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### Additional Resources

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May is recognized as National Mental Health Month. Established nearly 75 years ago in 1949, Mental Health Month was created to increase awareness of the importance of mental wellness and to celebrate recovery from mental illness. We invite you to join us in this national movement for mental health!

This month's toolkit includes extra resources such as educational materials, social media assets, and printable posters – all to help you raise awareness during Mental Health Month. Let’s lift up the importance of caring for one another, reducing stigma, and promoting the supports available for those struggling with their mental health.

TAKE ACTION
Follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook @FreeYourFeelsGA
MAY: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

RESOURCES BY AUDIENCE
Everyone has mental health. Mental health is a spectrum ranging from healthy/calm to unhealthy/in crisis. Each of us moves along this continuum depending on many factors, such as life stressors and circumstances as well as our ability to cope, and where we fall on the continuum can change over time.

**Mental Health Continuum**

Mental Wellness to Emotional Distress

Image source: http://takeaction4mh.com/

**TAKE ACTION**

Read this factsheet to better understand the spectrum of mental health and how to take care of yourself depending on where you may fall along the spectrum.
FOR YOUTH

Awareness of mental health is crucial to reducing stigma and supporting ourselves and others. Being exposed to a diverse range of experiences and stories can help us understand various mental health journeys, which can ultimately allow us to shift from mental health awareness to acceptance. We can grow towards accepting ourselves and others no matter where we/they are in the journey.

TAKE ACTION

Watch this informal "table talk" where young people from across the U.S. share their personal mental health journey and reflect on what acceptance of their mental health needs would have meant for them as children/youth.
Each of us is unique, with exceptional qualities to love. The National Federation of Families has created an activity workbook to share with your child, full of activities encouraging self-love and compassion! With writing prompts, coloring activities, and more, each page promotes positive mental health and reflection.

TAKE ACTION
Use this mental health activity book for kids with the young ones in your life!
"Allow your child to hear you compliment them." “Talk as a family about big emotions – what are they and how do you cope?” “Play a feelings game with your family.” These are three examples of activities curated by the National Federation of Families for the month of May. Building mental health awareness and taking action can start at home!

### TAKE ACTION

Each day in May, participate in an activity as a family to model and encourage open, judgment-free conversations about mental health.
FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH YOUTH

Many schools and community centers are establishing “quiet zones” or “calming spaces”. When our immediate environment becomes overloaded with sensory input, it can often become overwhelming, and a quiet room is a place that children can retreat to in these moments. It gives them time and space to calm their sensory systems and regain control of their emotions.

**How to create a quiet room**

Each quiet room will be unique to the availability of space in your community. The key is for this space to offer a safe respite from feeling overstimulated or stressed out. Some considerations:

**Sound**
- Ensure the space is relatively quiet or the youth can effectively unplug. Sounds of screaming can be unsettling so try to have the quiet room away from playgrounds or gym.
- Try a noise machine that creates calming sounds like white noise, waves, or rain.

**Color**
- Colors can affect our moods. Allocate a space with neutral or cool colors as these promote feelings of calmness. Avoid red or multi-colored walls.
- Lights can be soothing.Look into options like faux lamps, ocean or sky projections or soft lamps. Lights on dimmers are also a great option, as each user can choose what they are most comfortable with.
- Avoid lights that flicker.

**Size**
- Ensure the room is large enough to not induce feelings of claustrophobia.
- Staged for space. You can section off an area in an existing quiet room, like a library.

**Smell**
- Consider providing the option of aromatherapy. This can include scented candles or essential oils. Some smells may elevate or calm your senses. Note: some scents can trigger headaches and migraines in some children and youth.

**Objects**
- If you’re feeling overwhelmed, it can be helpful to focus attention on specific feelings or experiences. Offer options for manual manipulation such as playdough, stress balls, fidget spinners, or even showing ocean. Make sure the room has comfortable places to sit, like a couch, bean bags, cushions, or a sensory rug.

The young people in your community will know their needs best. Ask them what would relax them and ensure they have options when they retreat to the Quiet Room, without it feeling secluded.

**Take Action**

Create your very own Quiet Room using this instructional guide.
We hear a lot about self-care, but that’s because its importance cannot be understated – especially in a profession which interacts frequently and closely with young people and contributing daily to their development. Modeling healthy behaviors starts by taking care of yourself and your mental health.

**Take Action**

Use this “31 Ways to Make the World Around You Work for Your Mental Health” calendar which offers daily self-help tips for the month of May. Try a few (or all)!
MAY:
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
For 74 years the goal for Mental Health Awareness Month has been to ensure there is a community focused on mental health promotion and accessible resources to provide appropriate care to everyone. We are kicking things off by celebrating Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week this week! Visit www.freeyourfeels.org to access the Mental Health Month toolkit!

To learn more about the advocacy work organizations across Georgia are doing to increase awareness about the emotional and mental needs of Georgia’s youth, join us at Children’s Mental Health Day at the Capitol on Thursday, May 4, 2023. Register at www.tinyurl.com/cmhd2023

We are halfway through the week, and we want to know: how are you?! Let us know how your week has been so far! We are all ears. #FreeYourFeels

Check out "The Do’s and Don’ts When Talking About Mental Health", courtesy of On Our Sleeves, a campaign designed to support children’s mental health. bit.ly/3MrbR6a

Physical activity (such as dancing) helps children’s minds and bodies. Benefits of moderate physical activity include reduced stress, improved academic performance, and reduced risk of obesity. Show us how dancing improves your mood! #FreeYourFeelsFriday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY MAY 1</th>
<th>TUESDAY MAY 2</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY MAY 3</th>
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A variety of content is available for you to download, print, and place wherever you’d like! Whether it’s a poster in your bedroom or school hallway, an informational flyer at a meeting, or a resource brochure at a community event — these printable resources are yours to use!
Interested in learning more and expanding your knowledge on mental health? There are many reputable, relevant factsheets available! Below are a few educational flyers with facts about general mental health, youth suicide, and more.

- Voices for Georgia’s Children – behavioral health factsheets
- Mental Health America – facts, statistics, and mental illness signs/symptoms
- National Alliance on Mental Illness – factsheet library
- National Institute of Mental Health – factsheet library
Virtual meeting backgrounds can be a great way to show your support, spark a conversation, and participate in Mental Health Month. Use this Free Your Feels graphic as your virtual background image during the month of May!

- How to change your Zoom background
- How to change your Microsoft Teams background

Celebrating Mental Health Month, May 2023
www.freeyourfeels.org
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<td>DECAL's Children's Mental Health Week</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
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QUESTIONS? CONTACT

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