

**FREE**  
*your*  
**FEELS**<sup>TM</sup>

**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
AWARENESS**

**RESOURCE TOOLKIT** 



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**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
AWARENESS  
MONTH**



# INTRO



May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Since 1949, this national celebration has aimed to increase awareness of the importance of mental wellness and celebrate recovery from mental illness. During this month, we join the movement to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public, and advocate for programs and policies that benefit the millions of people in the U.S. affected by mental health conditions.

One significant focus during May is Children's Mental Health Week, which falls May 5 – 11 this year. This entire week is dedicated to teaching people about children's mental health, advocating for improved supports and services, and celebrating the hope, strength, and resilience of children, parents, and families. Given the unique challenges young people face today, it is crucial to show support and raise awareness for youth mental health. Further, let's empower everyone to "speak, listen, and connect" – to speak fearlessly about feelings, to listen to others judgment-free, and connect to additional support when needed.

In this month's toolkit, you'll find additional resources included to equip you with knowledge and tools to celebrate all throughout the month. Let's collectively uplift the importance of caring for everyone's mental well-being!



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CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225**



# DID YOU KNOW?



Have you ever noticed green being widely used as the color to celebrate mental health? If you've ever wondered "why green?" – we're here to give a bit of background!

In the 1800s, green was used to label people as "insane." However, the children's mental health community decided to reclaim this color in a positive way and to combat discrimination and bias. Today, green signifies new life and growth, and represents the collective effort to improve the lives of children facing mental health challenges and to support them and their families throughout their lives. The green ribbon has become an international symbol of mental health support.

**BE SEEN IN GREEN CHALLENGE  
MAY 1-MAY 31ST, 2024**

**WEAR GREEN AND SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH  
AWARENESS!**

**WEARING GREEN, WHETHER IT'S A COMPLETE OUTFIT, A SIMPLE GREEN AWARENESS BRACELET, OR LIGHTING UP YOUR BUILDING, SYMBOLIZES UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH. PARTICIPATING IN THIS CHALLENGE SENDS A POWERFUL MESSAGE: MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT, AND BY JOINING TOGETHER, WE ARE ADVOCATING FOR AND SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH.**



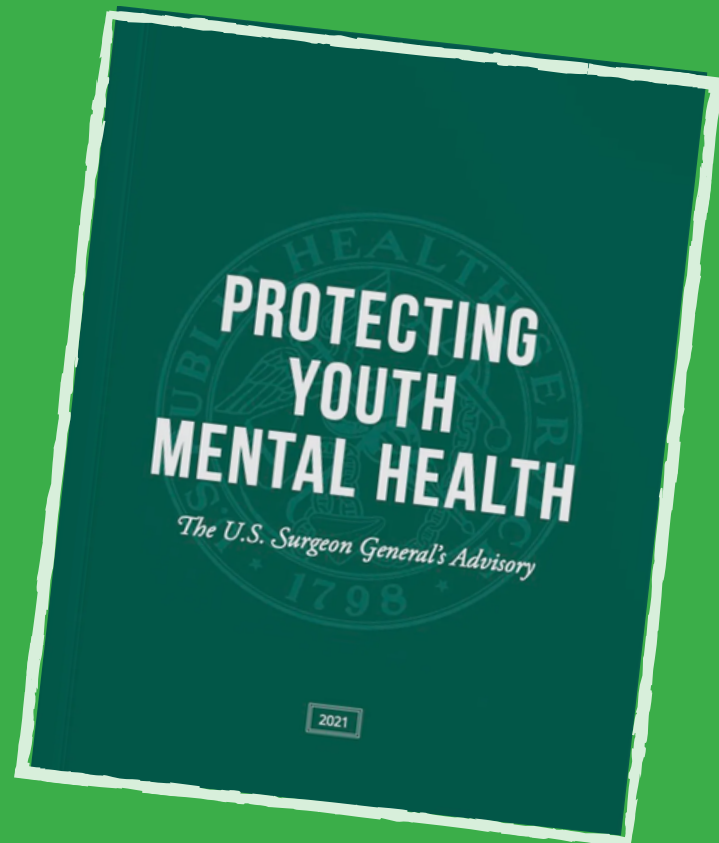
# FOR EVERYONE



In December 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory emphasizing the critical importance of addressing the mental health crisis among our nation's youth. In June 2023, the surgeon general released [another report](#) specifically highlighting the risks to youth mental health associated with social media use. These advisories serve as a powerful reminder of the significance of Mental Health Month and Children's Mental Health Week – a time to not only raise awareness, but actively recognize and help mitigate the challenges faced by our children and youth today.

## ACTION

Explore the [2021 advisory and webpage](#), which provides specific guidance on how you can take action based on your role (whether you're a young person, caregiver, health professional, etc.).



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# FOR YOUTH



You can feel a variety of emotions at one time. During your teenage years, it might be challenging to pinpoint exactly what you're feeling, let alone feel comfortable exploring or sitting with those emotions. However, practicing healthy emotional exploration is a valuable skill and can help regulate our nervous system!

## ACTION

Explore your emotions using [this tool](#) developed by the CDC. It offers language to help normalize what we feel as well as resources to cope.



