

Mental Health Awareness Month Toolkit

MAY 2026

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. While mental health is important to address year-round, Mental Health Awareness Month provides a dedicated time for people, organizations, and communities to join their voices to broadcast the message that mental health matters.

This year's Mental Health Awareness Month theme is "You matter." The theme is intended to remind you that no matter who you are, where you are from, or what you are going through, you belong here and matter to the people in your life and community.

Whether it's through advocacy, education, community engagement, or direct action in our own lives, "You matter" reflects our commitment to creating a world where everyone's mental health is valued and supported, no matter who they are.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit has been designed for people, organizations, and communities. We encourage you to edit the content to best suit your community.

How to use the Mental Health Awareness Month Toolkit

This year's toolkit includes ideas and resources on what you can do throughout the month to raise awareness and provide actionable tips and resources around mental health and suicide prevention. It includes key messages that can be used for emails, newsletter content, social media posts, images, as well as additional resources that can be used to supplement what you currently use. [Safe Messaging Around Mental Health and Suicide \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidemessaging.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidemessaging.pdf) provides guidance on how to safely talk about mental health and suicide.

Below are key messages that can be used for each week:

Week 1: Your mental health matters.

- Your mental health is as important as your physical health. Just like with our physical health, we can do things that make us mentally healthier.
- When you feel mentally well, you're more able to manage the stress and challenges you face in life.

Week 2: Practicing self-care matters.

- Self-care is about finding practices that help you support your mental health, even under challenging circumstances.

- Self-care doesn't have to be time consuming or expensive and can help maintain or improve your daily mental wellbeing.

Week 3: Reaching out matters: Seek help when you need it.

- When your mental health is off, it is important to find the help that is right for you.
- Support is available no matter where you are or what you are dealing with.

Week 4: Community support for mental health matters.

- It's important to make mental health an ongoing priority in our lives and communities.
- Community advocacy for mental health and wellbeing can help others feel more comfortable talking about mental health and ensure access to helpful resources that are available when people need them.

How to use the toolkit's weekly content:

- Use the key messages to develop content for emails, newsletters, or to share with those you keep in touch with, including friends, work colleagues, faith community, schools, and other groups.
- Use the key messages in daily conversation. This can be with friends, family, in meetings, community events, etc.
- Share the social media posts each week. These can be shared on Facebook, X, Instagram, Snapchat, or an employee intranet site to name a few. Feel free to edit the posts to best suit your community and add #YouMatterMN to your posts so others can learn from what you are doing.
- Use the graphics created [at Mental Health Awareness Month Shareables \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/shareables.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/shareables.html). You can also find graphics from the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Partner Toolkit \(https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988/partner-toolkit\)](https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988/partner-toolkit).
- Review the ideas for action and learning opportunities and get more involved. Help to spread these ideas and learning opportunities through emails, newsletters, social media posts or with those you are engaged with.
- Encourage organizations, individuals and communities to seek out what is happening in their community.

The toolkit is a starting point, and individuals, organizations, and communities can tailor these messages for their communities and add their own images and graphics to boost the visibility and engagement.

Week 1: Your mental health matters.

Key message

We all have mental health.

Mental health is our ability to engage with our emotions, thoughts, interactions with others, and the world around us. Mental health affects how we think, feel, and act every day. Just like with our physical health, we can do things that make us mentally healthier. When you feel mentally well, you're more able to manage the stress and challenges you face in life, feel better about yourself, and engage in fulfilling activities and relationships.

Exploring your mental health will help you better understand what you need to support your mental wellbeing.

Mental health plays a big role in overall wellbeing. We all have tough days and weeks, and everyone manages their mental health every day. The best way to protect mental health is to pay attention to it even when you're feeling ok or even good. Becoming more aware of what disrupts your mental health, will help you learn what actions, tools and resources may be useful to help you when you need it. There are many ways to take action – big and small – to improve mental health for yourself and for those around you. Taking proactive steps to understand and care for your mental well-being isn't just self-care—it's an investment in your future.

Experiencing poor mental health is not the same as having a mental health condition.

