
From: DCF BWF Work Programs Help Desk <BFWWorkProgramsHD@wisconsin.gov>
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To: DCF DL DFES BWF W-2 Agency CARES Coordinators <DCFDLW-2AgencyCARESCoordinators@wisconsin.gov>; DCF DL DFES BWF W-2 REGIONAL STAFF <DCFDLDFESBFW-2REGIONALSTAFF@wisconsin.gov>; DCF DL DFES BWF W-2 Agency Directors <DCFDLDFESBFW2AgencyDirectors@wisconsin.gov>; DCF DL DFES BWF TJ TMJ <DCFDLDFESBFWTJTMJ@wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Mental Health Month Awareness and Resources

Good Morning,

This email is to raise awareness that May is Mental Health Month. This year presented many challenges that tested our resiliency, which makes it increasingly important for us to address mental health as we continue to support the well-being of individuals and communities. The [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) (NAMI) is amplifying the message, “[You Are Not Alone](#)” to focus on healing, connecting in safe ways, prioritizing mental health, and acknowledging that it’s okay to not be okay. We are sharing resources as links and attachments to meet your agency’s needs.

[Mental Health America](#) provides a [May is Mental Health Month web page](#) and [Tools 2 Thrive toolkit](#) with outreach ideas, handouts, posters, social media materials, and fact sheets in English and Spanish. They also have many resources (information sheets, videos, or podcasts) available addressing the pandemic and mental health:

[Caregiving and Parenting](#)

- [Caregiver Help Desk](#)
(Free support by phone, text or chat from [Caregiver Action Network](#))
- [Family Caregiver Tool Box](#) (information about specific issues)

[Wellness and Coping Skills](#)

[BIPOC and LGBTQ+ Communities](#)

[Mental Health Screening Tools](#)

As we know, the pandemic has affected the mental health of young people. The [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) shares that the number of young people living in poverty who reported experiencing serious psychological distress during the past [year increased from 1 in 5, to 1 in 4. See the full data snapshot on youth.](#)

For resources aimed at young people, please see: [Recognizing Mental Health Concerns in Kids and Teens](#) and [NAMI Resources for Teens and Young Adults](#)

Please be aware of the following 24/7 mental health crisis response resources:

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-8255

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

[Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor

See [Immediate and Crisis Response for more resources](#).

This email will be posted to the [BWF Work Programs Help Desk Home Page](#).

ADAPTING AFTER TRAUMA AND STRESS



We all face trauma, adversity, and other stresses throughout our lives. When people think of trauma, they often think of things like abuse, terrorism, or catastrophic events (big 'T' trauma). Trauma can also be caused by events that may be less obvious but can still overwhelm your capacity to cope, like frequent arguing at home or losing your job (little 't' trauma). Trauma of any kind can be hard on your mental health but working on becoming more resilient can help you feel more at ease.

TIPS FOR HEALING



Process your thoughts. During and after experiencing trauma, it's common to go into survival mode and not have energy to wrap your head around what happened. It may feel safest to bury painful feelings and avoid confronting them, but acknowledging what happened and how it has impacted you is an important part of healing. When you feel ready, take time to think about how you've been affected (and be proud of yourself for pushing through).



Connect with people. The pain of trauma can lead some people to isolate themselves, but having a support system is a crucial part of wellbeing. Emotional support helps us to feel less alone or overwhelmed by what's going on or has happened in our lives. Talking to someone who has gone through a similar experience or someone who cares about you can be validating - and help you feel more able to overcome the challenges you're facing.



Don't compare your experience to others'. We often question our own thoughts or experiences, and you may convince yourself that what you experienced wasn't a big deal because "others have it worse." Everyone experiences trauma differently, and no one trauma is "worse" than another. If it hurt you, then it hurt you - and your feelings and experiences are valid.



Take care of your body. Stress and trauma impact your body and physical health just as much as your mind. Listening to your body and giving it what it needs will help you heal. This includes eating a nutritious diet, getting enough sleep, staying hydrated, and exercising regularly. Moving your body is especially helpful in trauma healing¹ - aim to do it every day, even if it's only a few minutes of stretching.



