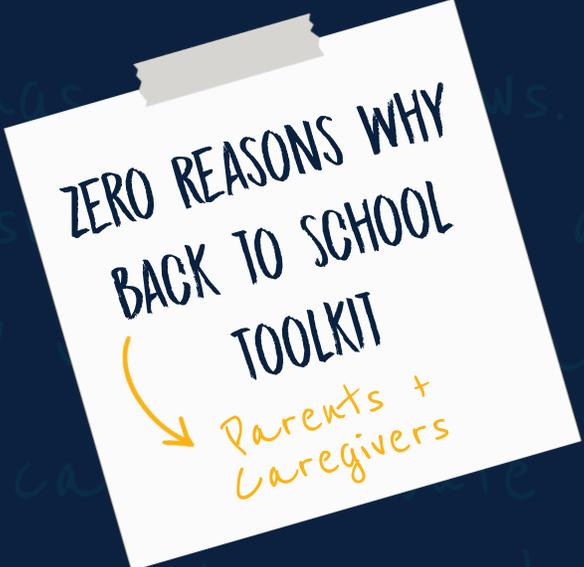


ZERO REASONS WHY



ZERO REASONS WHY BACK TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT

Parents +
Caregivers

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 caregivers, parents and guardians to support mental wellness during the back-to-school season and beyond. Get started below!

Back to school season can be a stressful time for both teens and their parents and caregivers. Being mindful about how to support your teen and yourself during this time can go a long way to make the transition back to school smoother for everyone.

Back to School Mental Health Tips

- ✓ Make mental health check-ins part of your regular routine with your teens.
- ✓ Give your teens the space and tools to reach out for help when they need it.
- ✓ If they're really struggling, reach out to their teachers or school counselor or social worker to help them get the additional support they need. In-school mental health resources are designed to connect your teens with the help they need inside and outside of school.
- ✓ Schedule time to spend together – it could be as simple as having dinner as a family, going for a walk or watching a movie.
- ✓ Advocate for mental health and access to resources for students with your PTO or school leaders. Your voice matters!
- ✓ Lead by example by taking care of your own mental health. Your mental wellbeing is important, too – and when you're performing at your best, you can better support yourself and your family. Ask for help if you need it.

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 teens. Sometimes it's enough simply listen, or support them in finding the help they need. Make sure your teens know that **24/7 support is available**. These numbers can also be used to help you help your teen, or for your teen to help a friend.

Parents and caregivers, you deserve support, too. Remember that you can reach out to these numbers for your own mental health or to get advice about your teen.

LET'S TALK

Starting a conversation around mental health with your teen can be difficult. Here are some prompts to help you get started:

- “How do you feel about going back to school?”
- “It’s okay and normal if you need help. I’m always here if you want to talk.”
- “Is there anything I can do to help make the transition back to school easier for you?”
- “I noticed you haven’t been as excited to go back to school this year. It’s okay if you’re feeling nervous. I’m here if you want to talk.”
- “Would you like help talking with your teachers or finding out what supports are available for you at school? I would be happy to do that with you.”



Tip: For more content and videos, visit zeroreasonswhy.org/resources

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 for parents and caregivers to know the signs that your teen might be struggling. Get educated on mental health concerns to look out for in students:

- 🔍 Changes in appetite
- 🔍 Changes in sleep or energy levels
- 🔍 Headaches, nausea or other aches/pains
- 🔍 Feeling anxious, depressed or hopeless
- 🔍 Feeling irritable or experiencing mood swings
- 🔍 Difficulty concentrating or feeling jittery
- 🔍 Signs of self-harm or not taking care of themselves
- 🔍 Changes in academic performance or attitude