

FOREWORD

During the past year, we at Mental Health America have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the numbers of people experiencing mental health problems. In November 2020, the CDC reported that 44 percent of us were dealing with either depression or anxiety. While historically data shows us that 1 in 5 adults will experience a mental health problem, these days it certainly feels like it's 5 in 5.

Nearly 3 million people have taken an MHA mental health screening during the past twelve months. A million were experiencing depression and hundreds of thousands more were experiencing either anxiety or psychosis. Young people are bearing the brunt of the pandemic, but these mental health impacts cross all generations.

But let us not only focus on dark facts. Let's shine a little light in the darkness.

This year's Mental Health Month toolkit – based once more on the theme of Tools 2 Thrive (especially during a pandemic) – will help us do just that.

Six topics comprise the toolkit – Adapting After Trauma and Stress, Processing Big Changes, Getting Out of Thinking Traps, Radical Acceptance, Taking Time for Yourself, and Dealing with Anger and Frustration. Together, these tools help us develop and employ the resiliency that will take us to brighter days.

When MHA started Mental Health Month in 1949, we did so to communicate the importance of mental health to overall health. Our insights about the factors that lead to mental health for all – including embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all we do – have grown since then. There are things we must do to change the world around us. And there are things we can do for ourselves along the way.

This year, thousands will celebrate this month by using this toolkit. Thank you for joining the effort. Thank you for doing your part to promote mental health for all. And thank you for taking care of your own mental health needs, too.

Together, we live and thrive.



Paul Gionfriddo
President and CEO



INTRODUCTION

While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health. In 2021, our theme of Tools 2 Thrive continues to provide individuals with information and coping strategies around common struggles that affect mental health - especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's toolkit includes:

Media Materials

- Key Messages
- Drop-In Article
- May is Mental Health Month Proclamation

Social Media and Web Components

- Sample Post Language
- Facebook and Twitter Cover Images
- Shareable Images for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- Call to Action Buttons for Screening
- Pop Under (Horizontal) Web Banner
- Wide Skyscraper (Vertical) Web Banner

Posters

- Tools 2 Thrive Poster
- Screening Poster

Fact Sheets

- Accepting Reality
- Adapting After Trauma and Stress
- Dealing with Anger and Frustration
- Getting Out of Thinking Traps
- Processing Big Changes
- Taking Time for Yourself

Worksheets

- Practicing Radical Acceptance
- Processing Trauma and Stress
- Managing Frustration and Anger
- Dealing with the Worst-Case Scenario
- Dealing with Change
- Prioritizing Self-Care

Other

- Outreach Ideas
- Additional Resources

We'll be reaching out in mid-June to ask about your outreach and impact. Make sure to keep track of your efforts by doing things like:

- Counting how many handouts you distribute;
- Tracking media hits and impressions;
- Downloading analytics for social media posts during Mental Health Month;
- If you do a screening event or health fair, keep count of how many people visit your booth and/or take a screen; and
- Conducting a pre/post survey to see how you've increased knowledge about mental health issues among those you reach. Set up a quick survey of up to 10 questions for free online using SurveyMonkey.com.

LIKE OUR MATERIALS? WANT MORE?

MHA merchandise is available through the Mental Health America store to supplement your outreach efforts. Visit the Mental Health America store at <https://store.mhanational.org>.

***MHA Affiliates** – One of the benefits of being an affiliate is getting a discount on materials at the MHA store. Contact Valerie Sterns at vssterns@mhanational.org if you need help getting your affiliate discount code. There will also be extra May is Mental Health Month tools for you ("Affiliate Exclusives") on the Education and Outreach section of the Affiliate Resource Center.

QUESTIONS?

If you have further questions about Mental Health Month, please contact Danielle Fritze, Vice President of Public Education and Design at dfritze@mhanational.org or Emily Skehill, Manager of Public Education & Awareness at eskehill@mhanational.org.