

MAY 2026

Mental Health Awareness Month Toolkit

Together, we can turn awareness into
action across Maryland.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This year, the Mental Health Association of Maryland, Maryland Department of Health's Office of Integrated Wellness and Prevention, and Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling are partnering to help spread the message that **mental health is health**.



WHY YOUR PARTICIPATION MATTERS:



Early awareness, open conversation, and access to care save lives. **This toolkit empowers you with simple, meaningful ways to make mental health visible, valued, and supported across Maryland.** We promote an integrated approach because suicide, problem gambling, and substance use are often connected. By supporting whole-person wellness instead of treating issues in isolation, we close gaps in care and help Marylanders get the compassionate support they need to thrive.

We believe that mental health care is a fundamental human right that includes not only emotional health, but improved physical health, addiction recovery, lower health care costs, greater equity and opportunity, and the capacity to realize our hopes and dreams. This toolkit equips you with everything you need to participate in Mental Health Awareness Month. We are thrilled to have you join us in helping to raise awareness here in Maryland!

Here are some of the ways you can participate:

- Light up green in support of children's mental health during Children's Mental Health Awareness Week: May 3rd–9th
- Light up green in support of mental health during Mental Health Awareness Week: May 10th–16th
- Become a Champion for children's mental health
- Wear green on May 7th
- Spread awareness on social media
- Share resources
- Attend an awareness event
- Share Maryland Voices
- Spread awareness with Mental Health Awareness Month merchandise
- Get trained in Mental Health First Aid and/or Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) Suicide Prevention Training
- Start conversations

Everyone can take part in Go Green for Mental Health Awareness Month:

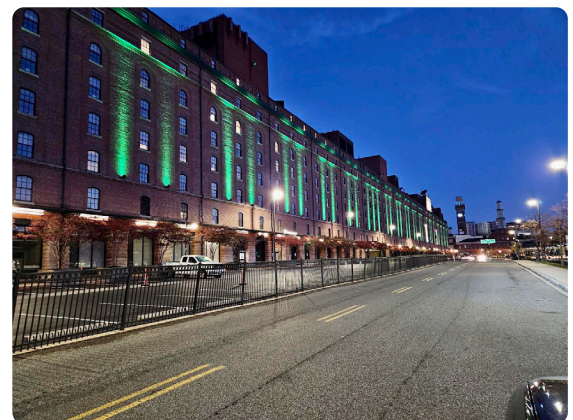
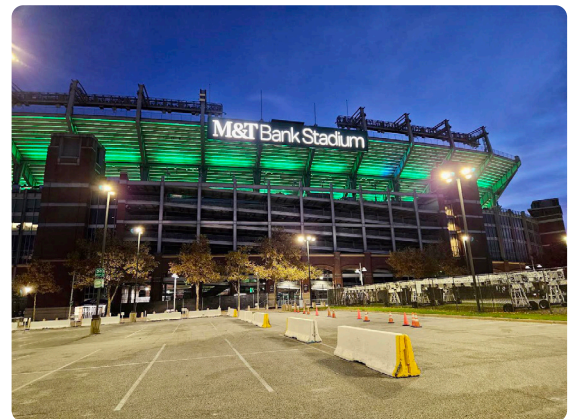
- **Youth and families** – Organize a school spirit day, share kindness notes, or join your local awareness walk.
- **Older adults** – Encourage your senior center, retirement community, or faith group to light up green and host a discussion about emotional wellness.
- **Workplaces and organizations**
 - Host a lunch-and-learn, display posters or digital banners, share 988 wallet cards, or invite staff to wear green and talk about mental health resources like the Employee Assistance Program.
- **Faith and community leaders** –
 - Invite congregations, mosques, temples, and community centers to light up green and share messages of hope during services or community gatherings.



