

International Adolescent Health Week 2020

Transforming Risk into Wellness

Resilience and Mental Health



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How to use this toolkit:

This toolkit has been created to make it easy for a variety of organizations interested in adolescent health to participate in International Adolescent Health Week (IAHW) an annual, international week of dynamic participatory events to inspire adolescents and their communities to advocate for a successful transition into adulthood. You are free to use and adapt any of the materials herein for your International Adolescent Health Week activities; however, use of these materials is not required in order to promote adolescent health during International Adolescent Health Week. Participating organizations are at liberty to celebrate International Adolescent Health Week in any manner they wish and are encouraged to be creative in adapting these ideas to meet the needs of the adolescents you wish to reach. Approval for activities or educational materials is not required.

Background:

The adolescent years can be a vulnerable time with tremendous physical changes, emotional development, and growth during one of the most rapid phases of development. Half of all mental health disorders in adulthood start by age 14, but the majority are untreated even in high income countries. In lower and middle income countries, even fewer mental illnesses are treated and access to any mental health care is rare. Depression is one of the leading causes of illness amongst adolescents and suicide is the second leading cause of death in this age group, and suicide is a leading cause of death in this age group, with rates increasing significantly in certain communities. Additional mental disorders such as anxiety, eating disorders, and attention deficit disorder also affect young people in significant ways. Although it is important to understand how many youth are affected by specific disorders, it is equally important to teach our young people how to protect their mental health and how treatment can help prevent debility and to enhance their ability to live full, successful, healthy, and satisfying lives.

Resilience is an important part of achieving good overall health, including good mental health. Resilience has been described as the ability to “bounce back” after adversity, or to convert “toxic stress” into stress that is tolerable. Teaching adolescents the skills to develop and strengthen resilience, such as personal life skills, positive social skills, and how to identify sources of support, can promote mental health.

Adolescents often go to teachers, school nurses, clergy, youth workers, physicians, therapists, coaches and other adults with their concerns. It is important that these trusted adults or health professionals understand how to help young people with mental health concerns, and for communities to ensure youth have access to sufficient psychological support. Enhancing communication skills between parents and teens and between teens and their peers enhances mental well-being. Lastly, community awareness of the prevalence of mental health conditions in youth is important to advocate for government and community funding and resources to be allocated to meet the mental health needs of young people. Protecting the mental health of young people not only has positive effects on their health during adolescence, but also promotes healthier adulthood.

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Activities and Resources

Setting or Outlet	Suggested activities or ideas
Medical Practice Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear lime green to celebrate the week. • Submit a letter to local press about importance of adolescent mental health, access to mental health care or how community safety affects mental health. • Partner with a local school to share educational materials about resilience and mental health. A good starting point is reaching out to school nurses, counselors and health teachers. • Partner with a local celebrity who is outspoken about mental health issues. • Promote a mental health event or how your practice addresses the needs of adolescents with mental health issues with local newspapers, television and radio media. If you can be interviewed by local media / morning news use the opportunity to share information about adolescent mental health and what you are doing to improve it in your community. • Host an event with your families to explore "Family conflict". This can be a debate between teens and their parents about topics for which there is often conflict, such as career choice, family rules, etc. • Hang posters which encouraging youth to think about how they are working towards their own goals. • Prominently share information about favorite mindfulness apps with patients.
School or university-wide ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create lime green postcards with an inspirational or positive message to be slipped into lockers or desks around the school for students to find. One idea might be to Include a motivational quote on one side and the information for an online mental health resource, such as NAMI’s service www.ok2talk.org in the US on the reverse. • Publish a student-written article in the school newspaper or blog about a mental health issue important to students. • Student Government can make a statement, facilitate a discussion between students and administrators, or host an event about mental health issues important to their peers. One example could be making a position statement about heavy school workloads, or the need for more sleep, and how these impact mental health. • Hang posters of inspirational messages translated into languages represented at your school – to reach more adolescents, but also to spread a message of inclusion and welcome.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widely distribute information about the your country’s Suicide Prevention Hotline. For example in the US, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK. Post on school website and on posters in school halls and bathrooms. • Print and hang posters to encourage young people who need help to seek it. https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/getting-help-posters/ • Make School-wide public service announcements about the warning signs of suicide. • Remind students about where they can go to get help for themselves or for a friend. This can be done with posters hanging around the school or in bathroom stalls, etc. • Institute an anonymous Care and Concern box where students can identify anonymously students whom they are worried about. Forward names to counselor or nurse. • Host a Poetry Slam with topics focused on mental health – either after school or in English Classes. • Create a visual campaign to show student support for one another, for example, ribbon pins or bracelets to signify awareness and support.
Health Class activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create positive or inspirational posters to be hung around school. • Talk about the relationship between sufficient sleep and mental health and moderate a discussion about how students can get sufficient sleep. • Talk about strategies to improve mental well-being -- things you can do to recharge yourself mentally – exercise, eat right, get sleep, turn off social media for a while and take a break! • Have students experiment in class with different mindfulness apps – students can try a few and vote for their favorites. Some free apps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://kelymentalhealth.ca/breathr • https://insighttimer.com • https://www.stopbreathethink.com/ • Discuss the importance of self-care and focusing on your own goals (being "selfish" about school, job training, learning new skills in order to have a successful future) and how to resist the pressure of being pulled down by struggling family members or feeling responsibility to save them to detriment of their own future. • Use class to start making a stress management plan with this resource: https://parentandteen.com/teen-stress-management-plan/