Know it will take time. There is no set timeline for how you "should" heal. Remove the pressure of needing to bounce back quickly and focus on taking it one step at a time. Remember: recovery isn't linear, and it's normal to have bad days and setbacks. It doesn't mean you're failing - it's just part of the process.



Give yourself grace. Dealing with trauma and stress is no easy feat, but it's still common to get frustrated with yourself and what can sometimes be a slow recovery process. Try to catch when you hold yourself to unreasonable standards - instead of angrily asking yourself "why am I acting like this?!", think about how impressive it is that you keep going, despite what you have faced.



Don't feel ashamed to ask for help. It's easy to compare how you're feeling to how you *assume* others who have been through similar experiences are feeling, and you may get down on yourself because it seems like everyone else is doing just fine. What others experience and how they cope doesn't matter in your journey - if you feel like you need (or want) help, it's important to get that as soon as you can.

FAST FACTS

#2

Among people who took a screen at mhascreening.org in 2020, past trauma was the second most reported cause for mental distress among screeners after loneliness.²

3x

People who have been through trauma are 3 times more likely to experience depression.³

53%

Of people who took a screen at mhascreening.org in 2020 who scored with moderate to severe symptoms, over half (53%) reported past trauma as one of the three main contributors to their mental health problems.⁴

TAKING A MENTAL HEALTH SCREEN IS ONE WAY TO WORK ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH. VISIT [MHASCREENING.ORG](https://mhascreening.org) TO CHECK YOUR SYMPTOMS.



It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and resources to help you start to feel better.

Sources

¹Ivan de Kamp, M. M., Scheffers, M., Hatzmann, J., Emck, C., Cuijpers, P., & Beek, P. J. (2019). Body- and Movement-Oriented Interventions for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Journal of traumatic stress*, 32(6), 967-976. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22465>

²Proprietary data. MHA screening.org. 2020.

³<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/mhsa/trauma-statistics.pdf>

⁴Proprietary data. MHA screening.org. 2020.

TAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF



There are always a handful of roles that each of us are juggling. If you are a parent, a student, an employee, a caretaker, someone struggling with a mental health concern, or are just feeling overwhelmed with the responsibilities of day-to-day life, the idea of taking time for yourself may seem unimaginable. Sometimes it can be difficult to even take basic care of ourselves - but there are small things that can be done to make self-care and taking time for ourselves a little bit easier.

TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



Accept yourself as you are. Remember that you are running your own race. Try not to compare your life and what it looks like right now to anyone else's. When you start comparing yourself to others, it's easy to feel inadequate, which makes it hard to even take the very first step in self-care. Instead, try your best to accept the person that you are and where you are in life right now.



Focus on the basics. Sometimes being an adult is not easy and it can feel impossible to get even the littlest things done. Taking time for yourself doesn't necessarily mean treating yourself to special things. One of the most important things you can do is focus on steps to ensure you're living a healthy lifestyle. Showering and brushing your teeth every day, eating nutrient-rich food, moving your body, and getting good sleep are all building blocks of good self-care.



Find what makes you happy. If you're caught up in taking care of all of your responsibilities — rather than taking care of yourself — you may not even really know what kind of self-care you need. What works for someone else may not work for you. Take time to think about what things you can do to make yourself feel happy or accomplished and include them in building the self-care routine that makes the most sense for you, your schedule, and your health overall.



Practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is one of the best ways to make the most out of any amount of time that you do have to care for yourself. Take a few slow, deep breaths, focus on each of your senses, and try to be fully present in whatever you're doing. Not only does mindfulness reduce stress, it also has the power to help you slow down and really take care of yourself — even in the midst of all of life's challenges and responsibilities.



Make small goals. Unfortunately, taking time for yourself doesn't just happen overnight, so try to be patient. Instead of putting pressure on yourself to immediately have the perfect self-care routine established, set small goals that you want to accomplish for yourself. Focus on small, daily tasks like wanting to take a 15-minute walk outside each day, or journaling for 10 minutes every night — rather than a complete overhaul of your life, all at once.



