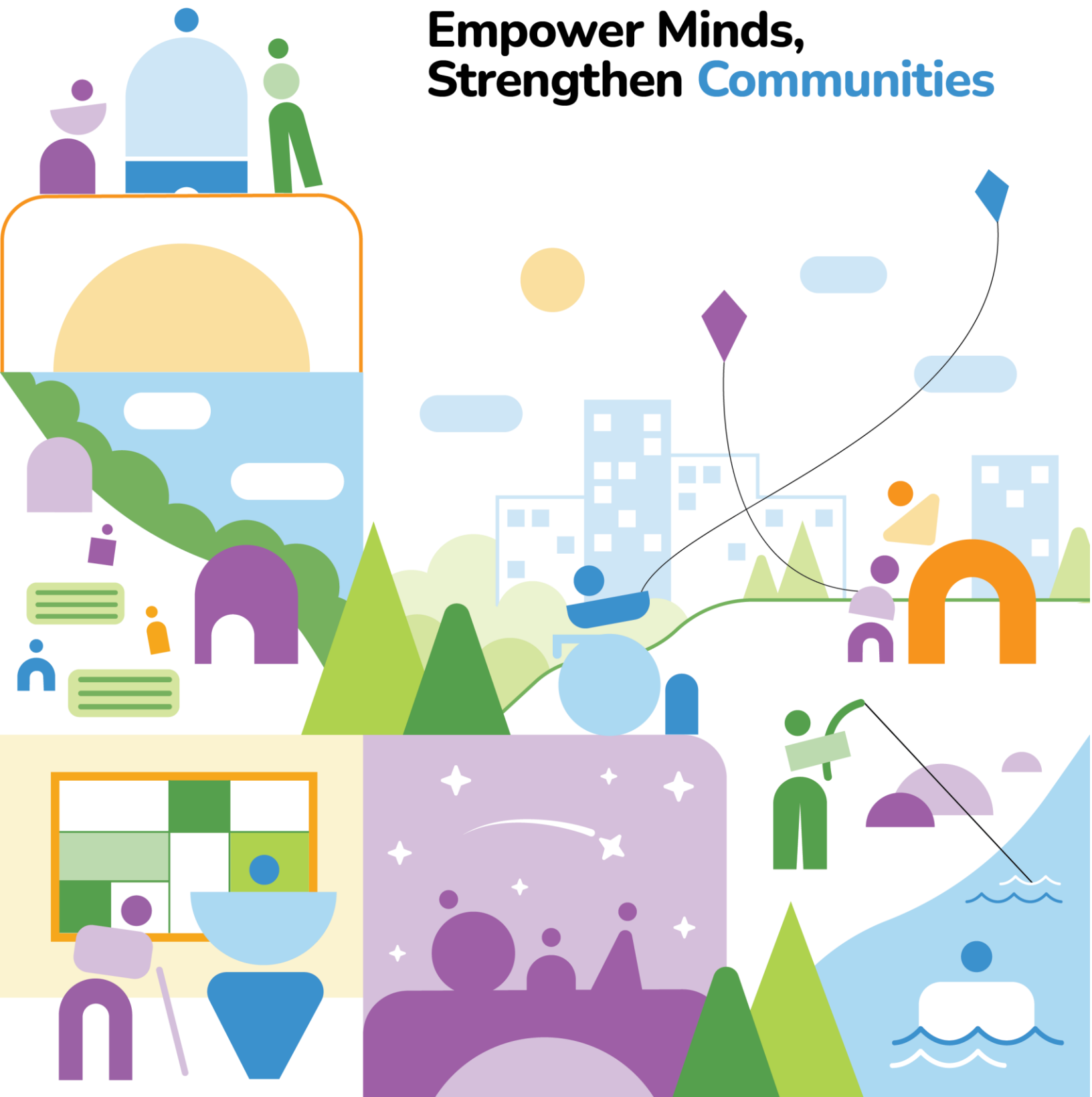


# Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities



## Forward

Our health is deeply shaped by our connections with ourselves and the communities around us. The environments where we live, work, learn, and gather influence our mental well-being in powerful ways. While physical health often dominates conversations, it's important to recognize how individual resilience and collective support play equally important roles in our mental wellness.

