

BACK TO SCHOOL 2018



Don't suffer in silence

MHA
Mental Health America
B4Stage4

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A MESSAGE FROM MHA

As students head back to school, they can be dealing with a host of emotions. Young people today deal with a lot – and those who are struggling with mental health problems often must deal with them on their own – because we don't recognize the seriousness of the problems until kids begin to get in trouble at school. That's too late, and it often doesn't result in the right kind of help.

MHA wants to remind students and parents that mental health issues are common and treatable and should be addressed as soon as possible - before Stage 4. Mental health problems are best dealt with through health, educational, and social services and supports.

This year, MHA has developed tools and resources for young people to help them understand the effects trauma can have on the mind and how traumatic events may trigger the onset of mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and psychosis.

The toolkit is designed for MHA affiliates, advocates, and organizations of all types to use with youth and school personnel to raise awareness of the importance of proactively addressing early warning signs of mental health conditions in hopes of encouraging young people to seek help and support as soon as possible so that they can address issues Before Stage 4.

While we can't completely shield young people from all the stressful or traumatic situations they may be facing, we can help them learn to recognize when they may need help. And we can help the adults with whom they interact do the same.



Paul Gionfriddo
President & CEO
Mental Health America

INTRODUCTION

The 2018 Back to School Toolkit is designed for MHA Affiliates, advocates, and organizations of all types to use with parents, youth and school personnel to raise awareness of the importance of mental health issues that start during the youth.

By using the toolkit materials, you will help members of your community:

- Be aware of the relationship between trauma and mental health problems in youth;
- Learn strategies for recognizing the early warning signs of common mental health conditions; and
- Access resources for finding treatment and help in times of crisis.

This year's toolkit includes:

Media Materials

- Key Messages and Stats
- Drop-In Article

Social Media and Web Components

- Sample Social Media Posts
- Social Media Images

Handouts/Poster

- Fact Sheet: Understanding Trauma
- Fact Sheet: Recognizing Depression
- Fact Sheet: Recognizing Anxiety
- Fact Sheet: Recognizing Psychosis
- Fact Sheet: Preventing Suicide
- Worksheet: Keep Your Mind Grounded
- Poster: Don't Suffer in Silence

In addition to the materials included in this toolkit, MHA has created a wealth of web content for young people and adults that can easily be linked to and shared in electronic newsletters and over social media.

Questions?

If you have further questions about Back to School, please contact Danielle Fritze, Senior Director of Public Education and Visual Communication at dfritze@mentalhealthamerica.net.

KEY MESSAGES AND STATS

Messages

- Mental Health America (MHA) has developed its 2018 Back to School Toolkit to help increase understanding of how traumatic events can trigger mental health issues and is providing materials on the topic for parents, school personnel, and young people.
- Half of all mental health disorders begin by the age of 14. About 75 percent begin by the age of 24. Early identification and early intervention in children and young adults is essential to their current and future mental wellbeing.
- Mental health issues are common and treatable and should be addressed as soon as possible - before Stage 4.
- It's important for parents, caregivers, and school personnel to know the signs that a young person is struggling with his or her mental health and be willing to help.
- While we can't completely shield young people from all the traumatic situations they may face, we can help them learn to manage their emotions and reactions in ways that cultivate resilience.
- When someone just doesn't "feel right" and isn't sure why, it's important to know the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and seek help.
- Free, confidential, and anonymous screening tools are available at [MHAScreening.org](https://mhascreening.org) for parents and youth to find out if a young person may have symptoms of a behavioral, emotional or cognitive disorder.
- Don't suffer in silence! Young people should find someone they trust and start a conversation about their mental health. Crisis lines are available to call or text if needed.
- If you are concerned about your child and think he or she may be dealing with a mental health issue, reach out and start a conversation. Don't assume it's just "kids being kids" when your gut tells you it may be something more. Consider taking the parents screen at mhascreening.org to check symptoms that you are witnessing.

