource List

Handouts for Adults

Handouts for Kids and Teens

Worksheet for Kids and Teens

Posters

Social Media Cheat Sheet Infographic

QUESTIONS?

If you have further questions about the toolkit, please contact Danielle Fritze, Vice President of Public Education and Design, at dfritze@mhanational.org.