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use class time to learn how to meditate or create a gratitude journal. • Review the warning signs of suicide. https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/how-we-can-all-prevent-suicide/ • Help students understand what to do if someone approaches them with a mental health crisis. http://www.halfopus.com/help-a-friend/ • Have students brainstorm to name all the places or people they can go to get help for themselves or others. Write them down and share them with others. • Share the local Suicide Prevention Line information with students to help them know what to do if they know or interact with someone who seems suicidal: (in the US: https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now/) and share international online crisis resources (https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres/) • Ask student to consider what the dreams are for themselves, and how they can invest more time and energy in own goals. • Define what healthy future means, and then list important behaviors or tasks needed to reach this future. • Download a phone use timer app to increase awareness of time spent on digital devices. • Use these lesson plans to help students understand how to develop healthy relationships: https://page.search-institute.org/reach-chapter
Community ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a session to educate parents and communities about the benefits of later school start times for youth. • Host an event to view and discuss this TED talk on mental health stigma and about mental health as a global concern: https://www.ted.com/talks/sangu_delle_there_s_no_shame_in_taking_care_of_your_mental_health?utm_campaign=tedspread-b&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare • Attend or host a Mental Health First Aid course. For example, in the US, classes can be found: https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/ • Vocalize support for the importance of out-of-school activities, separate from education but including creative activities, music and sports and volunteering in promoting resilience in youth. This could mean attending a school board meeting or visiting with legislators, or coordinating a letter writing campaign to

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	<p>government officials to garner support for funding these activities.</p>
<p>Social Media ideas (#IAHW2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a lime green “I Support You” snap filter for your Snapchat. • Have a contest to create fact-based educational images to share on Instagram. Appoint judges in advance so that “likes” alone are not a factor. • Download these infographics and share these suicide facts on social media: http://www.suicidology.org/resources/infographics • Help youth identify accurate social media accounts that promote mental health (examples: @crisistextline, @mentalhealth) • Use a mental health specific hashtag to share social media messages to promote mental health. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ #mentalhealth, #youmatter, #imatter , #icare, #someonecares, #youarenotalone, #noonechoosesforyou • Post on social media healthy ways to cope with stress. Create a hashtag to you specific to your school, or use #IAHW2020 StressBusters – share and try to get the posts to go viral! • Have youth brainstorm for ways they can interact with social media in a healthy way. For instance, have young people identify 4 high achieving people in areas which interest them (scientists, artists, athletes etc) and follow them in addition to their friends.
<p>Tweets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More adolescents are affected by anxiety affects than by other mental health disorders. So, you are not alone. Treatment helps! #IAHW2020 • Talking about suicide doesn’t cause someone to become suicidal. 1-800-273-TALK #IAHW2020 • Treatment of depression works ~70% of the time, but fewer than 25% of people w/ depression are treated. #IAHW2020 • Live in India? Share this free app for suicide prevention: https://mhtech.in #IAHW2020 • I may not be a mental health professional, but that doesn’t mean I can’t ask “How’re ya doing?” #IAHW2020 • Don’t be afraid to ask for help! #IAHW2020 • Mental health isn’t just “your” problem. 1/5 of all people are dealing with something! #IAHW2020 • You don’t need to deal with things alone. www.ok2talk.org #IAHW2020 • You are important and valuable! You matter! #IAHW2020