Stats

11% of people aged 2-17 years old in the U.S. currently have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions.
[<http://www.nschdata.org/browse/data-snapshots/nsch-profiles/mental-health?geo=>]

At some point in their lives, half of all adolescents will experience a mental health disorder.
[Merikangas KR, He JP, Burstein M, Swanson SA, Avenevoli S, Cui L, Benjet C, Georgiades K, Swendsen J. Lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in U.S. adolescents: results from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication--Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A). *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2010 Oct;49(10):980-9. PMID: 20855043]

Nearly one-third of adolescents aged 13-18 will experience an anxiety disorder in their lifetime.
[Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of 12-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27. PMID: 15939839]

12.8% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17 (or 3.1 million adolescents) have had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.
[2016 NSDUH: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-DetTabs-2016/NSDUH-DetTabs-2016.pdf>]

Feel free to supplement these messages and statistics with language from the fact sheets and other materials included in this toolkit.

DROP IN ARTICLE

Use this article in your next e-blast or share with your local schools to include in their next newsletter.

Summer is wrapping up, and many are prepping to get back in the swing of things with school. If the thought of going back to school fills you with dread and anxiety, you're not alone.

If something just doesn't "feel right" and you aren't sure why, you may be dealing with a mental health condition. If you've dealt with traumatic events in your life, that may be a contributing factor.

Did you know that half of all mental health disorders begin by the age of 14, and about 75 percent begin by the age of 24? But it's also important to know that mental health issues are common and treatable.

Don't suffer in silence! It's important to know the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and seek help. Free, confidential, and anonymous screening tools are available at MHAScreening.org to find out if you or someone you care about may have symptoms of a behavioral, emotional or cognitive disorder.

Mental Health America (MHA) has also developed tools and resources to help increase your understanding of how traumatic events can trigger mental health concerns. You can learn how to understand trauma's impact on mental health, and recognize mental health concerns like anxiety, psychosis and depression. While you do not get to choose what happens to you, you do get to choose how you respond. Learn more at mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school. This school year make smart choices about how to deal with difficult or uncomfortable feelings - and learn why your mental health matters.

Just like physical health, taking care of mental health struggles early can help to prevent more serious problems from developing in the future. If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be experiencing a mental health problem, it is important to act before Stage 4. Start the conversation. Seek help from a trusted adult. Remember there is nothing to be ashamed of and that there is help and hope. Don't know how to start the conversation? MHA has tips and information to help get you started at bit.ly/tips4talking.

There are also serious signs that someone is in crisis and needs more immediate help. These include thoughts or plans of hurting oneself or another person. If you or someone you know is in crisis call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), text "MHA" to 741741, or call 911.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Download the Toolkit

Because of Twitter's new 280 character limit, all of these work for Facebook and Twitter.

- Half of all #mentalhealth conditions start by 14. Understanding how #trauma can trigger mental health issues in youth can help parents, teachers, and young people prevent crises #b4stage4. [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18
- About 75% of all #mentalhealth conditions begin by the age of 24. We can do more for young people through early identification and intervention. Download the #B2S18 toolkit as part of your #backtoschool prep: [bit.ly/mhabts]
- The #BackToSchool Toolkit helps increase understanding of how traumatic events can trigger #mentalhealth issues and provides materials on the topic for parents, school personnel, and young people: [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18
- #BackToSchool season is upon us! Are you keeping #mentalhealth in mind as part of your preparations? Download the toolkit to learn more about youth #mentalhealth: [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18
- Making the transition #backtoschool is all about preparation. Is #mentalhealth a part of yours? Download the toolkit for #B2S18: [bit.ly/mhabts]
- How do young people cope with #trauma? What can you do to support the students in your life this #backtoschool season? Download the free toolkit to learn more: [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18
- #Trauma can happen to anyone, at any age. It's important to be aware of how trauma can trigger #mentalhealth issues in young people and prevent #mentalillness before crisis - #b4stage4. [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18
- How does #trauma trigger #mentalhealth issues in young people? Don't be unprepared this #backtoschool season. Our young people shouldn't suffer in silence. Learn what you can do to help: [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18
- Young people deal with a lot, and #backtoschool season may be conjuring up a lot of #anxiety. It's important to understand how to talk about #mentalhealth this school year. [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18
- While we can't completely shield young people from all the #trauma they may face, we can help them learn to recognize when they need help dealing with mental health. Download the #backtoschool toolkit: [bit.ly/mhabts] #B2S18