LIGHT UP GREEN DURING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK: MAY 10TH–16TH

Green is the color for mental health awareness. Across the country, Mental Health America is asking for buildings, landmarks, and communities to raise awareness by lighting up green on May 10th–16th. You can show your support for mental health by joining efforts to grow the light up green movement in our home state. Collectively, we can show that Maryland believes mental health is health. We hope that you will join us by committing to lighting up green. Participating organizations will be listed on the [Mental Health Association of Maryland's campaign web page](#).

We need to do more to protect mental health and ensure equitable access to care for all Marylanders.

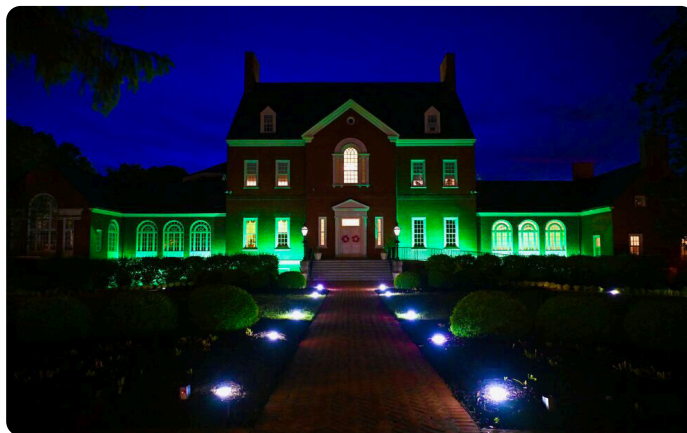


Let's rally together and show our commitment to the wellbeing of all Marylanders by lighting our skyline in green. We're stronger together! To sign up, go to mhamd.org/yes-to-green.

LIGHT UP GREEN DURING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK: MAY 3RD–9TH

May 3rd–9th is Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. Now more than ever, we need to rally together in support of the mental health and wellbeing of all children in Maryland. You can show your support by lighting up green during

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. To sign up, go to mhamd.org/yes-to-green.



BECOME A CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Each year, the [Children's Mental Health Awareness Campaign](https://childrensmentalhealthmatters.org) brings together nonprofits, schools, local businesses, and communities from across the state to champion children's mental health by raising awareness, reducing stigma, promoting protective factors, and

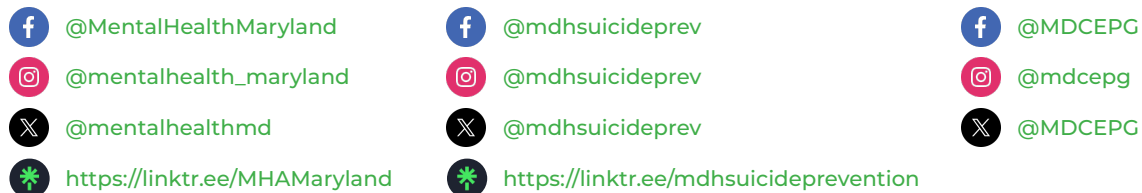
increasing access to resources to improve the mental wellness of Maryland's children and families. When you sign up to be a Children's Mental Health Matters Champion, you join a growing network of Marylanders coming together to advocate for the mental wellbeing of children in communities across the state. Anyone can be a Champion! To sign up as a 2026 Champion, visit childrensmentalhealthmatters.org.



SPREAD AWARENESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Share messages of hope through your social media accounts. You can like, follow, and reshare posts from our accounts. You can also post messages of your own! Find a few sample posts on the following page.

Social Media Handles:



Key Dates to Engage

- May 1st – National Go Green Day
- May 8th – Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day
- May 3rd–9th – Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week
- May 10th–16th – Mental Health Awareness Week
- All Month Long!

Social Media Graphics:

To download, click on the image. In your browser, right-click on the image, select “Save Image As”, and save it to your computer. The image should be available in your downloads folder.



Alt Text: Green Mental Health Awareness Month graphic promoting the message ‘Mental health is health. Smaller text at the bottom reads, “May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Get involved at MHAMD.ORG/GREEN.”