A mental health condition, or mental illness, refers to a set of symptoms that have been identified by a health provider. People with mental health conditions experience change in emotions, thinking, and/or behavior. For some, this means extreme and unexpected changes in mood, like feeling more sad or worried than usual. For others, it means not thinking clearly, pulling away from friends and activities you used to enjoy, or hearing voices that others do not. Mental illness is treatable; it is not always a permanent state of being.

The opportunities and resources we have available in our neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and communities can help support our mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health is about what we do as individuals, and how we are supported in our communities. For example, neighborhoods and organizations can provide resources that support your sense of belonging, connectedness, and mental wellbeing.

Social media posts

- Taking steps to explore your mental health will help you learn what you need to support your mental wellbeing. Take action by checking on your mental health with a free, quick, anonymous test at [Take a Mental Health Test - Mental Health America](https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/) (<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>) #YouMatterMN

- Research has found several ways that you can keep yourself healthy. Check out these [Keys to Mental Wellbeing from Berkely University Greater Good Magazine](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/key) (<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/key>). #YouMatterMN
- Mental health is all around us but is often misunderstood. The [Roadmap to Mental Health](https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/mhcs-roadmap-to-mental-health/) (<https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/mhcs-roadmap-to-mental-health/>), by the Mental Health Coalition, can explain what we mean when we say, “mental health.” #YouMatterMN
- Every individual, family, organization and community can promote mental health and wellbeing. For example, practicing gratitude and savoring are two individual exercises that can enhance our positive experiences in life. See [Harvard's Human Flourishing Program: How to Flourish](https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/how-to-flourish) (<https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/how-to-flourish>) for practical ideas help you flourish. #YouMatterMN

Week 2: Practicing self-care matters.

Key message

Self-care is about finding practices that help you thrive, and it can include a range of things. It takes purposeful effort, but it can help you maintain or improve your daily mental wellbeing. It can be helpful to think of it as taking time to care for yourself as you would others.

Prioritizing time for self-care doesn't have to be time consuming or expensive, and it is important for you to find out what works best for you. Below are a few different ways to nurture your mental wellbeing, from the Mental Health Coalition:

- **Physical:** Notice and address the stress that shows up in your body. Notice what physical activities reduce or alleviate physical pain, tension and mental stress for you. Some common activities are massages, hugging loved ones with their consent, fitness, dance, aromatherapy, rest, and boundary setting.
- **Emotional:** Tend to your own internal emotional world – especially your mood and feelings. Ways to tend to your emotional self can include connecting with others, naming and acknowledging your emotions, psychotherapy, journaling or creative writing, art, and setting boundaries for your emotional wellbeing.
- **Cognitive:** Engage in activities that are intellectually rewarding and/or stimulating. This can include reading, writing, listening to books or podcasts, watching films, and psychotherapy.
- **Spiritual:** This can take many different forms and does not have to be tied to formal religion. It means getting in touch with the less tangible aspects of yourself and the world around you. This can include meditation, breathwork, prayer, connecting with a spiritual or religious community, mantras.

Especially during times of stress and uncertainty, identifying a few small ways to take care of yourself can help maintain your mental health and wellbeing. Set aside the time you need to do

it, give yourself permission to embrace it if it is hard for you to prioritize yourself, and work towards adding these moments regularly into your life. Know that what taking care of yourself may look like can change over time, and it is okay to adapt to what activities you engage in to fit your needs.

Social media posts

- Just like you do things to take care of your body, there are things you can do regularly to tend to your mental wellbeing. This can and will look different for everyone, [The JED Foundation \(https://jedfoundation.org/practice-self-care/\)](https://jedfoundation.org/practice-self-care/) has a variety of resources to help find ideas to add to your self-care practice. #YouMatterMN
- Learning to recognize and name your emotions and know how they show up for you mentally and physically will help you navigate life when your emotions are strong. The [Mental Health Coalition has tools for identifying and Dealing with Feelings \(https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/how-to-deal-with-emotions/\)](https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/how-to-deal-with-emotions/). #YouMatterMN
- Being well connected to other people promotes positive mental health and physical health and gives life meaning. Connecting with others is one of the [10 tools for resiliency \(https://mhanational.org/ten-tools\)](https://mhanational.org/ten-tools) that Mental Health America has put together to help you feel stronger and more hopeful. #YouMatterMN
- Finding movement that's a good match for you physically and mentally can help you thrive. Be kind with yourself and your body in the process in learning to move! Explore these videos from the [University of Minnesota's Move + Thrive Project \(https://www.youtube.com/@umn_moveandthrive\)](https://www.youtube.com/@umn_moveandthrive) that features diverse bodies and a variety of movement and meditative practices.