Calls to Action

- Free, confidential, and anonymous screening tools are available at [MHAScreening.org](https://www.MHAScreening.org) for parents and youth to find out if a young person may have symptoms of a behavioral, emotional or cognitive disorder. [MHAScreening.org] #B2S18
- If something just doesn't "feel right" and you aren't sure why, it's important to know the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and seek help. You can get started with a #mentalhealth screen: [MHAScreening.org] #B2S18
- If you're concerned that your child may be dealing with a #mentalhealth issue, reach out. Don't assume it's just "kids being kids" if your gut tells you it may be something more. Consider taking the parents' screen at [MHAScreening.org](https://www.MHAScreening.org) to check symptoms that you see. #B2S18
- Telling someone "I'm not okay" can be easier said than done. MHA's 2018 mPower winners developed the NotOK App to make that process easier. You can download the app to prepare for #backtoschool: [<https://www.notokapp.com/>] #B2S18

Hashtags

- #backtoschool
- #backtoschool2018
- #B2S18
- #B2S

Links

- URL: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/bts>
- Shortened: bit.ly/mhabts

IMAGES

Download and save the images provided for use on your social media platforms or websites. All images can be downloaded by visiting mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school-2018-toolkit-download, then right-clicking on the image and selecting "Save image as."

Shareable Images
(Formatted for Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram)



Facebook or Twitter Cover Images



Profile Images



BACK TO SCHOOL: *Understanding Trauma*

Trauma occurs when something bad happens that makes you feel unsafe and scared. And because this experience was a big deal, it has an ongoing impact on your life.

Lots of different kinds of events can cause trauma. Some common examples are:

BEING BULLIED

BEING ABUSED

SEEING SOMETHING VIOLENT

LOSING A LOVED ONE

NOT FEELING SAFE IN YOUR HOME

NOT FEELING SAFE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

LIVING THROUGH A DISASTER LIKE A BAD ACCIDENT, FIRE, OR HURRICANE

BEING EXPOSED TO SOMETHING BAD THAT HAPPENED TO A LOVED ONE

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Your brain can be put under a lot of stress if you are experiencing trauma over a long period of time or dealing with an extreme event. When this happens, it's possible to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. If you have some of the symptoms below, you might be dealing with PTSD.¹

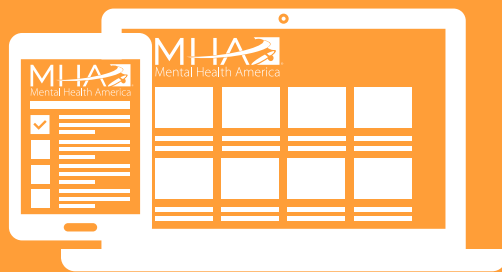
- STRESSFUL MEMORIES OF THE EVENT THAT POP UP OFTEN AND DISTRACT YOU DURING THE DAY
 - NIGHTMARES OR TROUBLE SLEEPING
- FLASHBACKS WHICH MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE RELIVING THE TRAUMATIC EVENT
 - FEELING JUMPY AND ON EDGE
- FEELING EMOTIONALLY OR PHYSICALLY BAD WHEN YOU ARE REMINDED OF THE EVENT
 - TROUBLE CONCENTRATING
- NEGATIVE FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT YOURSELF, OTHER PEOPLE, OR THE WORLD
 - DIFFICULTY FEELING POSITIVE OR HAPPY EMOTIONS
- DESIRE TO AVOID PEOPLE, ACTIVITIES, OR PLACES THAT REMIND YOU OF WHAT HAPPENED
 - ANGRY OUTBURSTS
- TROUBLE REMEMBERING THINGS THAT HAPPENED BEFORE OR AFTER THE TRAUMATIC EVENT
 - BLAMING YOURSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED

What Next?

Trauma is hard for the mind and body and you may not feel “normal” for a little while. To reverse the effects of trauma and PTSD, you have to teach your mind and body how to feel safe again. Learning how to feel safe again is best done with support. Some things that might help include: talking about what happened, being in tune with your body’s reactions to stress, changing upsetting and untrue thoughts that are in your head because of the trauma, or finding ways to help you sleep. If you find you can’t quiet your mind, try using MHA’s “Keep Your Mind Grounded” worksheet. If you need help starting a conversation, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/timetotalk for tips on how to get started.