Alt Text: Green graphic with a ribbon and text reads, “I believe that mental health is health.” Bottom text reads, “May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Get involved at MHAMD.ORG/GREEN.”



Alt Text: Green graphic with a ribbon and text reads, “We believe that mental health is health.” Smaller text reads, “May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Get involved at MHAMD.ORG/GREEN.”

Meeting background:

To download, click on the image. In your browser, right-click on the image, select “Save Image As”, and save it to your computer. The image should be available in your downloads folder.



Hashtags: #GoGreenMD #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth #MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthMD

Sample Social Media Posts:

Week 1, May 1st–9th

- **May is #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth!** It’s important to remember that everyone has mental health—mental health is how we think about life or issues, feel about ourselves and others, and handle change, stress, and other things that happen to us.
- **This #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth let’s make sure we’re taking care of ourselves and each other.** Check in on your loved ones, seek help when you need it, and prioritize your mental health.
- **May is #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth!** According to Mental Health America, 46% of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition during their lifetime. Learn how you can make a difference by visiting mhamd.org/green. #MentalHealthMD

Week 2, May 10th–16th

- **#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth is the perfect time to prioritize your mental health.** Visit the Mental Health Association of Maryland’s website for information, resources, and more: mhamd.org/green.
- **You don’t need to be an expert to offer support to someone who is struggling with mental health issues.** You can make a real difference in someone’s life by being a good listener, showing empathy, and offering resources. #MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthMD
- **Mental health care is a fundamental human right** that includes emotional health, but also so much more: improved physical health, addiction recovery, lower health care costs, greater equity and opportunity, and the capacity to realize our hopes and

dreams. Learn more: mhamd.org/green. #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

Week 3, May 17th–23rd

- **Schools play a critical role in supporting the mental health of students.** The Maryland Action Plan for Preventing Suicide in Schools (MAPS) equips K-12 public and private school communities with the necessary tools for effective suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. Go here to access the MAPS guide: health.maryland.gov/MAPSk12
- **Suicide prevention begins with connection.** The Connecting to Hope Toolkit gives you concrete tools to discover warning signs, start conversations, and refer someone to help. Download it today and save a life: bit.ly/ConnectingtoHope
- **Suicide prevention starts with recognizing the warning signs, offering support, and connecting individuals to resources.** If you or someone you know is struggling, reach out to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline—help is available 24/7.
- **Know the signs, save a life.** Changes in behavior, mood, or talk about hopelessness can be warning signs of suicide. If you're concerned about someone, start a conversation and connect them to resources like the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Your support can make all the difference.

Week 4, May 24th–31st

- **Looking for local support?** These Maryland mental health and substance use resources are organized by county to make it easier for you to find the care you need. Whether you're seeking support for yourself or a loved one, local help is just a click away. Check out these resources by county: <https://bit.ly/MDResourcesByCounty>
- **Free, confidential help for problem gambling is just a call or text away.** Reach out to the Maryland Problem Gambling Helpline anytime, day or night. Call or text 1-800-GAMBLER (426-2537) or visit HelpMyGamblingProblem.org.
- **Problem gambling doesn't just affect one person—it can impact 7-10 people in their immediate circle.** If you or a loved one has concerns about gambling habits, this free, confidential self-assessment can provide valuable insight. It's a private way to help you understand whether seeking support is the right next step. Take the assessment here: HelpMyGamblingProblem.org/Assessment

EXPLORE AND SHARE RESOURCES

Share resources: Share mental health and substance resources, such as hotlines ([988 Lifeline](#)), support groups, online resources, or local resources. Encourage the people in your life to seek help if they need it and remind them, they are not alone.