A screenshot of the 'Explore Your Emotions' tool from the CDC. The tool has a dark blue header with the text 'You can feel a variety of emotions at one time. Explore your emotions and find what could help.' Below the header is a list of emotions on the left side, each with a blue arrow icon pointing to a description box on the right. The emotions listed are: Afraid, Sad or Depressed, Angry, Stressed, Grieving, Worried or Anxious, and Lonely. Each description box contains a brief explanation of the emotion and its potential causes or effects.

## BONUS ACTION

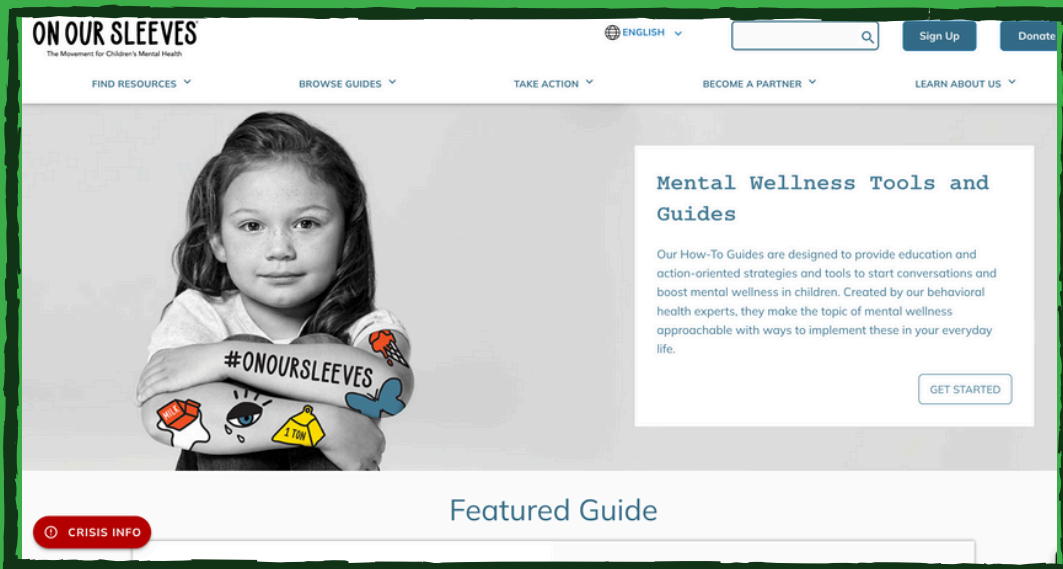
With summer approaching and a new school year starting in a few months, now is an opportune time to talk to your school administration about implementing programs to reduce stigma and prevent suicide, like a [Free Your Feels peer-to-peer group](#) or other programs!



# FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



Promoting mental health awareness can begin at home. A fundamental starting point involves destigmatizing discussions about emotions and feelings. On Our Sleeves has created a collection of practical “How-To Guides.” These guides, developed by behavioral health professionals, offer educational insights and actionable strategies to initiate conversations and enhance mental well-being in children. By making the topic of mental wellness accessible, these guides empower families to incorporate these practices into their daily lives.



## ACTION

Browse the [available mental wellness guides and tools](#)

## BONUS ACTION

Prefer an activity? Check out [this collection](#) of mental health activities for children of all ages and families.

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# FOR EDUCATORS & PROFESSIONALS



Integrating trauma-informed care with cultural humility fosters healing, understanding, and well-being. Educators can create inclusive environments where every student feels valued and supported. The National Center for Safe Supportive Schools (NCS3) provides states, districts, and schools with the knowledge and tools to implement culturally responsive, trauma-informed policies and practices that promote equity and well-being, and they've just released a FREE training series for school-based professionals! The National Trauma-Focused Intern Training (T-FIT) for Counseling, Psychology, Social Work, and Other School Mental Health Trainees is a 9-module video series designed for school-based clinical trainees that is divided into two separate courses: 1) Foundations of Trauma-Informed School Mental Health and 2) Trauma-Informed School Approaches, Classroom, and Counseling Supports.

## ACTION:

Learn more and register for this online, no-cost certificate program. Both courses are available now! With access to rewatch modules on Youtube!



The screenshot shows a YouTube playlist titled "NCS3 Schools Training Modules" from the "National Center for Safe Supportive Schools" channel. The playlist contains 23 videos and was last updated on April 1, 2024. The video thumbnail shows a woman and a child looking at a book. The video title is "Module 4 Cultural Humility and Awareness Objectives". The video description lists four objectives: Define, Develop, Reflect on, and Identify. The video player controls at the bottom show "Play all" and "Shuffle" buttons.

Define	Define 2-3 foundational terms related to cultural humility and awareness.
Develop	Develop an understanding of why cultural humility is important for promoting safe supportive schools.
Reflect on	Reflect on your personal identity, values, and beliefs.
Identify	Identify one strategy that school staff can implement for enhancing their cultural humility AND one strategy for promoting equity and cultural responsiveness in your role in your school.

# FOR EDUCATORS & PROFESSIONALS

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood is a time when young ones are learning about emotions and finding ways to express them. Check out the “Mood Crew” worksheets, coloring sheets, and more to spark healthy conversations and help build the coping skills that support long-term wellness.



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# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## CLICK TO DOWNLOAD



**SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS**

**ZOOM/TEAMS BACKGROUNDS**

**MHAM POSTERS**

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## **QUESTIONS? CONTACT**

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