Traumatic events can also cause people to start having symptoms of anxiety, depression, or psychosis for the first time in their lives.

SCREENING IS AN ANONYMOUS, FREE, AND PRIVATE WAY TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND IF YOU ARE SHOWING WARNING SIGNS OF A CONDITION. A SCREENING IS NOT A DIAGNOSIS, BUT IT CAN BE A HELPFUL TOOL FOR STARTING A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.



TAKE THE YOUTH SCREEN
AT MHASCREENING.ORG

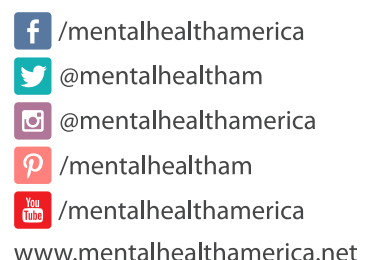
If you or someone you know is struggling, it is important to reach out for help as soon as possible. There are doctors and counselors who have special training to help people who have been through traumatic events, and the sooner you get help, the more likely you are to get better.

TRAINED CRISIS COUNSELORS ARE AVAILABLE 24/7 BY TEXTING “MHA” TO 741-741 OR CALLING 1-800-273-TALK(8255).

YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD THE NOTOK APP ON GOOGLE PLAY OR THE APP STORE. THE NOTOK APP ALLOWS YOU TO IDENTIFY UP TO 5 PEOPLE WHO WILL RECEIVE A NOTIFICATION WHEN YOU PRESS A BUTTON INDICATING THAT YOU’RE NOT OK.

Sources

¹ American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.



BACK TO SCHOOL: *Recognizing Depression*

It's not unusual to have "the blues" or feel down occasionally—especially when you are in middle or high school. Bodies go through major chemical changes as you mature. The expectations of your teachers, family and friends—and the fear of not meeting them—can create stress and worry. When things go wrong at school or at home, you may feel unsure of yourself or wonder how you fit in. The idea of preparing for college or making decisions about your future can be overwhelming. On top of that, you face choices about friendships, sex, alcohol, and drugs. You may feel like you are getting mixed messages from parents, teachers, friends, and society.

Feeling down from time to time is different than having depression. When you have depression, it feels like there is a dark cloud over everyone and everything, and it is hard to feel good.

3.1

MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE AGES
12-17 DEAL WITH PERIODS OF
MAJOR DEPRESSION.¹

78%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 11-17 WHO TOOK
MHA'S DEPRESSION SCREEN SCORED POSITIVE
FOR MODERATE TO SEVERE DEPRESSION.²

Signs of Depression

It is important to recognize depression so it can be treated. The earlier you get help, the sooner you can get back to feeling like yourself again. If you have some of the symptoms below, you might be dealing with depression.³

- HAVING TROUBLE WITH SCHOOLWORK
- NOT PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES YOU USED TO ENJOY
- SADNESS AND HOPELESSNESS
- LACK OF ENTHUSIASM, ENERGY OR MOTIVATION
- ANGER AND RAGE
- OVERREACTION TO CRITICISM
- FEELINGS OF BEING UNABLE TO MEET EXPECTATIONS
- POOR SELF-ESTEEM OR GUILT
- PROBLEMS WITH MAKING DECISIONS, LACK OF CONCENTRATION OR FORGETFULNESS
- RESTLESSNESS AND AGITATION
- CHANGES IN EATING OR SLEEPING PATTERNS
- REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS, TEACHERS, OR OTHER AUTHORITY FIGURES
- SUICIDAL THOUGHTS OR ACTIONS

Don't Suffer in Silence

Depression can make people feel hopeless about their current circumstances or the future. Left untreated, depression can cause some young people to think about doing drastic or violent things.

If you see suspicious posts on social media or hear people say things that suggest they might be planning to hurt themselves or other people, tell an adult right away. If you feel this way, don't suffer in silence! It is important to remember that there is help and there is hope.

