

The logo features the word "TOGETHER" in large, bold, white capital letters on a green rectangular background. Below it, the words "for Mental Health" are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

#Together4MH

May is Mental
Health
Awareness
Month

Myth: Children don't experience mental health problems.

Fact: Even very young children may show early warning signs of mental health concerns. These mental health problems are often clinically diagnosable, and can be a product of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors.

Half of all mental health disorders show first signs before a person turns 14 years old, and three-quarters of mental health disorders begin before age 24.

Unfortunately, only half of children and adolescents with diagnosable mental health problems receive the treatment they need. Early mental health support can help a child before problems interfere with other developmental needs.

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/mental-health-myths-facts>

National Statistics

1 in 5 young people (age 13-18) has or will develop a mental illness in their lifetime. "Mental Health Facts: Children and Teens." National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2017. Accessed May 7, 2019.

1/2 of all mental illnesses show early signs before a person turns 14 years old, and 3/4 of mental illnesses begin before age 24. "Mental Health Myths and Facts." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017. Accessed May 7, 2019.

Some potential signs of mental health needs to watch for, especially when there are two or more of these symptoms:

- Long-lasting sadness or irritability.
- Extremely high and low moods.
- Excessive fear, worry, or anxiety.
- Social withdrawal.
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits.

We are here to help. Talk with your child's school counselor for ways the school can help support your child's mental health. Browse these resources below for helpful tips.

For Parents and Caregivers

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>

For Youth

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/young-people>

For Educators

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/educators>

<https://www.classroomwise.org/>

How to Improve Mental Health on a Daily Basis

Have a Meaningful Conversation with a Friend. Friendships are among the most important and valuable relationships that people have. ...

1. Get Some Exercise. ...
2. Do Something Kind for Someone Else. ...
3. Create and Follow a Sleep Routine. ...
4. Write in a Journal. ...

The Relationship between Resilience and Mental Health

Having solid mental health doesn't mean that you never go through bad times or experience emotional problems. We all go through disappointments, loss, and change. And while these are normal parts of life, they can still cause sadness, anxiety, and stress. But just as physically healthy people are better able to bounce back from illness or injury, people with strong mental health are better able to bounce back from adversity, trauma, and stress. This ability is called *resilience*.

People who are emotionally and mentally resilient have the tools for coping with difficult situations and maintaining a positive outlook. They remain focused, flexible, and productive, in bad times as well as good. Their resilience also makes them less afraid of new experiences or an uncertain future. Even when they don't immediately know how a problem will get resolved, they are hopeful that a solution will eventually be found.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/building-better-mental-health.htm>.

REDUCING STIGMA

What We Can Do to Reduce Stigma

<https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/addressing-stigma>

1. Know the facts. Educate yourself about mental illness including substance use disorders.
2. Be aware of your attitudes and behavior. Examine your own judgmental thinking, reinforced by upbringing and society.
3. Choose your words carefully. The way we speak can affect the attitudes of others.
4. Educate others. Pass on facts and positive attitudes; challenge myths and stereotypes.
5. Focus on the positive. Mental illness, including addictions, are only part of anyone's larger picture.
6. Support people. Treat everyone with dignity and respect; offer support and encouragement.
7. Include everyone. It's against the law to deny jobs or services to anyone with these health issues.

