



## COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

PTAs can play an important role in raising families' awareness and understanding of existing mental health information, services and supports available, and distributing information to help them.

### WHY IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?

Many families do not know what mental health is, where to go for information and help, or how to prioritize it as a family. Communicating effectively with families at your school about mental health information, services and supports:

1. Helps all families at your school strengthen their:
  - Knowledge about mental health.
  - Skills prioritizing mental health and maintaining a healthy mind.
  - Confidence helping their child who is struggling emotionally, mentally and physically.
  - Awareness of what schools are doing to support students' mental health.
  - Understanding of why your PTA is focused on supporting students' and families' mental health.
2. Builds, strengthens and maintains families' bonds with your PTA and school leadership.
3. Ensures that all families have the same opportunity to learn and benefit.

### WHAT ROLE SHOULD YOUR PTA PLAY IN COMMUNICATING?

There are so many mental health resources out there, which can be hard for families to navigate. Your PTA can act as a hub of information and direct families to any mental health resources, tools and services available that will help meet families' specific needs, address barriers, and fill in gaps in knowledge, skills and services. Your PTA should also look for opportunities to communicate with families about the value of PTA membership and promote the work that your PTA is doing to support families and students' mental health and overall wellbeing.

Before deciding what to share out, be sure to first figure out what information families want most so you can demonstrate you're listening to families and meeting their needs! Use this [Guide to Understanding Your Community's Needs](#) to really customize your communication.





## WHAT SHOULD YOU COMMUNICATE?

Check out the resources National PTA has created and those they've featured from expert organizations on [PTA.org/HealthyMinds](https://www.pta.org/HealthyMinds) and then share these with families. Resources include:

- General mental health information
- Activity guides to strengthen Social Emotional Learning skills
- Mental health assessment tools
- Tools to help you learn more about existing school based mental health services and supports
- Guides on how to get help to improve your mental health and address challenges
- Guides to help you family have productive mental health discussions
- Tip sheets with strategies to strengthen and prioritize mental health in your daily lives

## WHO SHOULD YOU COMMUNICATE TO?

To ensure that mental health supports, services or programs reach every family at your school, your PTA should communicate with students and families from every racial, ethnic and financial background.

Your PTA should also talk with school leadership about any existing school-based mental health services or programs, if they are used, how they are promoted to families, and how your PTA can help support their efforts. Also share plan to share any Healthy Minds family needs assessment data you have gathered.

Finally, your PTA should communicate your commitment to mental health and partnership with school leadership to everyone in your school community who supports students' good mental health. Examples include:

- School counselor, psychologist or therapist
- School nurse
- School principals
- Teachers & aides





## WHEN SHOULD YOU COMMUNICATE?

PTAs should proactively communicate with your school community about good mental health practices, services and supports throughout each school year. For example:

- **At the beginning of the school year:** Share why your PTA is committed to supporting families' good mental health and what school-based mental health services and supports are available to students and families and promote the value of PTA membership.
- **Throughout the school year:** Distribute [tools and resources](#) that will increase families' knowledge, skills and confidence about prioritizing mental health and maintaining a healthy mind.
- **At the end of the school year:** Seek feedback from your school community on the usefulness, relevance, accessibility and helpfulness of school-based mental health resources and supports and how the school and PTA can better support families' good mental health.

## HOW SHOULD YOU COMMUNICATE?

There are a variety of tools your PTA can use to communicate about your PTA's commitment to mental health, the importance of prioritizing and maintaining a healthy mind, and the mental health information, tools, and services available to help families.

- Social media: Facebook Live, Instagram or Twitter posts, TikTok videos.
- Virtual platforms: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, GoToMeeting or another platform used by your school
- Emails, district newsletters, or backpack fliers
- PTA meetings, back-to-school nights or PTA sponsored Healthy Minds events

There is not one communication tool that will work for everyone you are trying to reach. Not everyone is comfortable using social media, they may not have internet access, they may not be English language speakers, or they may be unable or unwilling to attend in person meetings. Using a variety of tools and strategies to communicate similar messages helps ensure that ALL families have the chance to be informed.