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, seek immediate help by calling 911 or going to the closest emergency room. Trust your instincts, and if necessary, break a confidence in order to save a life.

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TAKE THE YOUTH SCREEN
AT [MHASCREENING.ORG](https://mhascreening.org)

If you just don't feel right or notice that someone else is struggling, it's important to get help sooner rather than later. Reach out to a friend or trusted adult and tell them how you feel or that you are worried about someone. If you need help starting a conversation, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/timetotalk for tips on how to get started.

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Sources

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 17-5044, NSDUH Series H-52). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

² Proprietary data from mhascreening.org.

³ American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.




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BACK TO SCHOOL: *Recognizing Anxiety*

Being nervous, uneasy, or worried can be summed up as feeling anxious. Everyone feels anxious from time to time, and often for good reason—you may have a big test coming up, be changing schools, have concerns about relationships with friends, feel self-conscious in certain situations, or have a very realistic fear of something. In most cases, anxious feelings pass relatively quickly.

Having anxious feelings is different than having an anxiety disorder. When you have an anxiety disorder, anxious feelings are extreme, can happen without warning or reason, have physical symptoms, and last for extended amounts of time.

31.9%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 13-18
HAVE AN ANXIETY DISORDER.¹

1/2

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 11-17 WHO TOOK MHA'S ANXIETY
SCREEN SCORED POSITIVE FOR SEVERE ANXIETY.²

Types of Anxiety Disorders

There are many different types of anxiety disorders, but some of the most common are Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Phobias, Social Anxiety Disorder, and Panic Disorder. Here are some of the signs for each.³

GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

- FEELINGS OF CONSTANT, EXAGGERATED WORRY AND TENSION
- ALWAYS EXPECTING THE WORST
- DIFFICULTY RELAXING OR SLEEPING
- PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS SUCH AS TIREDNESS, TREMBLING, MUSCLE TENSION, HEADACHES, IRRITABILITY OR HOT FLASHES
- TIGHTNESS IN YOUR CHEST OR KNOTS IN YOUR STOMACH

PHOBIAS

- BEING AFRAID OF AN OBJECT OR SITUATION THAT IS ACTUALLY RELATIVELY SAFE, BUT THE THOUGHT OF FACING IT BRINGS ON A PANIC ATTACK OR SEVERE ANXIETY
- INTENSE FEAR OF BEING HUMILIATED OR EMBARRASSED IN FRONT OF OTHER PEOPLE WHICH KEEPS YOU FROM BEING SOCIAL
- HAVING INTENSE ANXIETY ABOUT BEING IN PLACES OR SITUATIONS THAT MIGHT MAKE YOU FEEL HELPLESS OR TRAPPED, OFTEN MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO LEAVE THE HOUSE

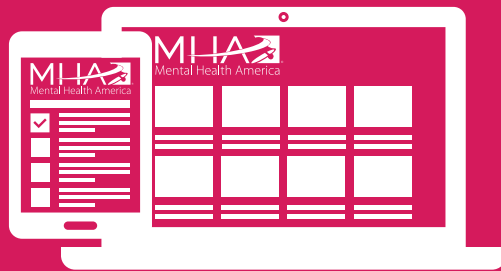
PANIC DISORDER

- UNEXPECTED ATTACKS OF EXTREME TERROR WHICH OFTEN HAVE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS LIKE SHORTNESS OF BREATH OR RAPID BREATHING, SHAKING, CHOKING SENSATION, SWEATING, AND FAST HEART RATE
- FEELING LIKE YOU'RE LOSING CONTROL, GOING CRAZY, OR DYING
- INTENSE FEAR BETWEEN ATTACKS ABOUT WHEN & WHERE THE NEXT ONE WILL HAPPEN

SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

- EXTREME FEAR OF SOCIAL OR COMPETITIVE SITUATIONS
- BEING TERRIFIED OF HUMILIATION, REJECTION, OR BEING JUDGED NEGATIVELY
- PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS SUCH AS RAPID HEART RATE, SWEATING, AND RACING THOUGHTS AT THE IDEA OF INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE OR BEING IN LARGE GROUPS

SCREENING IS AN ANONYMOUS, FREE, AND PRIVATE WAY TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND IF YOU ARE SHOWING WARNING SIGNS OF A CONDITION. A SCREENING IS NOT A DIAGNOSIS, BUT IT CAN BE A HELPFUL TOOL FOR STARTING A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.