Week 3: Reaching out matters: Seek help when you need it.

Key messages

When your mental health is off, it is important to find the help that is right for you. Where you go for help will depend on what is happening within your life. Often the best place to start is to talk with those that you already have connections with, including your friends and family, your primary care doctor, or spiritual advisor. You can also find safe and confidential support through local mental health organizations or the 988 Minnesota Lifeline.

Help can be found across many places and depends on what type of support that you may need. It can start with participating in some self-care, or engage with friends, family, or someone else to talk to help you process, find a distraction or problem solve. If the problems in your life are stopping you from functioning well or feeling good, professional help can make a big difference. Even if you're not sure that you'd benefit from help, it can't hurt to explore the possibility.

Engaging in formal services can help you:

- Develop plans for solving problems.
- Feel stronger in the face of challenges.
- Change behaviors that hold you back.
- Look at ways of thinking that affect how you feel.
- Heal pains from your past.
- Think about your goals.
- Build self-confidence.

Social Media Posts

- Everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health. [Mental Health American Tools 2 Thrive \(https://mhanational.org/tools-2-thrive\)](https://mhanational.org/tools-2-thrive), provides information, tips, and practical tools for situations that we all deal with. These tools, if used can be used to improve your mental health and increase your resiliency. #YouMatterMN
- Sometimes it is hard to know when you need extra help with your mental health. This infographic from the [National Institute of Mental Health \(https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/my-mental-health-do-i-need-help\)](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/my-mental-health-do-i-need-help) may help guide you if you don't know where to start. #YouMatterMN
- Warm lines and peer support can be helpful for those who are managing stress. Anyone seeking support may call Mental Health Minnesota which offers a warmline. Their services are available Monday - Saturday, noon to 10 p.m. Call 1-877-404-3190 or text Support to 85511. [Minnesota Warmline – Mental Health Minnesota \(mentalhealthmn.org\)](https://www.mentalhealthmn.org). #YouMatterMN
- Even in the darkest times, there is hope. Connecting with the #988Lifeline is simple and convenient. No matter where you are or what you're going through, skilled, caring 988 specialists are available to talk through your unique situation any time. Call or text 988 or chat at [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).
- 988 mental health support is available for non-English speakers too. For Spanish, call 988 and press 2. If texting, type “Ayuda” to connect with a Spanish-speaking specialist. Or call 988 to access translations in more than 240 languages. Ask for an interpreter in English if you are able or say the name of the language you need. Call or text 988 or chat at [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).
- If you know someone who is struggling, having a supportive conversation can be a big help. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health challenge #988Lifeline provides 24/7 connection to confidential support. There is hope. Just call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

- Supporting kids’ mental health matters and knowing how to help isn’t always straightforward. 988 is here to support families and caregivers. Call or text 988 or chat at 988Lifeline.org.

Week 4: Community support for mental health matters.

Key messages

It’s important to make mental health an ongoing priority in our lives and communities. Community advocacy for mental health and what’s needed to support our own and our neighbor’s mental health and wellbeing can help others feel more comfortable talking about mental health, seeking help, and ensuring access to helpful resources that are available when people need them. As a result, community efforts will help:

- Build connections.
- Foster the feeling that no one is alone.
- Make space to gain perspective on the difficulties we and our neighbors are experiencing.
- Connect our neighbors to mental health services and resources in times of need.

