



Dear School Champion:

Thank you for joining the **Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign* as a School Champion** and pledging your school's commitment to raising awareness of children's mental health! As a School Champion, you are responsible for organizing at least one awareness raising or educational event for your school during or around **Awareness Week, May 5-11, 2019.**

Within this packet you will find many resources, including ideas and templates for activities, to use during Awareness Week.

- Take Home Sheet for Parents - Fast Facts About Children's Mental Health (p.1)
- Awareness Flyer for School Staff (p.2)
- Essay Contest (p.3)
- Morning Announcements (p.4)
- Phone Message (p.9)
- Social Media Posts (p.10)

For more information and resources please visit the campaign website www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org. You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for additional ideas and activities for you to use in your schools. In the months leading up to Awareness Week, we will routinely email you with new resources and ideas to add or use in your planning.

Participate in the **2019 School Champion of the Year** contest by submitting photos and/or stories of your school's awareness activities. The winner will receive additional awareness items, recognition on our website and social media, as well as a certificate honoring your efforts. *All submissions must be received by May 24, 2019.*

Also, if you have community events scheduled, email us the details so that they can be added to our website event calendar. When you post your stories and photos on social media, use the hashtag #CMHMMaryland2019 so that your activities can be shared.

Please send your contest submissions or questions to Tiffany Thomas at TThomas@mhamd.org.

With appreciation,

Kari Gorkos
Tiffany Thomas
MHAMD

MCF

Dr. Nancy Lever
NCSMH Co-Director



*The Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign is a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMd) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Maryland Department of Health-Behavioral Health Administration. The Campaign goal, with community and school champions across the state, is to raise public awareness of the importance of children's mental health. For more information, please visit www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Attn: Parents & Families!
Help *(Insert School Name)* be a
Children's Mental Health Matters! School Champion!
Thursday May 9, 2019
is Children's Mental Health Matters! Green Day

Encourage your child to wear the color green to support awareness of the importance of children's mental health.

Fast Facts about Children's Mental Health

- ❖ Mental health refers to a person's overall social, emotional, behavioral and psychological well-being. It impacts how we think, feel, and act, including how a child:
 1. Feels about himself/herself
 2. Relates to other children and adults
 3. Handles change, stress and other life situations
- ❖ One in five children experience a mental, emotional or behavioral health problem before age 18. These problems affect children of all demographic groups, regardless of education, income, race or culture.
- ❖ Up to 70% of school-aged children with a diagnosable mental illness do not receive treatment. Early intervention is the best way to prevent long-term or severe conditions into adulthood.
- ❖ Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is a great time to learn more about children's mental health and to check out available resources to help ensure all children have the opportunity to be successful in school, at home, in the community, and in their future adult lives.
- ❖ Read more about the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and find resources, including our Family Resource Kit, at www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org.

Be a Children's Mental Health Matters! School Champion and help raise awareness in your school!



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Attn: Teachers and Staff!
Thursday May 9, 2019
is Children's Mental Health Matters! Green Day

Encourage your fellow staff and students to wear the color green to support awareness of the importance of children's mental health.

Fast Facts about Children's Mental Health

- ❖ Mental health refers to a person's overall social, emotional, behavioral and psychological well-being. It impacts how we think, feel, and act, including how a child:
 1. Feels about himself/herself
 2. Relates to other children and adults
 3. Handles change, stress and other life situations
- ❖ One in five children experience a mental, emotional or behavioral health problem before age 18. These problems affect children of all demographic groups, regardless of education, income, race or culture.
- ❖ Up to 70% of school-aged children with a diagnosable mental illness do not receive treatment. Early intervention is the best way to prevent long-term or severe conditions into adulthood.
- ❖ Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is a great time to learn more about children's mental health and to check out available resources to help ensure all children have the opportunity to be successful in school, at home, in the community, and in their future adult lives.
- ❖ Read more about the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and find resources, including our Educator Resource Kit, at www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org.

Be a Children's Mental Health Matters! School Champion and help raise awareness in your school!