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BACK TO SCHOOL: *Recognizing Psychosis*

Psychosis can be scary for those who deal with it and makes it hard to tell what is real or not real.

Young people who experience psychosis often say "something is not quite right." Sudden bizarre changes in thoughts and behaviors are some of the key signs of psychosis.

3%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE DEAL
WITH PSYCHOSIS.¹

86%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 11-17 WHO TOOK MHA'S
PSYCHOSIS SCREEN SCORED AT RISK FOR PSYCHOSIS.²

Signs of Psychosis

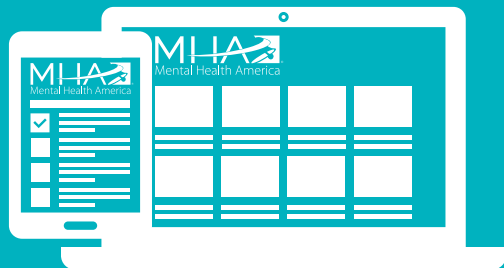
It is important to recognize psychosis so it can be treated. The earlier you get help, the sooner you can get back to feeling like yourself again. If you have some of the symptoms below, you might be dealing with psychosis.³

- FEELING LIKE YOUR BRAIN IS NOT WORKING
- FEELING LIKE YOUR MIND OR EYES ARE PLAYING TRICKS ON THEM
- SEEING, HEARING, TASTING, OR BELIEVING THINGS OTHERS DON'T
- HEARING KNOCKING, TAPPING, CLICKING, OR YOUR NAMED BEING CALLED WHEN OTHERS DON'T
- CONFUSED THOUGHTS
- VIVID AND STRANGE THOUGHTS AND IDEAS
- SUDDEN AND BIZARRE CHANGES IN EMOTIONS
- PECULIAR BEHAVIOR THAT SEEMS UNUSUAL
- INCREASED SENSITIVITY TO LIGHT, SOUNDS, SMELLS, OR TOUCH
- FEELING THAT PEOPLE ARE "OUT TO GET YOU"
- BEING FEARFUL OR SUSPICIOUS WITHOUT REASON
- NOT WANTING TO BE AROUND OTHER PEOPLE
- SEVERE PROBLEMS IN MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS
- TROUBLE SPEAKING, WRITING, FOCUSING, OR MANAGING SIMPLE TASKS

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT REAL PEOPLE THINK PSYCHOSIS FEELS LIKE IN THEIR OWN WORDS, IMAGES, AND VIDEOS BY VISITING WWW.MENTALHEALTHAMERICA.NET/FEELSLIKE.

If you just don't feel right or notice that someone else is struggling, it's important to get help. Reach out to a friend or trusted adult and tell them how you feel or that you are worried about someone. If you need help starting a conversation, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/timetotalk for tips on how to get started.

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TAKE THE YOUTH SCREEN
AT MHASCREENING.ORG

Getting treatment as soon as possible helps to make sure that you have the best chance of recovering from mental health problems.

Most of the time, psychosis is treated with a combination of therapy and medication. If you are diagnosed with psychosis, you can still live a full and productive life.

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Sources

¹ Jonna Perälä, MD; Jaana Suvisaari, MD, PhD; Samuli I. Saarni, MD, MSocSc; et al. Lifetime Prevalence of Psychotic and Bipolar I Disorders in a General Population. 2007;64(1):19-28. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.64.1.19

² Proprietary data from mhascreening.org.

³ American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.



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BACK TO SCHOOL: Preventing Suicide

It can be hard to know how to deal with all the things life throws at us. For some, sometimes death seems like the only option. More young people survive suicide attempts than die, but even one death is too many. It's important to know that there is help and there is hope.

