



ZERO REASONS WHY
BACK TO SCHOOL
TOOLKIT
Educators



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WHY**

Back-to-school season can be stressful – and it can also provide great opportunities for reset and growth. This toolkit is designed to be a resource for educators and administrators to support mental wellness during the back-to-school season and beyond. Get started below!

Students spend many of their waking hours at school, so educators play a crucial role in promoting mental wellness among students. It's important for adults in schools to understand student mental health, what factors influence it and how to best support your students.

Tips for Healthy Learning Environments

- ✓ Create a sense of belonging where all students feel safe.
- ✓ Educate students on how to access mental health resources inside and outside of school through student assistance programs and counselors.
- ✓ Start the day with a mental health check-in – this could look like taking a few minutes to journal or offering a prompt that students could respond to or think about.
- ✓ Talk to your students about the daily things they can do – like getting enough sleep, staying active, asking for help and making time to connect with friends—to take care of their mental health.
- ✓ Be open to learning from your students – when students feel heard by those in leadership, strong partnerships are formed where students and educators work together to accelerate positive mental health in their schools.
- ✓ Ensure that staff and faculty have training to meet diverse cognitive, emotional and social needs of students.
- ✓ Connect students with resources that provide expanded opportunities and support when navigating challenges.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for students to learn interpersonal skills like communication, empathy and conflict resolution.



LET'S TALK

Starting the conversation around mental health with your students can be difficult. Here are some prompts to help you out:

“How can I support you or help connect you with resources this semester/school year?”

“I’ve noticed you’ve missed a few assignments lately, are you doing okay?”

“I know you have a lot on your plate with classes, work and other responsibilities. How are you holding up?”

The Lifeline:
call or text 988

Crisis Text Line:
text SCHOOL
to 741741

It’s okay if you don’t have all the answers for your students. It’s just as important to guide them in the direction of support they need - like encouraging them to seek support from school counselors. Another simple way to do this is to make students aware of national hotlines where they can reach a crisis counselor 24/7. Add these numbers around your campus and classrooms as a reminder.

Educators, you deserve support, too. You can reach out to these numbers to support your own mental health or get additional ideas to support your students. You don’t have to be in crisis to call.

Sources: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Mental Health America, Mental Health Coalition, Crisis Text Line

LEARN THE SIGNS

When entering a new academic year, it’s important to know the signs that a student may be struggling. Get educated on common mental health concerns to look out for in students:

- Expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or hopelessness
- Feeling irritable or experiencing mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating or sitting still
- Signs of self-harm or not taking care of themselves
- Changes in academic performance or attitude toward school
- Signs of being bullied or bullying others
- Trouble managing emotions
- Declining academic performance
- Withdrawing during class, sports or extracurriculars

Tip: For more content and videos, visit [zeroreasonswhy.org/resources](https://www.zeroreasonswhy.org/resources)