This year, during Mental Health Month, the Health Care Authority (HCA) invites you to **Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities**. This theme centers on building personal resilience while reinforcing the importance of supportive, inclusive communities that foster mental wellness for all. This toolkit offers practical tools to help individuals care for their own mental health while also uplifting their communities.

Though some circumstances are outside of our control, this toolkit highlights ways we can take meaningful action; whether by cultivating digital balance, advocating for mental health in the workplace, empowering youth voices, or promoting culturally informed care. It also provides resources to cope with challenges and foster change, even when systemic transformation takes time.

We recognize the financial challenges facing Washington State and the tough decisions affecting mental health programs. Even so, we are grateful for the legislature's ongoing commitment to improving social conditions that support mental well-being, including education, housing, social networks, and access to care. Now is the time to work together—through local partnerships, advocacy, and community-led solutions that strengthen our collective foundation.

Mental health affects every one of us. When we empower individuals and strengthen communities, we create resilient, compassionate spaces where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



**Teesha Kirschbaum**

Director, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)  
Health Care Authority

### Questions?

If you have further question about Mental health Month, please contact:

**Liz Venuto, Tina Burrell, or Christine Mickelson** the Prenatal-25 supervisor team

## Introduction

This Mental Health Month, HCA encourages everyone to **Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities**. This year's theme reflects the belief that while individual strength is essential, collective support is transformative. From local neighborhoods to statewide policies, many interconnected factors shape mental well-being like access to care, educational opportunities, economic stability, and meaningful social connection.

This toolkit provides practical resources to help individuals and communities navigate challenges, build resilience, and promote inclusive mental health solutions. Inside, you'll find:

### Media materials

- Key messages
- Drop-in article
- May is Mental Health Month Proclamation

### Social media

- Sample post language
- Shareable images for Facebook, X, and Instagram

### Posters

- Calendar (horizontal)
- Mental Health monthly poster (vertical)
- Index cards to build a vision board

## Examples of Projects, programs, services, resources

**Washington Thriving:** Washington Thriving is a collaborative statewide effort to develop a strategic plan for equitable behavioral health for children, youth, young adults from before they are born through age 25, and their families and caregivers. This ambitious process prioritizes collaborative engagement between individuals with lived or living experience and decision makers who will act to make the vision a reality.

**Center of Parent Excellence (COPE):** COPE provides a pathway for Washington State parents who are accessing and navigating the children's behavioral health system to have a peer support on their journey.

**Collegiate recovery support project:** This project aims to create support programs for students in colleges and universities across the state using a harm reduction approach. The project provides training, guidance, and resources to staff and students that build sustainable connections within their communities.

**Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI):** CPWI is a two-pronged local community and school-focused approach to preventing substance use disorder in Washington State

**Department of Health Adolescent and Young Adult Health Youth Advisory Council:** Is a community engagement group of diverse young people from

around Washington. This group helps state agencies understand what public health topics are important to young people.

**Family Initiated Treatment (FIT):** FIT provides parents a way to access services when they feel a youth may need behavioral health treatment, and for providers to engage youth in a manner that shows them the benefits of treatment, so they are willing to provide their consent.

**Housing for transitioning youth (TAY):** All youth and young adults, including those transitioning from behavioral health inpatient care, require access to stable, long-term, supportive housing and services as they enter adulthood. This resource aims to assist young people, families, and providers in understanding how they can support transition-age youth with housing and resources.

**Kids Mental Health Washington:** Health Care Authority, Kids' Mental Health Pierce Co., and Developmental Disabilities Administration partnered to create youth regional behavioral health teams. These teams aim to enhance communication, streamline services, and deploy multidisciplinary teams to improve access to services for children and youth facing behavioral health challenges. [Connect with your regional KMHWA team to learn more about what is available in your area.](#)

**Mobile rapid response crisis teams:** Mobile rapid crisis response (MRRCT) teams provide in-person and telehealth or telephonic interventions for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. These services are provided in the community, including in individuals' homes, businesses, public spaces, and schools. The focus is on voluntary services that are provided, whenever possible, outside of an emergency department and without the presence of law enforcement.

**Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP):** PCAP is an evidence-informed program that provides intensive case management and support services to pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders and their young children.

**Pregnant and Parenting services:** Pregnant and Parenting services are designed to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting women who are seeking services.

**Problem gambling:** For eligible individuals and their family members who are struggling with problem gambling or affected by gambling addiction, Washington State provides assessment and treatment reimbursement with **contracted problem gambling agencies and certified gambling counselor providers**.

**Regional crisis lines and Mobile Response Stabilization services for youth:** The mobile response and stabilization services (MRSS) model is utilized by MRRCT and is designed to meet the developmental needs of children, youth, young adults and their parents or caregivers. The youth or family define the crisis and teams respond based on that identification, not their own.

**School-based prevention and intervention services:** The Student Assistance Prevention and Intervention Services Program (SAPISP) works with a mix of local, state, and federal funding to place prevention and intervention specialists in schools. The services provided implement comprehensive student assistance programs addressing problems associated with substance use and violence.

**Suicide prevention and mental health promotion:** HCA funds Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI) coalitions as well as local community-based organizations, private not-for-profits, and educational organizations for mental health promotion or suicide prevention services. These communities implement a variety of mental health promotion or suicide prevention programs.

**Tribal relations:** Tribal Affairs supports and communicates with tribes and tribal-related organizations for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) health care. They provide information, manage agreements, develop policies, offer training, collaborate on crisis and care coordination, facilitate communication, and assist with Medicaid claims and tribal issues.

**The Bridge:** The Bridge is a statewide collaboration between community-based housing providers, behavioral health discharge planners, other community-based professionals, and young people with lived experience. The group aims to increase the number of unaccompanied young people who return to community with safe housing and services upon exiting an inpatient behavioral health setting.

**Wraparound Intensive Services (WiSe):** WiSe provides comprehensive behavioral health services and supports to youth who are Apple Health eligible through age 20 years of age, with complex behavioral health needs. The program prioritizes children in WA with the most complex needs, delivering behavioral health services and support in their home and communities.

**Youth substance use disorder treatment services:** Services designed to meet the needs of the youth and families seeking assistance. Level of care is established using the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) standards and varies depending on the severity of the diagnosis, its impact, and the needs of the youth and family. Services are age appropriate, medically necessary, and trauma informed.

## Drop-in article

### Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities: Resilience begins with you and us

This Mental Health Month, take a moment to reflect on your surroundings. Do you feel supported? Do you have access to health care, safe spaces, and relationships that nurture your well-being?

Your mental health is shaped not just by what's going on inside, but by what's happening around you. Where you live, work, learn, and connect as well as your financial stability, cultural identity, and community support are all pieces of the mental health puzzle. These factors are known as Social Determinants of Health.

When these supports are strong, people are more likely to thrive. But when challenges pile up, like housing instability, isolation, or community violence, they can wear down even the most resilient person.

The good news? We're not powerless.

You can take small steps to improve your own mental health and help those around you do the same:

- Create a calming, safe space—even if it's just a corner of your room where you feel grounded.
- Reach out for support—from a friend, a mental health professional, or a local resource.
- Foster community—say hello to a neighbor, support local businesses, or join a local group.
- Speak up—share your story or advocate for mental health supports where you live.

Remember: It's OK to seek help. If you're struggling, visit [screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools](https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools) for a free, private mental health screening to better understand what you're feeling.

Health Care Authority's Mental Health Month toolkit is full of ideas to help individuals and communities take action. Together, we can build resilient people and connected communities where mental health is a shared priority. Visit [hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025](https://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025) to get started.