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Children's Mental Health Matters! Essay Contest

Instructions: Write an essay on one of the following topics, or chose your own topic about children's mental health. Use the space below or type or write your response on a separate sheet of paper. Winning essays will be displayed around the school.

Possible Topics:

- What does mental health mean to you?
- How can students and adults in schools best work together to improve mental health?
- What positive strategies, activities, people, or outlooks on your life help you deal with stress?
- Write about a famous person who has shared openly about his/her mental health problems.



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Morning Announcements

During the morning announcements, students or staff can share tips, facts, or stories with their peers to spread knowledge about children's mental health. Example morning announcement scripts are listed below and can be modified to meet your needs. *Additional suggestions specific to elementary and middle/high school students are also included beginning on page 7.*

First day's Introduction: May 5th through 11th is Children's Mental Health Awareness Week in Maryland. This week, we will be talking about the importance of being healthy not just in our bodies, but in our minds. This means doing things to help ourselves and others feel better when we are sad, worried, angry, or scared. Each day this week on the announcements, we will learn a 'Coping Skill of the Day.' Teachers, please encourage your students to practice these in class together.

Monday: Today's coping skill of the day is reading. Reading is a great way to learn about new things and is also a way to take your mind off of other things. Sometimes when people are upset, it can be helpful to read a book by a favorite author or about a favorite topic. Think about what type of book would be best for you to read when you are upset. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Tuesday: Today's coping skill of the day is listening to music that makes you happy. Choose music or a song that has a positive message and makes you feel happy. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS! (It would be great if a song is shared as part of this announcement with only 30 seconds or less played of the song.)

Wednesday: Today's coping skill of the day is writing. If you have a hard time talking about your feelings and thoughts try writing them. Writing helps you express those difficult feelings that you cannot find the words to express. Take a few minutes and write down what you are thinking or how you are feeling a few times a day. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Thursday: Today's coping skill of the day is taking a break. Walk away from what is upsetting you and being by yourself for a few minutes until you start to feel calmer. Taking a break for yourself helps you to feel more in control and removes you from people or events that may be upsetting you. During your peaceful break, take three deep breaths to help calm your mind and body down, so you can be ready to return to your day. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Friday: Today's coping skill of the day is talking to someone who cares about you. Talking to someone who cares about you helps you feel understood and supported, and they may be able to help you solve



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

your problem. Think of people you can talk to at home, at school, and in the neighborhood. Don't keep it to yourself when you are feeling hurt, scared, sad, or angry. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Any Day: Did you know that students who are feeling stressed, sad, or even thinking about suicide are very likely to tell a friend or teacher first? If a student shares feelings of depression with you, the most important thing you can do is take it seriously, listen without judgment, and help them get to a trusted adult, mental health professional, school nurse, or even their family doctor for more support. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

**The above suggestions were compiled by clinician Jennifer Lease, LGSW with the University of Maryland School Mental Health Program.*

The following suggestions can be used in addition or in place of the ones above include:

General School Audience Suggestions:

Today's coping skill of the day is talking to a trusted friend. Sometimes you just need to be heard. Having a friend that listens without judging can really help when you are feeling worried, overwhelmed or depressed. Research shows that social support is one of our best buffers against stress and positive friendships are really important for our overall well-being. Friends are like walls. Sometimes you lean on them, and sometimes it's good just knowing they are there. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Today's coping skill of the day is exercising. Going for a walk, a quick stretch, or even dancing can help relieve stress. When faced with mental or emotional challenges in life, exercise can help you cope in a healthy way. Take five to ten minutes a day to do some sort of physical activity. Your body and mind will thank you for it. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Today's coping skill of the day is guided imagery, or imagining a happy place in your mind. Think of the place where you are the happiest, like your bedroom, your grandmother's house, or wherever you are the most happy. Close your eyes and imagine that you are there. Think about what you see, what you hear, what you smell, and who is with you. If it helps, you can draw your happy place to help you remember it. Imagining a happy place helps you feel better when you cannot change your surroundings. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Today's coping skill of the day is the plusses and minuses of a decision. The next time you have a problem, come up with a few solutions of how you could solve the problem and then take the time to list out the plusses, what is good about the choice, and the minuses, what could be bad about the choice, for each of the solutions. Use the list to help you make a decision that is best for you.

REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Today's coping skill of the day is Journaling. Keeping a special journal or a diary in which you can write out your thoughts and feelings can be helpful. Some people like to journal on their own, while others like to put their thoughts on paper and then share it with others such as friends, teachers, or a counselor. Think about starting a journal for writing down your own thoughts and feelings. **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Today's coping skill of the day is coloring. Coloring is not just for little kids – it is for all ages. Coloring is a great way to take your mind off of things and focus on a fun, peaceful task. Look online for adult printable coloring pages for some inspiration, or just grab a piece of paper and any crayon, marker, colored pencil or pen and get drawing! **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Today's coping skill of the day is baking. Working together with your friends or family to bake a delicious treat is a great way to be creative. When you focus and follow a recipe, you are clearing your mind of other stressors and focused on the present moment. It is great to feel accomplished after baking something special – and yummy too! Ask a trusted adult to help you with this skill. **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Today's coping skill of the day is taking deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose for 3 seconds, hold the breath for 3 seconds, and breathe out for 3 seconds. Do this 5 times or until you start to feel better. You can think of your favorite color or a peaceful word when you're breathing to keep your mind focused. Breathing deeply helps calm your body down and gives you time to figure out how to react to what is going on around you. **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Today's coping skill of the day is writing poetry. Poetry is a great way to express your thoughts and feelings in a creative way. The next time you are upset or even if you are in a great mood, take a moment and try writing a poem. Many students find that writing poetry helps them to cope with feelings they are experiencing. Once your poem is written, you can keep it for yourself, or share it with your family, friends, or teachers. **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Elementary School Suggestions:

Today's coping skill of the day is using pizza breathing. Taking deep breaths can help us calm ourselves down when we feel uncomfortable emotions, but we must practice frequently to become good at this skill! Close your eyes. Imagine that your teacher ordered your favorite kind of pizza, just for you! You open the box and immediately smell the buttery, cheesy goodness of your pizza. You want to eat the pizza, but it is still very warm. Take in a deep breath through your nose, smelling all the pizza goodness! Now, slowly blow out your breath through your mouth to cool off your slice of pizza. Let's do it again. Breathe in and smell your pizza. Breathe out and cool it off. Next time you're upset, or see a friend who is upset, encourage them to use pizza breathing to help calm down! **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Today's coping skill of the day is using muscle relaxation. When we feel uncomfortable emotions, like anger or worry, we sometimes can make our bodies feel very tense and uncomfortable. Making sure we remind ourselves to relax can help us feel better when we are sad, mad, or worried. Pretend that you have two lemons and you want to squeeze the juice out to make lemonade. Squeeze your fists together, and squeeze out all the juice from your lemons. Keep squeezing! Notice how your hand feels when you squeeze the lemon. Now that the juice is all gone, drop the lemon and relax your hand. Notice how much better your hand feels when it is relaxed. Try it again! **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Today's coping skill of the day is saying nice things to ourselves. Sometimes when we are upset or frustrated, we may say mean things to ourselves in our head, like "I never do things right," or "I always make my teacher mad!" These thoughts can make us feel even worse! Today, we encourage you to say nice things to yourself in your head, such as "I got this!" "I am trying really hard today." or "I like myself!" Notice when you are being mean to yourself or when others are being mean to themselves and encourage them to practice saying nice things. **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Today we encourage you to say something nice to a person you know; it could be a classmate, a teacher, or a friend. Saying nice things to others can help make them feel good about themselves, but it also can make us feel good too! Practice it right now. Turn to a neighbor and share something you like about them. It could be that you like something they're wearing, their hair, how they help others. **REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!**

Middle/High School Suggestions:



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Today's coping skill is mindful eating. Mindful eating helps you focus your attention on what you're doing in the moment and notice new things about the food you're eating. The next time you eat a snack or meal, take a moment to really slow down and enjoy your food. Close your eyes and take time to notice all the sensations you experience while eating – how your food looks, tastes, smells, and feels in your mouth. Focusing on what you're experiencing in the moment is a skill that can help increase your awareness of physical sensations in your body. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!"

