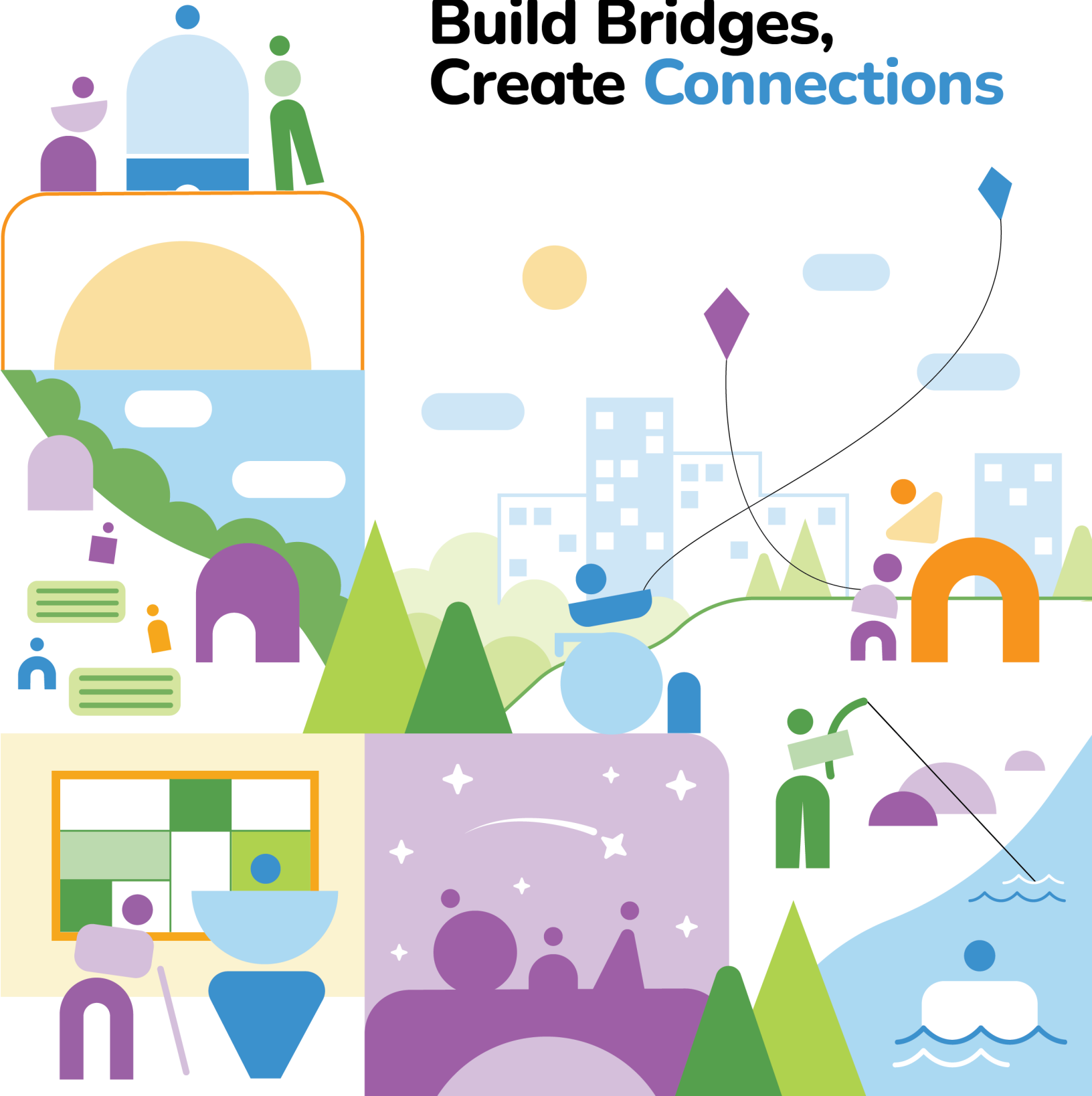


Build Bridges, Create Connections



Forward

Our health is deeply influenced by our connections with our community. The places we live, work, learn, and gather all play a crucial role in shaping our mental well-being. While we often prioritize physical health, it's essential to recognize the impact of community on our mental health. Factors such as education, economic stability, social connections, neighborhood, community infrastructure, and access to care all contribute to our mental well-being. Strong communities, stable environments, and access to necessary services benefit us all.