## Key messages

### General

This Mental Health Month, HCA invites everyone to recognize that **mental health is both a personal journey and a shared responsibility**. When we build individual resilience and ensure our communities are safe, inclusive, and connected, we create lasting mental health outcomes for all.

The **Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities** theme is about acknowledging how our personal and collective actions influence mental wellness. Whether advocating for services, checking in with a neighbor, or fostering digital balance, small actions can ripple out to create big change.

### Housing stability

A safe and stable home is the foundation for both security and peace of mind. Without a place to rest and recharge, it's difficult to cope, connect, or heal. When individuals are empowered to build stability, and when communities ensure access to housing, we create a powerful framework for well-being.

### Crisis support

In times of crisis, immediate and compassionate support can be life changing. Community-centered crisis care reduces stigma, saves lives, and reinforces our collective responsibility to support one another. No one should face mental health challenges alone.

Call or text **988** to reach trained crisis counselors who can provide immediate, confidential assistance.

## Community

Communities thrive when everyone feels safe, valued, and supported. When we work together to address the social and environmental factors that shape mental health, we foster collective resilience and ensure that no one is left behind.

### Creating connections

Here are ways to build both personal resilience and strong community ties:

- Encourage buildings to light up green during May.
- Join or host a mental health walk or event.
- Model healthy screen-time habits and digital boundaries.
- Share mental health resources and take part in local activities.

## May is Mental Health Month Proclamation

Encourage your local public officials to go on the record in support of mental health. Below, please find a sample proclamation that designates May as mental health month. An official signing of a proclamation is a perfect occasion for a news event, photo opportunity, or other activity.

### **Mental Health Month 2025** **“Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities”**

WHEREAS, individual resilience and community support are essential for mental well-being; and

WHEREAS, the environments where people live, work, and connect influence if, how, and when their mental health needs are met; and

WHEREAS, having access to stable housing, social support, and inclusive care can help prevent and heal mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, early interventions and compassionate support can help individuals recover, thrive, and live full, meaningful lives; and

WHEREAS, each person, business, school, organization, and government entity plays a role in promoting a culture of wellness and mental health equity;

THEREFORE, I [NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL], do hereby proclaim May 2025 as Mental Health Month in [STATE OR COMMUNITY]. I encourage all citizens, organizations, and public institutions to recommit to building resilient individuals and strong communities by promoting mental health awareness, reducing stigma, and increasing access to care for all.

## Social media posts

### Download the toolkit

1. This #MentalHealthMonth, join us to #EmpowerMindsStrengthenCommunities and explore how building personal resilience and stronger communities supports mental well-being. Download the toolkit: [hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025](https://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025)
2. Your mental health matters—and so does your neighborhood, school, and workplace. [Learn how](#) you can create change for yourself and your community.  
#EmpowerMindsStrengthenCommunities #MentalHealthMonth

### Toolkit topics

1. From safe housing to accessing the help you need, your surroundings impact your mental health. Let's build environments that support healing and growth.  
#EmpowerMindsStrengthenCommunities #MentalHealthMonth
2. Everyone deserves support. Let's normalize asking for help and uplift those who are struggling. Together, we can create compassionate communities.  
#EmpowerMindsStrengthenCommunities #MentalHealthMonth
3. Building resilience starts with small steps—like talking to a friend, taking a walk, or supporting a neighbor. Every action counts.  
#EmpowerMindsStrengthenCommunities #MentalHealthMonth
4. Every person has the power to make a difference. Whether it's a kind word, lending a hand, or showing up your actions matter. What can you do today to help your community thrive?  
#EmpowerMindsStrengthenCommunities #MentalHealthMonth

### Crisis

1. For immediate help with a mental health crisis or thoughts of suicide: contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) 1-800-273-8255 (TRS: 1-800-799-4889) or call or text 988.
2. For immediate help with a mental health crisis for youth: contact your [Regional crisis line and mobile response stabilization services for youth](#).