- Suicide Prevention Resources
 - » [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) - free, confidential support 24/7
 - » [Maryland Action Plan to Prevent Suicide in K-12 Schools \(MAPS\)](#)
 - » [Connecting to Hope: Suicide Prevention Resource Toolkit](#)
 - » [Trevor Project](#)
- [Maryland Mental Health Resources by County](#)
- [Grief and Loss](#)
- [Coping with Violence](#)
- [Minority Mental Health](#)
- [Children's Mental Health](#)
- [Mental Health in Later Life](#)
- [Paying for Care](#)
- Problem Gambling Resources
 - » [For Help Seekers](#)
 - » [For Professionals](#)
 - » [Winning Back My Life](#)
 - » Gambling blockers: [Bet Blocker](#), [Gamban](#)
- [Peer Support Resources](#)
- [Self-Care Tips to Support Your Mental Health](#)



Learn warning signs: Familiarize yourself with [common signs of mental health challenges](#), such as changes in behavior, mood, or physical symptoms. Educating yourself on warning signs is an important step in promoting mental wellness for yourself and those around you.

Learn about this important tool for empowerment and communication: A mental health advance directive (MHAD) is a legal document you can complete to express your needs and preferences for mental health treatment in case you are unable to make or communicate your decisions in the future. If you are living with a serious mental illness, consider completing a mental health advance directive during a period of wellness or recovery.

You can communicate what types of treatment you do or do not want and appoint an individual to assist with your health care decisions. [Go here to learn more about the benefits of MHADs and how to get started.](#)

ATTEND AN AWARENESS EVENT

From community walks to educational workshops, there are countless ways to get involved across our state. Explore our [events calendar](#) to find opportunities in your area. If you're hosting an awareness event and would like to have it included in our 2026 awareness event calendar, [submit your event information here](#).

SHARE MARYLAND VOICES

Building effective support systems starts by centering lived experience. The stories of Marylanders navigating mental health and substance use challenges are powerful tools for connection; they spark conversation, deepen understanding, and reduce stigma. [We invite you to share your story with us.](#) With your permission, these stories may be featured in current and future Go Green campaigns to elevate lived voices and help ensure our work reflects the real needs and experiences of Maryland communities.

SPREAD AWARENESS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH MERCHANDISE

You can support mental health and help spread the message—Mental health is health—by choosing from t-shirts, hoodies, and other fun items in the [Mental Health Association of Maryland's Mental Health Awareness Month online store](#).

GET TRAINED IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID OR QUESTION. PERSUADE. REFER. (QPR) SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

- **Mental Health First Aid:** Learn the skills needed to support yourself and others who may be struggling with a mental health or substance use challenge. Mental Health First Aid® teaches people how to recognize and respond to a person experiencing a mental health or substance use concern or crisis and to connect them to appropriate

care. To learn more about Mental Health First Aid, visit MHFAMaryland.org.

- **Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) Suicide Prevention Training:** Learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Visit mhamd.org/events to register for an upcoming QPR training.

START CONVERSATIONS

Start conversations about mental health with the people in your life, asking questions like “How are you really feeling today?” or “I’ve been feeling stressed lately. How do you usually manage stress in your own life?”. Remember that starting a conversation about mental health can be sensitive and personal, so it’s important to approach the topic with kindness, empathy, and respect.

Be mindful of language: Use language that is respectful towards individuals living with mental health and substance use disorders. Using stigmatizing or offensive language can reinforce negative stereotypes and contribute to the stigma and discrimination that individuals with mental health and substance use challenges often face.

<i>Instead of this...</i>	<i>Say this.</i>
Mentally ill	Person living with a mental health challenge or use the diagnosis if the person prefers that language (e.g. major depressive disorder)
Crazy/insane/disturbed	Person living with a mental health challenge/condition
Depressed/schizophrenic	Person living with depression/schizophrenia
Committed suicide	Died by suicide or lost to suicide
Failed suicide	Attempted suicide
Addict/junkie/druggie	Person with substance use disorder
Ex/Former addict	Person in recovery or long-term recovery
Drug/alcohol abuse	Substance use challenge

[National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#)

Mental health awareness is a continuous effort. Use your platform all year long to create a safe and supportive community.