SUICIDE IS THE
#2

CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG
YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 10-24.¹

BOYS

ARE MORE LIKELY TO DIE
FROM SUICIDE, WHILE

GIRLS

ARE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT
ATTEMPTING SUICIDE.²

17%

OF STUDENTS SERIOUSLY
CONSIDERED ATTEMPTING
SUICIDE IN THE LAST YEAR.³

Warning Signs

If you think someone you know is considering suicide, look for these warning signs:

- THREATS OF SUICIDE—EITHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT
- VERBAL HINTS SUCH AS "I WON'T BE AROUND MUCH LONGER" OR "IT'S HOPELESS"
- OBSESSION WITH DEATH
- DEPRESSION
- OVERWHELMING SENSE OF GUILT, SHAME OR REJECTION
- PUTTING AFFAIRS IN ORDER
(FOR EXAMPLE, GIVING OR THROWING AWAY FAVORITE POSSESSIONS)
- SUDDEN CHEERFULNESS AFTER A PERIOD OF DEPRESSION
- DRAMATIC CHANGE IN PERSONALITY OR APPEARANCE
- BECOMING ANGERED EASILY
- BIZARRE THOUGHTS
- CHANGES IN EATING OR SLEEPING PATTERNS
- CHANGES IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
- LACK OF INTEREST IN FUTURE PLANS

What Can You Do?

If you think someone you know is at immediate risk of suicide, you need to ACT.

A IS FOR ASK:

ASK YOUR FRIEND IF THEY ARE CONSIDERING SUICIDE OR IF THEY HAVE A PLAN TO END THEIR LIFE. IT'S OKAY TO BE DIRECT, JUST TRY TO BE NON-JUDGEMENTAL AND SHOW YOU CARE.

C IS FOR CARE:

IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, STAY WITH THEM AND OFFER TO GO WITH THEM TO FIND HELP. EVEN IF IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO YOU, TRY YOUR BEST TO SYMPATHIZE AND OFFER SUPPORT. TRY NOT TO LEAVE SOMEONE WITH SUICIDAL THOUGHTS ALONE.

T IS FOR TELL:

TELL A TRUSTED ADULT WHAT'S GOING ON. YOUR FRIEND MIGHT ASK YOU NOT TO TELL ANYONE, BUT YOU SHOULD NEVER KEEP TALK OF SUICIDE A SECRET. IT IS WORTH BREAKING TRUST TO SAVE A LIFE. YOU SHOULD NEVER TRY TO HANDLE THE SITUATION BY YOURSELF. THE MOST HELPFUL THING YOU CAN DO IS GUIDE YOUR FRIEND TO SOMEONE WITH TRAINING.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OF TAKING SUICIDAL ACTION, SEEK HELP BY CALLING 911 OR GOING TO THE CLOSEST EMERGENCY ROOM.

TRAINED CRISIS COUNSELORS ARE AVAILABLE 24/7 BY TEXTING "MHA" TO 741-741 OR CALLING 1-800-273-TALK(8255).

YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD THE NOTOK APP ON GOOGLE PLAY OR THE APP STORE. THE NOTOK APP ALLOWS YOU TO IDENTIFY UP TO 5 PEOPLE WHO WILL RECEIVE A NOTIFICATION WHEN YOU PRESS A BUTTON INDICATING THAT YOU'RE NOT OK.

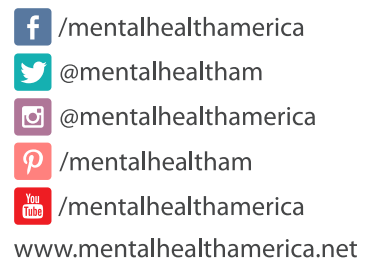
Content adapted from Red Flags "Suicide: A Permanent Solution to a Temporary Problem," and "How to Help."

Sources

¹ CDC. Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html

² Drapeau, C. W., & McIntosh, J. L. (2017, December 24). U.S.A. Suicide: 2016 Official Final Data for America for the America Association of Suicidology. Retrieved from <https://www.suicidology.org/resources/facts-statistics>

³ Kann, L., Kinchen, S., & Shanklin, S. (2014, June 13). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - United States, 2013. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6304a1.htm.