#### Hashtags

- #EmpowerMindsStrengthenCommunities
- #MentalHealthMonth

#### Links

- [www.hca.wa.gov](https://www.hca.wa.gov)
- [www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-behavioral-health-support/i-need-behavioral-health-support](https://www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-behavioral-health-support/i-need-behavioral-health-support)
- [www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-behavioral-health-support/mental-health-crisis-lines](https://www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-behavioral-health-support/mental-health-crisis-lines)



## Sharable items

We have provided sample social media posts and image for your use during the month of May. We have also included a printable [poster](#), [calendar](#), and [index cards](#) for vision board.



### Option 1

**Headline:** Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities

**Call to action:** Download the mental health month toolkit: [hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025](https://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025)

### Option 2

**Headline:** Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities

**Copy:** Resilient individuals and caring communities go hand in hand. Let's build both together.

**Call to action:** Access tools to support mental well-being in your community  
[hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025](https://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025)

### Option 3

**Headline:** Celebrate Mental Health Month with Us!

**Copy:** Encourage your community to light up green and show support for mental wellness. Together we shine brighter.

**Call to action:** Visit the Mental Health Month toolkit for more ways to engage.  
[hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025](https://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025)

## Instagram and Facebook story image

**Headline:** Resilience starts with connection

**Copy:** Find inspiration, share support, and strengthen your community this May.

**CTA button text:** Swipe up to download the toolkit.  
[hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025](https://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025)

# May is mental health month




## Empower Minds, Strengthen Communities.

When we care for ourselves and support each other, mental well-being becomes a shared reality. Take time this month to explore how your environment shapes mental health—and how you can make a difference.



Learn how to build personal resilience  
and create stronger communities at:  
[hca.wa.gov/assets/program/  
mental-health-month-toolkit-2025](https://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit-2025)

Find HCA on social media:

-  WAHealthCareAuthority
-  wa\_health\_care
-  WA\_Health\_Care



# May 2025

31 ways to empower minds and strengthen communities

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> Take a mental health screening online.	<b>2</b> Call or check in on a friend.	<b>3</b> Attend a local community event or support group.
<b>4</b> Share your mental health story to help reduce stigma.	<b>5</b> Volunteer for a mental health organization.	<b>6</b> Set healthy boundaries around work, tech, or media.	<b>7</b> Post about mental health resources on social media.	<b>8</b> Support a small business focused on wellness.	<b>9</b> Organize a walk or run to raise awareness.	<b>10</b> Journal about what mental strength means to you.
<b>11</b> Create a calming space in your home.	<b>12</b> Help a neighbor with a task or errand.	<b>13</b> Write a thank-you note to someone who has supported you.	<b>14</b> Advocate for improved mental health resources in your city.	<b>15</b> Take a walk in nature and reflect on your well-being.	<b>16</b> Attend a local government or school board meeting.	<b>17</b> Offer a listening ear to someone in need.
<b>18</b> Host a wellness day or mindfulness workshop.	<b>19</b> Practice a random act of kindness.	<b>20</b> Cook or share a meal with someone.	<b>21</b> Post flyers or share digital resources in your neighborhood.	<b>22</b> Join a virtual peer support community.	<b>23</b> Meditate or try a new breathing exercise.	<b>24</b> Light up your porch green to support Mental Health Month.
<b>25</b> Host a movie night with a mental health documentary or film.	<b>26</b> Read a book that expands your understanding of mental health.	<b>27</b> Decorate a space with affirmations or inspirational quotes.	<b>28</b> Organize a donation drive for hygiene or comfort items.	<b>29</b> Share your favorite coping strategies with others.	<b>30</b> Reflect on how far you've come and what you need to grow.	<b>31</b> Celebrate community by thanking those who make yours stronger.

*Resilience is built in  
connection—not in isolation.*

Unknown

*Empowered minds create  
empowered communities*

Anonymous

*We rise by lifting others up.*

Robert Ingersoll

I have the strength to face  
challenges and the courage to ask  
for support.

My community is a source of  
healing, growth, and connection.

I am building a life that supports  
my mental wellness—one step at  
a time.

I contribute to a stronger, kinder  
community by showing up as my  
authentic self.

