



ZERO REASONS WHY BACK TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT

for students

#ZERO REASONS 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 teens to support mental wellness during the back-to-school season and beyond. Get started below!

Whatever you may be feeling as you head back to school – excited, anxious or a bit of both – know that you're not alone. Staying on top of your mental health is just as important as staying on top of your assignments and activities (if not more so!). Start your back-to-school mental health prep now to set yourself up for success throughout the school year.

Mental Health Prep for Students

- Ask about mental health resources or clubs you can join at your school.
You have the power to start a mental health campaign at your school! To start or join #ZeroReasonsWhy on your campus, visit: zeroreasonswhy.org/chapter
- Reduce school stress by seeking support early from peers, counselors, study groups or teachers.
- Create support systems you can lean on at school — friends, trusted adults or extracurricular groups.
- Build and maintain healthy habits like getting enough sleep, moving your body and taking time to unplug.
- Monitor your mental health so you know if or when you need to ask for help.

Back to School Mental Health Checklist

- ☒ Re-establish daily routines
- ☒ Set realistic expectations
- ☒ Take time to take breaks
- ☒ Prioritize getting enough sleep
- ☒ Practice time management
- ☒ Check in with your friends... and ask them to check in with you
- ☒ Give yourself credit and grace
- ☒ Be proud of yourself—you're doing great!



MENTAL HEALTH SAFETY PLAN

In times of high stress or crisis, sometimes we need help remembering what we can do to help ourselves. Plan ahead by keeping the lists below in your phone or written somewhere you see often, like in your locker or planner.

Who can I reach out to if I need support?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. The Lifeline: Call or Text 988 for 24/7 support.



My favorite kinds of self-care:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



What I know to be true about myself:

1. I am not alone.
2. I will get through this.
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



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



With parents/trusted adults

- “I’m feeling anxious about going back to school. Can we make a plan for how I can manage this?”
- “School has been really stressful and I might be more irritable than usual. Thanks for being patient with me.”
- “I’ve been feeling off lately. A lot of the time I feel [anxious/tired/sad/overwhelmed]. I’d like to talk to someone about how I’m feeling.”
- “I’m really struggling with [subject] and I need extra help. Can you help me get that help?”
- “Can we talk? I’d like to talk about what I’ve been going through and could use some support.”

With friends

- “This class has really been stressing me out. Could we study together and talk through it?”
- “With everything going on with school and sports, it feels like we never get a break. Want to hang out and just chill for a bit?”
- “I’ve noticed you haven’t seemed like yourself lately. Are you okay? Know that I’m here for you if you want to talk.”

BACK TO SCHOOL REMINDERS

- ☆ You can ask for help.
- ☆ Your mental health matters.
- ☆ Your grades don’t define you.
- ☆ Your voice matters.
- ☆ Your worth is not measured by your productivity.
- ☆ You don’t have to earn rest.
- ☆ You CAN do this.

Starting the conversation around mental health can be difficult. Here are some prompts to help you **#StartTheConvo**.

With teachers/school staff

Mental health impacts all areas of our lives, including life at school. Knowing how to talk to your teachers about how you’re doing can help. **Here are a few tips:**

1) Meet with your teachers at the beginning of the school year if you know you may struggle with your mental health – a parent or guardian could help by joining this conversation. Giving them a heads-up early on will allow them to help find ways to accommodate your needs and create an open dialogue if you need extra assistance.

2) Ask for help if you need it. Don’t wait until you start missing assignments or your grade is dropping. Your teachers want to help you succeed. Let them know if you’re struggling and need support.

3) If you don’t feel as comfortable explaining your situation to every teacher, that’s okay. Find another teacher, administrator or counselor that you trust. They may be able to help navigate those conversations.



Ideas to #StartTheConvo

- “What kind of mental health supports are available for students at school?”
- “I’ve been struggling with my mental health and might need extra support this year. Can we make a plan together?”
- “I’ve been struggling and don’t know if I will have my assignment completed by the due date. Is it possible to have an extension so I can turn in my best work?”

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