Keep Your Mind Grounded

Do you feel like your mind is constantly racing? It's like a train running through a million thoughts, thinking about the past, the future, or all the things that went wrong or could go wrong. As people struggling with anxiety or trauma, instead of staying grounded on the platform, we run and launch ourselves on the anxiety train and our minds go somewhere else.

When this happens it's hard to sleep, to stay focused, or be around others.

The following exercise is designed to help you calm down and retrain your body and mind to stay grounded in the moment. The exercise can be used when you catch your mind wandering or if you notice you're about to have an anxiety or panic attack.

It's pretty hard to have two different thoughts in your head at one time. The goal is to fill your brain with thoughts on the here and now – and stop allowing your brain to go to the other place. The more you practice, the faster you'll notice your body and brain responding well.

Hop off the Train

BEFORE YOU START, YOU MUST LEARN TO CATCH YOURSELF. IT'S HARD TO PRACTICE COPING SKILLS IF YOU'RE ON THE ANXIETY TRAIN. STOP YOURSELF FROM GETTING ON – OR GET OFF THE TRAIN IF YOU'RE ALREADY ON IT. SOMETIMES WE LITERALLY HAVE TO TELL OUR MINDS, "STOP IT!" AFTER YOU DO THAT, PRACTICE EITHER OF THE TWO STRATEGIES BELOW.

Stay Grounded Physically

TOUCH IS A POWERFUL FORCE FOR KEEPING YOUR MIND IN THE HERE AND NOW.

- AN OBJECT CAN HELP WITH FIDGETING AND REFOCUSING. IF YOU FIND AN OBJECT YOU LIKE, KEEP IT IN ONE HAND AND PULL IT OUT IF YOU NEED IT.
- USE YOUR SURROUNDINGS. IF YOU'RE ON A WALK, TOUCH A FENCE OR A WALL. IF YOU'RE IN THE CAR, FEEL YOUR SEAT OR THE DOOR. IF YOU'RE TRYING TO SLEEP, FEEL THE PILLOW ON YOUR FACE.

HOW DOES IT FEEL? IS IT COLD? ROUGH? DOES IT HAVE PATTERNS? DESCRIBE IT IN YOUR MIND OR OUT LOUD. DESCRIBE IT IN A CALM, RHYTHMIC WAY. TALK THROUGH IT UNTIL YOU FEEL YOUR MIND AND YOUR BODY CALM DOWN. FEEL FREE TO INTERRUPT YOUR THOUGHTS WITH WORDS OF AFFIRMATION LIKE, "I'VE GOT THIS" OR "I'M GOING TO BE OK."

5 Senses

USE THE FOLLOWING PROMPTS TO GO THROUGH YOUR ENVIRONMENT IN FIVE SENSES.

I SEE _____ (Example: I SEE THE WALL)

I FEEL _____ (Example: I FEEL MY TOES)

I HEAR _____ (Example: I HEAR THE CARS)

I SMELL _____ (Example: I SMELL THE DOG)

I TASTE _____ (Example: I TASTE MY DRINK)

YOU CAN TALK THROUGH EACH OF FIVE SENSES. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THEM IN ORDER OR DO ALL FIVE. YOU DON'T EVEN NEED TO MAKE SENSE. AS LONG AS YOUR MIND IS TALKING THROUGH ANY OF THE STATEMENTS ABOVE AND NOT ON ANXIOUS THOUGHTS, YOU'RE GOOD. TRY TO FIND A CALM RHYTHMIC PATTERN. TALK THROUGH IT UNTIL YOU FEEL YOUR MIND AND YOUR BODY CALM DOWN. FEEL FREE TO INTERRUPT YOUR THOUGHTS WITH WORDS OF AFFIRMATION LIKE, "I'VE GOT THIS" OR "I'M GOING TO BE OK."

1/2 OF ALL MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS START BY AGE 14



Don't suffer in silence

SCREENING IS AN ANONYMOUS, FREE, AND PRIVATE WAY TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND IF YOU ARE SHOWING WARNING SIGNS OF A CONDITION. A SCREENING IS NOT A DIAGNOSIS, BUT IT CAN BE A HELPFUL TOOL FOR STARTING A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.

TAKE THE YOUTH SCREEN
AT [MHASCREENING.ORG](https://mhascreening.org)



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