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing suicidal posts in your timeline? Twitter can help provide resources for them. More info here: https://support.twitter.com/articles/20170313 #IAHW2020
Facebook posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family dinners quiet? Hard to get a juicy conversation going? Here are some free conversation starters to get the talk going! https://page.search-institute.org/Family-Conversation-Starters-Free #IAHW2020 Have you heard of OK2TALK? It's an online community for adolescents struggling with mental health problems. You can talk about what you're experiencing by sharing poetry, inspirational quotes, photos, videos, song lyrics and messages of support in a safe, moderated space. http://ok2talk.org/ #IAHW2020 You don't have to pay for meditation apps to try them out. For a few free ways to learn how to meditate (and to learn what meditation can do for you): https://realtalkwithdroffutt.org/mental-health-and-wellness/meditation-and-mindfulness-yes-it-works #IAHW2020 Looking for a Buddy to help you fight through self-harm urges or who understands what it is like to feel the way you do? The Buddy Project will pair you with a buddy so that you have support every day from someone that you can really relate to. http://www.buddy-project.org/signup/ #IAHW2020 Live in India? Share this free app for suicide prevention: https://mhtech.in #IAHW2020 Do you know a teen who could benefit from professional help? Here are some ways to help guide them towards help: https://parentandteen.com/seek-professional-help/ #IAHW2020 The Trevor Project provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people. They provide help 24/7. http://www.thetrevorproject.org/ #IAHW2020 NAMI Air is an app for people and families struggling with mental illness. It's an anonymous way for people to find support. And it's free - https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Air-App #IAHW2020 Are you talking with someone online who seems suicidal? Facebook wants to help. Facebook has hotlines right here that you can share with your Facebook Friends: https://www.facebook.com/help/594991777257121/ #IAHW2020

Additional selected resources and links:

- **Half of Us** aims to initiate a public dialogue to raise awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues and connect students to the appropriate resources to get help. Celebrity videos and youth stories are shared, as are links to resources and educational materials: <http://www.halfofus.com/>
- The **National Alliance on Mental Illness** also has good resources to promote adolescent mental health and related support: <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Adolescents-Young-Adults>
- **The Buddy Project™** is a non-profit movement that aims to prevent suicide and self-harm by pairing people as buddies and raising awareness for mental health. <http://www.buddy-project.org/>
- **The YPHSIG App** is an app from the Young People's Special Interest Group (YPHSIG) of the UK Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. Based on the original adolescent HEADSS psychosocial assessment this app provides a guide to developmentally appropriate healthcare for young people and clinical resources for busy healthcare professionals. Included in these assessments are resilience factors. <https://app.appinstitute.com/theadss>
- **This is a resource for promoting resilience in young people with disabilities:**
 - In Turkish: https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/depo/birimler/saglikli-beslenme-hareketli-hayat-db/Cocuk_ve_Ergen_Rehberi.pdf
 - In English: https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/depo/birimler/saglikli-beslenme-hareketli-hayat-db/Yayinlar/rehberler/Cocukluk_Cagi_Fiziksek_Aktifite_Rehberi_Basim_Son_Ingilizce_2.pdf