Set some boundaries. Sometimes, the only way to really be able to make time for self-care is to lessen the amount of time or energy that you are giving away to other people. Having the sometimes tough conversations with people that set boundaries around your time, your emotions, your things, your other relationships, your health, and your opinions can give you an opportunity to devote more time and effort to yourself and your own mental health.



Remember that you are not alone. Everyone struggles to take time for themselves, so try not to get down on yourself for not having everything perfectly balanced all of the time. As circumstances change, you'll probably have to rethink your routines and how you use your time many times throughout your life. There will always be people that understand where you're coming from and are willing to help. Ask your friends and family for help when you need to take some time for your mental health. They may even be able to offer you some guidance on how they manage self-care and take time for their own well-being.

FAST FACTS



On average, people only spend 15 minutes a day on health-related self-care.¹



Self-care is proven to reduce stress and anxiety levels while increasing self-compassion.²



Of people who took a depression screen at mhascreening.org in 2020, 73% felt tired or said that they had very little energy at least half of the time or nearly every day.³

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It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and resources to help you start to feel better.

Sources

¹Yaribeygi, H., Panahi, Y., Sahraei, H., Johnston, T. P., & Sahebkar, A. (2017). The impact of stress on body function: A review. *EXCLI Journal*, 16, 1057–1072. <https://doi.org/10.17179/excli2017-480>

²Shapiro, S., Brown, K., & Biegel, G. (2007). Teaching Self-Care to Caregivers: Effects of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on the Mental Health of Therapists in Training. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 1(2), 105–115. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1931-3918.1.2.105>

³Proprietary data. MHAScreening.org, 2020.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RESOURCES FROM MHA:

ADAPTING AFTER TRAUMA AND STRESS

Podcasts:

- [*Past Trauma Affects My Relationships*](#)
- [*I'm Exhausted from Explaining My Trauma*](#)

Article:

- [*Is All Trauma the Same?*](#)

Webinars:

- [*Protective Factors for Healing From Trauma In BIPOC Communities*](#)
- [*Owning Your Feelings & Moving Through Emotional Discomfort*](#)

PROCESSING BIG CHANGES

Podcasts:

- [*Dealing with Change*](#)
- [*I Don't Want to Change*](#)

GETTING OUT OF THINKING TRAPS

Podcasts:

- [*Why Am I So Hard on Myself*](#)
- [*Stopping Stupid Thoughts*](#)

Webinar:

- [*Strategies for Healthy Emotion Regulation During Uncertain Times*](#)

PRACTICING RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

Podcast:

- [*Does Being Positive Make You Happy?*](#)

TAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF/SELF-CARE

Podcasts:

- [*How Do I Love Myself*](#)
- [*How Do I Find Balance in My Life*](#)

Articles:

- [*6 Ways to Practice Self-Compassion*](#)
- [*8 of the Best Meditation Apps*](#)

Webinar:

- [*Cultivating Gratitude To Support Wellbeing*](#)

Worksheets:

- [*Self-Care Checkup*](#)
- [*Daily Wellness Chart*](#)
- [*Guided Journal*](#)

DEALING WITH ANGER AND FRUSTRATION

Podcasts:

- [I Get Mad at Little Things](#)
- [How to Tell Someone You're Mad](#)
- [I'm Really Angry at the World](#)

COVID-19

A wealth of articles, webinars, blogs, and podcasts about how to deal with the mental health struggles presented by the COVID-19 pandemic can be found at mhanational.org/covid19.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Resources mentioned below come from MHA's trusted partners, supporters, and associate members.

BetterHelp: BetterHelp is an online counseling platform that matches you with a licensed therapist who you can video call, live chat, or exchange messages with. Check out their article: [What Is Radical Acceptance And How Can It Help Me? Learn How To Use Radical Acceptance To Your Advantage](#)

Brightline: Brightline is the first comprehensive behavioral health solution designed to support kids, teens, and parents across a range of common family challenges.

ChoicesInRecovery.com: Support and information for people with Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective, and Bipolar Disorder and their caregivers, including [Strategies for Success](#) that can be used daily by people living with mental health conditions.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy Clinic at Rutgers University (DBT-RU): DBT-RU is a research and training clinic that provides comprehensive Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) services to individuals in the community. Be sure to watch their [Radical Acceptance](#) video.