Resilience

The image features a 2x4 grid of concepts. A vertical dashed line runs down the center, separating the left and right columns. The top row has a wavy border at the top. The bottom row has a wavy border at the bottom. The left column has a wavy border on the left side. The right column has a wavy border on the right side. The colors of the wavy borders are: top-left (orange), top-right (light green), middle-left (light blue), middle-right (light purple), bottom-left (orange), and bottom-right (light green).

Empowerment

Uplift

Connection

Community

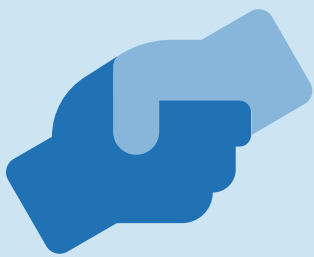
Belonging

Courage

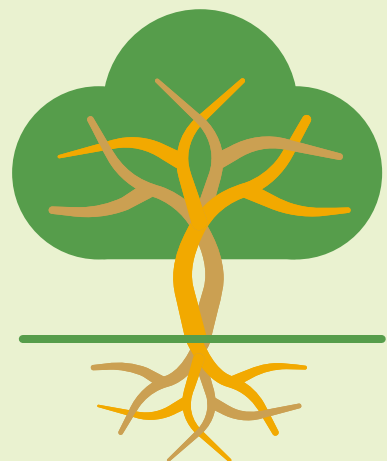
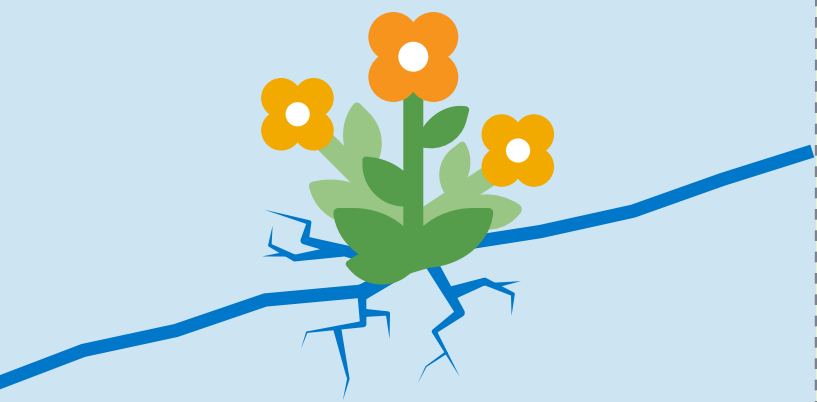
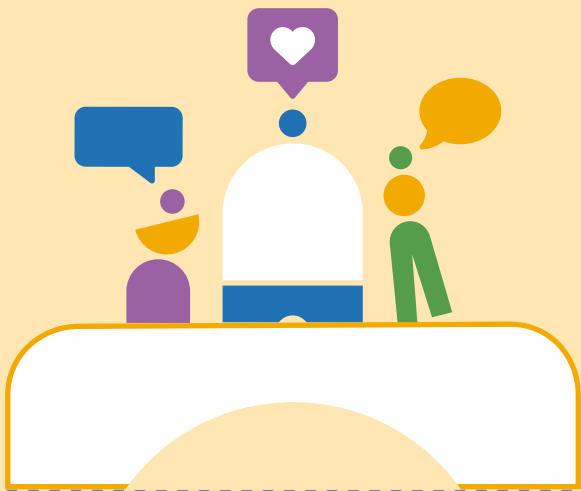
Wellness

Collaboration

Support



Gratitude



## Additional resources

### **Regional crisis lines and Mobile Response**

**Stabilization services for youth:** Regional crisis lines and MRSS provide rapid in-person support for youth and families during a crisis. The stabilization phase is a medically necessary service from 1 response to a 2-3 day intervention.

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free, and confidential support to people in distress – you don’t need to be suicidal to reach out. Call 1-800-273-8255 to be connected with a crisis counselor. Crisis counselors who speak Spanish are available at 1-888-628-9454.

