

# May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

Mental health is defined as “an important part of health and well-being. It includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It determines how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices. It is important at every stage of life from childhood through adolescence through adulthood.”

Mental health is not just the absence of a mental disorder. It's about promoting mental wellness and it is an active process.

As we continue to navigate through the pandemic, promoting mental health and wellness is especially important. Just like physical health, children and teens must learn that mental health is a key dimension to overall well-being. In order to promote emotional, psychological and social well-being, parents and caregivers can:

- Encourage youth to talk about what is going on in their lives.
- Model support with active listening.
- Allow them to express and identify their feelings.
- Explain that everyone experiences a range of emotions.
- Stress self-care and help identify coping strategies when needed.
- Have youth identify who they can go to for help when they do not feel mentally well.

It is equally important to take care of one's own mental health. If you have traveled on a plane, you know that you are told to put your oxygen mask on first. Find ways to take care of yourself and model healthy coping strategies.

*Below are resources that provide information about mental health and mental health concerns.*

*We all have mental health and it's okay to talk about it!*

**NY Project Hope** - Coping with COVID: Tips for parents of children and adolescents. This resource helps parents and caregivers recognize and help children and adolescence cope with stress.

**Supporting Children's Mental Health** - Tips for Parents and Educators: A Resource from the National Association of School Psychologists.

Mental Health Association in NYS – May **Toolkit2021**

**National Child Traumatic Stress Network Guide** - This guide defines resilience and factors that enhance resilience in children following a potentially traumatic event.

American Psychological Association - **Resilience Booster: Parent Tip Tool**

For more information, go to: [www.adapp.org](http://www.adapp.org) and click on the pop up for Mental Health Awareness Month.