During this year's Mental Health Month, Health Care Authority, encourages individuals to **Build Bridges, Create Connections**, as we explore parts of our community and its effect on our mental health and well-being. This toolkit offers practical resources to support your mental health and that of your community.

While some aspects of our communities may be beyond our immediate control, this toolkit provides valuable suggestions for adapting your surroundings to enhance overall health and well-being. It also offers coping strategies for situations where change seems out of reach.

In this season where improvement is needed, we are grateful for the support of the legislature in advancing mental health programs. Their commitment to funding initiatives that prioritize education, stability, social connections, neighborhood revitalization, community infrastructure and enhanced access to care is instrumental. These programs not only address immediate needs, but they also lay the foundation for long-term community well-being. As we navigate these challenges together, we are all encouraged by the dedication of our lawmakers to improve mental health outcomes for all.

We all have mental health, and our communities are unique. By striving to make our communities as healthy as possible, we can significantly improve our mental well-being.



Sue Birch
Director
Health Care Authority



Teesha Kirschbaum
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Introduction

This Mental Health Month, Health Care Authority is encouraging everyone to *Build Bridges, Create Connections* to support mental health. From your local community to your genetic makeup, numerous factors contribute to your mental health. We encourage everyone to reflect on how their communities influence their well-being.

Health Care Authority's Mental Health Month toolkit offers practical resources to support your mental health and that of your community. This year's toolkit includes:

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

Programs

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.

Mobile rapid response crisis teams: Mobile rapid 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: Are 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.

Additional resources

Questions?

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

Jennifer Peterson, Communications or **Liz Venuto, Youth and Young Adult Integrated Services Supervisor**

Key messages

Feel free to supplement these key messages with the assorted statistics and tips included on the fact sheets.

General

For Mental Health Month this year, Health Care Authority is encouraging individuals to build bridges and create connections. From your neighborhood to genetics, many factors come into play when it comes to your mental health. We encourage everyone to consider how their community around them affects their mental health.

Health Care Authority's Mental Health Month toolkit provides resources and suggestions for making changes to improve and maintain mental well-being, and how to seek help for mental health challenges.

If you constantly feel worried or sad about where you live, one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition is to take a mental health screening at screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/.

Housing stability

Having safe, stable, and healthy home conditions set the foundation for achieving and maintaining good mental health.

For many people, not having a true “home base” to consistently return to can leave them feeling distressed, disconnected, or isolated. Stable housing allows individuals to develop routines and connections to their local community, which are beneficial for mental health.

Wherever you call “home,” it should give you feelings of comfort, support, safety, and calmness. If not, there are things you can do to your space to help you get started/grounded, reach your goals, and improve your mental health.

Community

The area, or ZIP code, that you live in plays a significant role in how healthy you are.

A strong sense of community within neighborhoods protects mental health through shared support, resources, and joy.

Challenges like gentrification, community violence, and lack of access to resources can negatively impact mental health. While many of these can be out of your control, being an advocate for change and making healthy community connections can bring hope.

Participate in Light Up Green for mental health month: The purpose of mental health month is to raise awareness, provide education about mental health conditions, and reduce the stigma that surrounds them. Light Up Green is a campaign in which we ask buildings and structures across the U.S. to light up green (the color for mental health awareness) throughout the month of May.

What to participate? [Here's what you do next.](#)

Creating connections

Organizing or participating in a community walk/run for mental health you'll be promoting both physical activity and help break the stigma surrounding mental health.

Knowledge is power when it comes to mental health. Take a mental health screen or attend an educational event to learn more about your mental health, gain valuable insights, and discover available resources.

Drop-in article

Build Bridges, Create Connections: Your community says a lot about your mental health.

Take a moment to consider your community. Do you feel safe? Do you have access to health care and grocery stores? Does your home support you, both physically and mentally?

This Mental Health Month, challenge yourself to look at your community and how different factors can affect your mental health.

The places we live, work, learn, and gather as well as economic stability and social connections are part of what is called “Social Determinants of Health” (SDOH). The more these factors work in your favor means you are more likely to have better mental well-being. However, when it seems like the world is working against you, your mental health can suffer.

While many parts of your community can be out of your control, there are steps you can take to change your space and protect your well-being.