**988 Textline:** When you text 988, you will complete a short survey letting the crisis counselor know a little about your situation. You will be connected with a trained crisis counselor in a crisis center who will answer the text, provide support, and share resources if needed.

**988 Veterans:** Talk to other veterans who have gone through the same kind of trauma that you have.

**988 Option 4:** Native and Strong Lifeline: Native and Strong is the nation’s first program dedicated to serving American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

**AAKOMA Project:** AAKOMA works to build the consciousness of youth of color and their caregivers on the recognition and importance of mental health, empowering youth and their families to seek help and manage mental health and influence systems and services to receive and address the needs of youth of color and their families.

**Athena forum:** The Athena Forum is a site for substance use disorder prevention and mental health promotion professionals and volunteers.

**Babies on the Homefront:** Deployments and times apart can take a health toll on young military families. Babies on the Homefront is an app designed for military families to make separation a little easier and less stressful. A **partnership toolkit** and **video series** is also available.

### **Children Youth Behavioral Health Work Group**

**(CYBHWG):** The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group (CYBHWG) provides recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature to improve behavioral health services and strategies for children, youth, young adults, and their families. The group includes legislators, state agencies, health care providers, tribal governments, community behavioral health services, advocates, and other organizations, as well as youth and young people who have received services and parents of children and youth who have received services.

### **Family Peer Network: Washington State**

**Community Connectors:** WSCC is a family-driven community of support for caregivers of children with a range of behavioral health needs, including mental health and substance use, as well as other disabilities and challenges within the educational and judicial systems and more.

### **Family Youth System Partner Round Table**

**(FYSPRT):** Washington State Family Youth System Partner Round Tables (FYSPRTs) provide a forum for families, youth, systems, and communities to strengthen sustainable resources by providing community-based approaches to address the individual behavioral health needs of children, youth, and families.

**Lavender Phoenix:** Lavender Phoenix builds queer and transgender Asian and Pacific Islander power to amplify voices and increase the visibility of the communities. Through organizing in the San Francisco Bay Area, they inspire and train grassroots leaders, transform values from scarcity to abundance, and partner with organizations to sustain a vibrant movement ecosystem.

**MHA Screening:** Online screening is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine if you’re experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition. Our screens are free, confidential, and scientifically validated.

**Problem gambling:** For eligible individuals and their family members who are struggling with problem gambling or affected by gambling

addiction, Washington State provides assessment and treatment reimbursement with **contracted problem gambling agencies and certified gambling counselor providers**.

**Rural Minds:** Rural Minds serves as the informed voice for mental health in rural America and provides mental health information and resources.

**Southern Echo:** Southern Echo works to empower Black and low-income communities throughout Mississippi and the southern U.S. with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to impact and demand accountability of the political, education, economic, and environmental systems to address the needs of communities through comprehensive organizing, leadership development, training, and technical assistance programs.

**SPARK Peer Learning Center:** SPARK Peer Learning Center is a youth led organization that works to strengthen and build the workforce development of youth peer counselors with an emphasis on the WISE program in Washington State. They offer a 6-week program for youth ages 17-26 that teaches social and emotional skills, who have had or is a

family member of someone with behavioral health challenges, and has knowledge of utilizing or navigating complex systems. SPARK classes prepare the youth to take the Certified Peer Counseling Training (CPC).

**The Praxis Project:** The Praxis Project is a national nonprofit that works in partnership with national, regional, state, and local partners to achieve health equity and justice for all communities.

**Veterans Crisis Line:** Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one? You are not alone, the Veterans Crisis line is here for you. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to call.

**Northwest Credible Messenger:** Northwest Credible Messenger empowers Black and Brown communities in Washington State through healing, mentorship, and leadership development rooted in lived experience. Using the Credible Messenger model, the organization supports youth, returning citizens, and community leaders with culturally responsive programs focused on justice reform, reentry support, and positive youth development.

## Online screening tools

- **Mental health online screening tool**
- **How Right Now | Finding what helps**