DRK Beauty: DRK Beauty is a well-being and mental health digital platform that helps womxn of color discover and craft their own unique well-being journey. We blend a powerful mix of community, content, programming, and services that speaks to the psychological, spiritual, and physical needs of our community, ultimately empowering them to blossom, all through a convenient app.

Equoo: Equoo is a game that teaches individuals psychological skills in a fun and captivating way to deal with emotional and mental stressors in a healthy and productive fashion.

Happify: Happify brings you effective tools and programs (via the web and an app) to help you take control of your feelings and thoughts using proven techniques developed by leading scientists and experts who've been studying evidence-based interventions in the fields of positive psychology, mindfulness, and cognitive behavioral therapy. Check out their video, [How to Defeat Negative Thinking](#).

IDONTMIND: IDONTMIND is a mental health awareness campaign and lifestyle brand working to get people talking about their minds and to generate positive messaging about mental health. Check out their [online journal](#) for articles on all things mental health.

Lyf: Lyf is a social media app where users share highly personal aspects of themselves without the fear of judgment. Lyf users receive support during some of their most grueling, challenging, confronting or even "embarrassing" stages of their lives from other people who have no preconceptions about their fellow Lyfers. Lyfers have the opportunity to connect with and chat to others on the same life paths or journeys; whether it's a struggle or celebration, in Lyf, you aren't alone.

Make Sure Your Friends Are Okay: Through merchandise and social media, Make Sure Your Are Okay is building a community of like-minded people who want to help us get the world talking.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN): NCTSN was created to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for children and families who experience or witness traumatic events. Be sure to check out their [Pause, Reset, Nourish \(PRN\) to Promote Wellbeing](#) handout.

notOK App: The notOK App® is a free app that takes the guesswork out of asking for help when you're feeling vulnerable.

OPEN Mental Health: Stories and advice from people who either live with mental health issues or care for someone who does.

PositivePsychology.com: PositivePsychology.com is a science-based online resource of courses, techniques, tools, and tips to help you put positive psychology into practice. Be sure to check out their [radical acceptance worksheets](#), including [Focus on the Present for Radical Acceptance](#).

Postpartum Support International: The mission of Postpartum Support International is to promote awareness, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues related to childbearing in every country worldwide.

PsychHub: PsychHub is the world's largest online platform for mental health education with revolutionary Learning Hubs to take you from knowledge learned to behavior changed.

PsychoSocial: PsychoSocial is a mental health multimedia business created by mental health professionals in a joint effort to raise mental health awareness and destigmatize mental illness. Check out their handout on [Positive Affirmations](#).

Supportiv: Supportiv is a digital peer-to-peer support network that enables people to process, cope with, heal from, and problem solve mental health (anxiety, depression) + daily life struggles (loneliness, family pressure, parenting challenges, relationship conflicts, work stress) in safe, professionally moderated micro-community chats.

This is My Brave: This is My Brave is an organization that works to bring stories of mental illness and addiction out of the shadows and into the spotlight.

This Way Up: This Way Up provides online courses that teach practical, psychological skills designed to help you manage difficult emotions, tackle unhelpful thoughts, and gain control over symptoms of anxiety and depression. Be sure to check out their handout, Calming Your Emotions During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

wikiHow: wikiHow is an online community consisting of an extensive database of how-to guides. Check out their course, created in collaboration with MHA: [Boost Your Well-Being: wikiHow's Healthy Mind Masterclass](#).

YogaPose: YogaPose is the largest free digital library of yoga poses searchable by symptom. As a form of holistic healing, we are utilizing yoga as a form of alternative medicine to help or ease the symptoms of both mental and physical illnesses. Users are able to search the Yoga Pose database of comprehensive yoga poses based on the ailment they are experiencing. Each yoga pose profile features an easy-to-follow Yoga Pose video, medical information, and related flows.

Youper: Youper uses Artificial Intelligence to deliver evidence-based therapy techniques to support people's mental health anytime and anywhere.