Today's coping skill of the day is progressive muscle relaxation. Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique used by professional athletes before games and is a great way to quickly relax your body and your mind. The next time you are stressed out or even if you are in a great mood, take a moment and try tensing and then releasing the muscles in your hands and feet twice. For your hands, clench your fingers into fists and hold your muscles taught for about 20 seconds straight, then release all of the tension at once for about 10 seconds. Then, repeat the tensing of your hands once more. For your feet, tighten up your toes as if you are digging them into the ground to keep your balance for about 20 seconds straight, and then release all of the tension in both of your feet for about 10 seconds. Again, repeat this tensing of your feet once more. Notice how relaxed your hands and feet feel after you tense and release the muscles in them. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Today's coping skill of the day is positive self-talk. Saying or thinking kind things about yourself is a great way to improve your mood and also a good way to replace bad thoughts you have about yourself. The next time you notice you put yourself down, or even if you are not having negative self-thoughts, take a moment and try telling yourself something you do well or like about yourself. Many students find that doing this helps them to feel more positively about themselves and cope with negative thoughts and feelings they are experiencing. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

Today's coping skill of the day is being kind to others. Saying or thinking kind things about others is a great way to improve your own mood and also a good way to make your relationships with people you care about even better. The next time you notice you see a friend or someone you like, take a moment and try telling them something you think they do well or like about them. You can also do this on social media, like snap chat or Twitter. Although it can be challenging, do your best to say something nice to them without laughing - be sincere. Many students find that even though it can feel awkward at first, complimenting others helps them to feel more positively about themselves and people with whom they are close. REMEMBER, YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Sample Automated Phone Message to Send to Parents

Dear (*Insert school name*) families,

May 5th-11th is Children's Mental Health Awareness Week in Maryland. The term mental health refers to a person's overall behavioral, social, emotional and psychological well-being. Mental health impacts how we think, feel, and act, including how a child feels about himself/herself, relates to other children and adults, and handles change, stress and other life situations. One in five children experience a mental, emotional or behavioral health problem before age 18. These problems affect children of all demographic groups, regardless of education, income, race or culture.

This week students will be learning things to help themselves and others feel better when they are sad, worried, angry, or scared. To learn more about the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and resources for help, contact your (optional-Children's Mental Health Matters School Coordinator, (*Insert name and contact information*)), your pediatrician, or go to www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org.



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Social Media

All stakeholders (students, parents, school staff, mental health clinicians, community members) can spread the word about Children’s Mental Health Matters! Awareness week. Update your social media status or share these data points with your distribution lists of child-, youth-, and family-serving organizations, associations, agencies, and individuals and encouraging other to share with their contacts. A first step is to “like” the campaign on Facebook and “Follow” us on Twitter at www.facebook.com/ChildrensMentalHealthMatters and www.twitter.com/ChildrensMHM

You can use these messages and/or graphics as stand-alone e-mail messages, a component of your signature block, or to post on your school’s website, blog, social media, and other means of communicating with colleagues and families.



Visit www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org/school-champions to download this and additional graphics for your use.

2019 Social Media Posts

Below are suggested posts for Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week in Maryland.

Date	Status
5/5/2019	<p>Did you know that a mental check-up is just as important as a routine physical? Visit for more information. www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week is May 5-11, 2019 in Maryland. Visit for more information. www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Twitter: It is Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week in Maryland – spread the word! www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>You heard that the bird is the word but have you heard of Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week?</p>