- **Work toward securing safe and stable housing:** This can be challenging due to finances, age, and other reasons, but there are a few things you can try, such as reaching out to state/local agencies to secure housing, removing safety hazards in the home, or finding another space (such as a community center or friend’s home) where you can get the comfort you are missing at home.
- **Focus on your home:** Consider keeping your space tidy, sleep-friendly, and well-ventilated. Surround yourself with items that help you feel calm and positive.
- **Build bonds with your neighborhood and community:** Strengthen connections within your neighborhood and community by familiarizing yourself with your neighbors, participating in or initiating local support groups, and supporting local businesses to engage with those around you.
- **Create opportunities for connections:** Organize a community run or walk for mental health. Reach out to your local media for assistance in promoting the event.

If you’re taking steps to improve your surroundings but are still struggling with your mental health, you may be experiencing signs of a mental health condition. Take a free, private screening at screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/ to help you figure out what is going on and determine next steps.

The community around us can be both positive and negative – bringing joy and sadness, hope and anxiety. Learn more with Health Care Authority’s Mental Health Month toolkit, which provides resources, such as how an individual’s community impacts their mental health, suggestions for making changes to improve and maintain mental well-being, and how to seek help for mental health challenges. Go to hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf to learn more.

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 2024 **“Build Bridges, Create Connections”**

WHEREAS, the community that someone lives in plays a significant role in their overall health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, surroundings can impact if, how, and when a person’s needs are met, which in turn affects mental health; and

WHEREAS, having safe, stable, and healthy home conditions set the foundation for achieving and maintaining good mental health; and

WHEREAS, with early and effective interventions, those individuals with mental health conditions can recover and lead full, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, each business, school, government agency, health care provider, organization, and citizen share the burden of mental health problems and has a responsibility to promote mental wellness and support prevention efforts.

THEREFORE, I [NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL], do hereby proclaim May 2024 as Mental Health Month in [STATE OR COMMUNITY]. As the [TITLE OF LOCAL OFFICIAL], I also call upon the citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools in [STATE OR COMMUNITY] to recommit our community to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health, the steps our citizens can take to protect their mental health, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental health conditions.

Social media posts

Download the toolkit

1. This #MentalHealthMonth, Health Care Authority invites you to #BuildBridgesCreateConnections to learn about how your community can impact mental health. Learn more: hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf
2. Download Health Care Authority's #MentalHealthMonth toolkit to learn about how your community can impact mental health: hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf
#BuildBridgesCreateConnections

Toolkit topics

1. Challenges like gentrification, community violence, and lack of access to resources affect mental health. While some issues may seem beyond your control, advocating for change and building community connections can bring hope. Let's create a supportive and inclusive community. #CreateConnections #BuildBridgesCreateConnections #MentalHealthMonth
2. Make your voice heard for mental health! Join your local advocacy group to amplify resources and support. Together, we can create positive change for our community. #CreateConnections #BuildBridgesCreateConnections #MentalHealthMonth
3. Safe, stable, and healthy home conditions are the foundations for good mental health. Let's prioritize creating environments that support well-being for everyone. #CreateConnections #BuildBridgesCreateConnections #MentalHealthMonth
4. Let's break the silence and reduce stigma around mental health. Everyone deserves support and understanding. Together, we can create a more inclusive and empathetic community. #CreateConnections #BuildBridgesCreateConnections #MentalHealthMonth
5. We invite you to join us in celebrating this important month and hope you will encourage buildings and structures in your community to light up green in support of mental health month! #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

- #BuildBridges
- #CreateConnections
- #BuildBridgesCreateConnections
- #MentalHealthMonth

Links

- www.hca.wa.gov
- 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

Sharable post images

Shareable post images (for all social media platforms) All images can be accessed by visiting hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf and downloading the images files.



Option 1

Headline: Build Bridges, Create Connections

Call to action: Download the mental health month toolkit: hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf

Option 2

Headline: Build Bridges, Create Connections

Copy: Safe, stable, and healthy home conditions are the foundations for good mental health. Let's prioritize creating environments that support well-being for everyone.

Call to action: Download the mental health month toolkit: hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf

Option 3

Headline: Celebrate Mental Health Month with us!

Copy: Join the movement by encouraging buildings in our community to light up green in support of mental health awareness. Together, let's shine a light on mental health and show our support for those affected.

