



SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH!

OBJECTIVE The purpose of Mental Health Month is to help eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness by raising awareness of mental health conditions and those who have them. Eating right, exercising and other sound lifestyle habits are great ways to help you stay fit, feel good and even live longer. But that’s only half the equation.

KEY FACTS

According to the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI):

- 1 in 5 Americans live with a mental health condition.
- This means that either you or someone you know has been impacted.
- 1 in every 20 Americans is living with a serious mental health condition like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or long-term recurring major depression.
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

According to CDC data, nearly 1 in 3 (30%) U.S. high school students seriously considered attempting suicide in 2021—up nearly 60% from a decade ago.



To achieve total well-being, it's equally important to take measures to address your emotional and mental health, especially when you're facing stressful life challenges. The following tips can help you defeat stress and lift your spirits, helping you feel emotionally fit and balanced.

Maintain Good Relationships

Stay in touch with friends and family, especially those who help you feel positive. Or join a local church or synagogue, or a meetup.com group that shares your interests.

Share Your Feelings

You are not alone! Talk and walk with a friend outside, whenever possible—being in nature is calming, and connects you to the world in a positive, nurturing way.

Get Enough Sleep and Move Your Body!

Find out how many hours you need for restful, restorative sleep. During the day, exercise regularly to help stoke the feel-good hormones, while dissipating cortisol, the stress hormone.

Reset With a Moment of Mindfulness

To corral draining, runaway worries, sit quietly, and slowly

breathe in for four counts, hold for four, and slowly exhale for seven. Repeat several times.

Stimulate Your Brain

Consider taking a class in writing, a new language or technology. Or play word games, mahjongg, or chess. Mental activity can help stave off depression and premature death.

Tend to Something or Someone

Looking after a pet or plants or volunteering to help someone or a cause can be profoundly rewarding.

Take a Risk

Try something you always wanted to do. Maybe it's singing in a choir, sending a poem you wrote to the local newspaper or exploring an offbeat location. Pushing yourself past your fears will boost your self-esteem!

Practice Optimism

Avoid negative self-talk and seek out daily experiences that bring a smile to your soul!





STUDENT MENTAL WELLBEING

As we've learned nationally during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools are critical in our communities to supporting children and families. While the expectation is that schools provide education, they also provide opportunities for youth to engage in physical activity and academic, social, mental health, and physical health services, all of which can relieve stress and help protect against negative outcomes.

What Educators Should Know

- The warning signs for mental health problems.
- How to promote mental health and substance use prevention in schools and on campuses.
- Whom to turn to, such as the principal, school nurse, school psychiatrist or psychologist, or school social worker, if you have questions or concerns about a student's behavior.
- How to access crisis support and other mental health services including district services.

Fortunately, the same prevention strategies that promote mental health—like helping students feel connected to school/family—help prevent a range of negative experiences, like drug use, violence, and self-harm.

- Building strong bonds and relationships with adults and friends at school, at home and in the community provides students with a sense of connectedness.
- This feeling of connectedness is important and can protect students from poor mental health, and other risks like drug use and violence.
- Individuals struggling with mental health need to know someone cares about them and they can receive the support they are looking for.

ASK ABOUT AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Many organizations have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) designed to assist employees in resolving personal issues. Childcare, relationships, finances, legal problems, traumatic events, and general wellness matters may be covered via video-based counseling, phone, online chat, email correspondence and face-to-face visits. Contact your human resources department to see if your district takes part.

It's important to remember that working on your mental health and finding tools that help you thrive takes time. Change won't happen overnight. Instead, by focusing on small changes, you can move through the stressors of the past year and develop long-term strategies to support yourself on an ongoing basis.

Mental health affects ALL of us. Help us get the word out and start the conversation today! Visit: nami.org/mhm #MoreThanEnough

Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/programs/mental-health-awareness-month>

California Mental Health Services Authority

[Recipe for Wellness and Self-Care](#)

[Mental Health Support Options](#)

[Your Mental Wellness Plan](#)

CalHOPE - Resources

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

CDC - Youth Mental Health

National Alliance on Mental Illness

- [NAMI HelpLine](#)
- [NAMI Support Groups](#)
- [NAMI Programs and Classes](#)
- [NAMI Podcasts & Webinars](#)

NAMI Web Articles, Resources & Blogs:

- [Why do we have the feeling that we are not enough?](#)
- [Family Members & Caregivers](#)
- [Identity & Culture](#)
- [Youth & Young Adults](#)

This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.