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

	<p>Have you heard? Have you heard? Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is May 5-11, 2019 in Maryland. www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p>
5/6/2019	<p>Do you know what the most common types of bullying are? Learn more at: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Did you know that 1 in 5 children may experience a mental, emotional, or behavioral health problem before the age of 18? Learn more at: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Twitter: One in five students' 12-18 report being bullied during the school year. Learn more at: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>What are the most common types of bullying? Learn more at: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>1 in 5 children may experience a mental, emotional or behavioral health problem before 18. Learn more www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p>
5/7/2019	<p>Can you recognize signs and symptoms of trauma in children? Some signs include: nightmares, body aches, and having trouble at school. Find more facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Can you name 3 ways to help build resilience in a child? Some ways: listen, spend positive time, encourage play, encourage a good night's sleep, be consistent with rules and routines, promote mutual respect and trust. Find more facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Twitter: Looking for information on signs of trauma in children? Visit www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>Looking for tips to foster resiliency in your child? Visit www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p>
5/10/2019	<p>Depression is associated with social, emotional, and cognitive delays. Find more facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among youth. Suicide is not the solution. Contact the Maryland Crisis Hotline if you need immediate help at 800-422-0009 or call 911 www.help4mdyouth.org</p>



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

	<p>Every 13.7 minutes in the US, someone dies by suicide. Suicide is not the solution. Contact the Maryland Crisis Hotline if you need immediate help at 800-422-0009 or call 911 www.help4mdyouth.org</p> <p>Twitter: Did you know depression is associated with social, emotional, and cognitive delays? Find more facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among youth. Contact 800-422-0009 or 911 for immediate help. #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>Every 13.7 minutes, someone dies by suicide. Suicide is not the solution. Contact 800-422-0009 or 911 for immediate help. #CMHMMaryland</p>
5/11/2019	<p>Are you not sure who to talk to about your child's behavior and emotional well-being? Download the Family Resource Kit for information on first steps: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Do you know what mental health services your child's school offers? For a list of services schools should provide download the Family Resource Kit: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Only 20% of children with mental health disorders are identified and receive mental health services. Download the Family Resource Kit for information on where to get help: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Twitter: Only 20% of children w/ mental health disorders receive services. Find help: www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p>
5/12/2019	<p>Have you gotten your daily dose of child mental health facts? Find facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>Out of 10 million Americans with an eating disorder, 90 percent of them are children and adolescents. Find facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>Concerned about your children's mental health? Find facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p>
5/13/2019	<p>With treatment and support, youth can learn to manage their symptoms of anxiety. Find resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p>



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

<p>Emotional scars cut just as deep as physical scars. Find help: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Research indicates that early identification and intervention can minimize the long-term impact of mental disorders. Don't wait, get help today: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Twitter: Eating disorders typically manifests between 12-13 years of age. Find facts and resources: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org #CMHMMaryland</p> <p>Just because you cannot see the scar does not mean it is not there. Find help: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p> <p>Early identification & intervention can minimize long-term impact of mental disorders. Find help: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org</p>

Additional Posts

Think it's hard to make a difference in a child's life? Learn easy, everyday ways to make a difference: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Got questions about children's mental health? Get answers: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Positive interactions with children strongly benefit their mental health. Get ideas: www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Symptoms of mental health problems often emerge during adolescence. Learn more at www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Bullying during the school years increases thoughts of suicide that may persist into adulthood. Find resources for combatting bullying at school: <https://www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org/educators-providers/educators-resources/>

Bullying can be a big mental health problem. For tools to help STOP bullying: www.stopbullying.gov

Depression in teens can mimic what we consider normal adolescent behavior; pay attention. www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org



www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people. For help, call 800-422-0009, 911, or go to the nearest ER.

Physical and mental health are strongly linked. For more information on building resilience:

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Childhood physical, emotional, and sexual abuse can cause permanent changes to the brain and impact the way a child copes with new stress. www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

With help from families, providers, and the community, children can be resilient following trauma.

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Positive words from adults are one of the strongest predictors of child resilience following trauma.

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Stigma can prevent children in need from receiving mental health care. For more information, go to

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Praise is an easy way to show children you care and provide encouragement. For ideas, visit

www.ciscc.org/UserFiles/File/101Ways.pdf

Nearly 50% of teens try an illegal drug by their senior year. Find tips on substance use prevention:

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

Children's mental health problems often go undetected. Learn more about signs at

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org