Social media posts

- NAMI MN provides free education and support groups and confidential crisis resources to reach communities across the state, including those who remain disproportionately affected in the wake of recent ICE operations in Minnesota. Learn about free classes and support groups and find resources at: <https://namimn.org/ice/> <https://namimn.org/support/information-and-resources/>
- Having conversations around mental health can sometimes be uncomfortable, but it can also make a big difference. Not sure where to start? Check out these tips and tools from [Seize the Awkward \(https://seizetheawkward.org/conversation/starting-the-conversation\)](https://seizetheawkward.org/conversation/starting-the-conversation) to help you start the conversation and what to do during and after the conversation. #YouMatterMN
- Offering support is one of the best things that we can do to support the mental wellbeing of friends, family, and neighbors. However, it can sometimes feel uncomfortable, daunting, or just plain awkward. [The Roadmap to Friends Supporting Friends \(https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/friends-supporting-friends-visible/\)](https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/friends-supporting-friends-visible/) gives ideas on what support can look like, how to offer support, and where to begin. #YouMatterMN
- This guide by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides a broad approach for things we can do—at our own pace, in our own time, and within our own abilities—that can help support us in our wellness journey. [Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-by-Step Guide to Wellness \(https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf\)](https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf)

Mental health awareness ideas for action

Individuals

- Share the Mental Health Awareness Toolkit with friends, family, personal, and professional contacts to share the weekly resources within their area of influence through emails, newsletters, and social media.
- Register for a more in-depth training on what to look for in people that have life challenges or suicidal experiences. To see a list of trainings to search for, visit [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Training \(health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/preventsuicidetrainings.html\)](https://health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/preventsuicidetrainings.html).
- Initiate and spark conversations on your social media pages regarding mental health using the prompts below:
 - Mental health moments: Help spread what you do throughout moments in your day to take care of yourself. This can be taking a walk, playing with your pet, journaling, taking a nap, connecting with a friend. Let's collectively promote these self-connection moments by sharing and using the hashtag #YouMatterMN.
 - Behind the picture: Picture after picture is posted to social media every single day, but often we don't know the entire story behind the picture. The purpose of this project is to normalize that we are all dealing with life behind the perfect pictures that we post on social media. Start by posting a picture of yourself and share more about what was really happening behind that picture. Let's collectively promote that life is not always as perfect as it seems by sharing and using the hashtag #YouMatterMN.

Organizations and communities

- Use the Mental Health Awareness Toolkit by spreading the key messages through emails, newsletters, and social media.
- Collaborate with local partners to light up bridges and/or buildings with the mental health awareness month color of green during May. Take a picture of the building lit up in green, share it on your social media and use the hashtag #YouMatterMN.
- Consider hosting a mental health awareness day for youth, adults, and the community.
- Promote other programs within the community that encourage positive healthy activities and places for connection.
- Attend an upcoming [Suicide Prevention Learning Opportunity \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/communityconv.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/communityconv.html) with a mental health awareness month focus.

Host a Light up Green for Mental Health Event

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Light up Minnesota:

NOTE: The 35W bridge will be lit green on 05/04/2026 from 1/2 hour before Sunset to 1/2 hour after Sunrise to promote and support Mental Health Awareness in Minnesota.

Swap out your standard lights for green ones. For one day or all month long. Green symbolizes hope, strength, support, and renewal, aiming to break the stigma surrounding mental health. Wearing green ribbons or clothing and illuminating buildings green are common ways to show support for mental health.

Reach out to local businesses, government, councils, and other community spaces and ask to turn their lights green during the month of May. Some communities may have forms, receive emails, or phone numbers to call.

Adapt the text below, or explain in your own words, why it is important to participate in mental health awareness activities in your community. Be sure to include specific requests, like lighting up specific buildings or landmarks.

Share this event throughout your community through social media, message boards, neighborhood associations or others.

Provide statewide or local resources, training opportunities, and other messaging with local community leaders. By turning your lights green, you are demonstrating the importance of mental health.

Minnesota's Mental Health Awareness efforts are rooted in the belief that help is available and healing is possible. Visit [Minnesota Department of Health Mental Health Awareness \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html) to learn more about Mental Health Awareness in Minnesota and other Mental Health Awareness resources.

We want to hear from you

We will reach out in June to gather information and feedback about your outreach and impact using this toolkit. We ask you to keep track of the following: what content you used from the toolkit, where you shared the content, who you shared the content with, how you share the material and what platforms you used. Your feedback will be instrumental in the development in future toolkits.

If you would like to submit immediately, please feel free to send your feedback by filling [out this survey \(https://survey.vovici.com/se/56206EE3706DA052\)](https://survey.vovici.com/se/56206EE3706DA052).

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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

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This guide offers a broad approach for things we can do—at our own pace, in our own time, and within our own abilities—that can help us feel better and live longer.

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5000