Option 4

Headline: Build Bridges, Create Connections

Copy: Let's break the silence and reduce stigma around mental health. Everyone deserves support and understanding. Together, we can create a more inclusive and empathetic community.

Call to action: Download the mental health month toolkit: hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf

Option 5

Headline: Celebrate Mental Health Month with us!

Copy: Join the movement by encouraging buildings in our community to light up green in support of mental health awareness. Together, let's shine a light on mental health and show our support for those affected.

Option 6

Headline: Build Bridges, Create Connections

Call to action: Download the mental health month toolkit: hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf

Posters

Click to download and save the images provided for your social media platforms, websites, or personal use. All images can be accessed by visiting hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mental-health-month-toolkit.pdf and downloading the images files.

Calendar content

Poster content

Index cards for vision board

Creating a vision board on an index card can be a creative and compact way to visualize your goals. Here are some ideas to get you started!

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 behavior 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.

Online screening tools

- [Mental health online screening tool](#)
- [How Right Now | Finding what helps](#)
- [Online mental health screening](#)

May 2024

31 ways to build bridges and create connections in your community



SUNDAY **MONDAY** **TUESDAY** **WEDNESDAY** **THURSDAY** **FRIDAY** **SATURDAY**

			<p>1 Volunteer for local mental health organizations or community events.</p>	<p>2 Start or join a support group for mental health in your area or school.</p>	<p>3 Organize a community wellness event focusing on mental health awareness.</p>	<p>4 Advocate for mental health education in schools and workplaces.</p>
<p>5 Initiate conversations about mental health to reduce stigma.</p>	<p>6 Support local businesses and organizations that prioritize mental health.</p>	<p>7 Practice empathy and kindness in your interactions with others.</p>	<p>8 Attend local government meetings to advocate for mental health resources.</p>	<p>9 Create safe spaces for open dialogue about mental health.</p>	<p>10 Educate yourself and others about mental health issues.</p>	<p>11 Foster a sense of belonging and including in your community.</p>
<p>12 Encourage physical activity and outdoor engagement for mental well-being.</p>	<p>13 Organize community clean-up events to improve the environment.</p>	<p>14 Offer to mentor or support someone struggling with mental health.</p>	<p>15 Advocate for policies that promote mental health awareness and access to care.</p>	<p>16 Organize community workshops or seminars on mental health topics.</p>	<p>17 Support local initiatives that promote mental health and well-being.</p>	<p>18 Reach out to neighbors and offer support or friendship.</p>
<p>19 Participate in community events that promote mental health awareness</p>	<p>20 Share your mental health journey to inspire others and reduce stigma.</p>	<p>21 Engage in acts of kindness and generosity towards others.</p>	<p>22 Connect with nature and encourage others to do the same.</p>	<p>23 Advocate for mental health resources and funding in your community.</p>	<p>24 Organize a community garden or green space to promote relaxation.</p>	<p>25 Host a mental health-themed book club or discussion group.</p>
<p>26 Create art or music events that promote mental health awareness.</p>	<p>27 Practice mindfulness and encourage others to do the same.</p>	<p>28 Support local initiatives that promote mental health services to underserved populations.</p>	<p>29 Engage in community-building activities that promote a sense of belonging.</p>	<p>30 Continuously seek ways to improve the mental health of your community.</p>	<p>31 Be a positive role model for mental health self-care practices.</p>	

*Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.*

Helen Keller

*The power of community to create
health is far greater than any
physician, clinic, or hospital.*

Mark Hyman

*The way to achieve your own
success is to be willing to help
somebody else get it first.*

Iyanla Vanzant

*Coming together is a beginning,
staying together is progress, and
working together is success.*

Henry Ford

I nurture positive relationships
that uplift and support
my mental health.

I seek out opportunities to
connect with others and create
a supportive network in my
community.

Gratitude

Kindness

Connection

Community

Belonging

Support

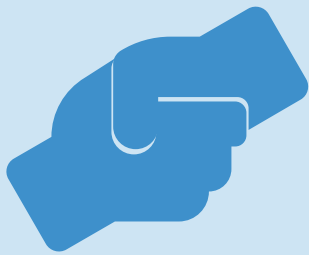
Empathy

Understanding

Inclusion

Unity

Relationships



Collaboration

