



HOW TO RUN THE PTA HEALTHY MINDS PROGRAM

The PTA Healthy Minds program is flexible and free to run so your PTA can use the program resources to meet the needs of your community, whatever those needs might be.

Your PTA will create mental health programming based on your community's needs with the following goals in mind:

1. Build the knowledge and skills of parents and families to support their child's mental health and help enhance their child's social-emotional skills and resilience by distributing resources and hosting learning opportunities.
2. Provide the resources and support so parents take action to strengthen their family and child's mental health; and
3. Partner with your school to build and strengthen mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) supports and services. The format and structure of each program will vary based on the unique needs of each school community.

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

The PTA Healthy Minds program is designed to meet the unique needs of each school community and there are plentiful resources on our website to help get you started.

The National PTA Healthy Minds Program provides framework to 1) **Listen** to and learn from Your School Community, 2) **Partner** with your School Administration, 3) **Share** useful resources and information with families, and 4) **Build** a Healthy Minds program that will best fit the needs of your community by utilizing National PTA's program materials to create learning and engagement opportunities for families at your school.

Utilize the [Guide to Running the PTA Healthy Minds Program](#) to get started in your program planning as well as the [Healthy Minds Toolkit for PTA Leaders](#) and the [Toolkit for PTA Programs](#) for customizable resources.

Before you start planning, take time to **listen** and **learn** about the mental health needs of your school community through:

- Asking to meet with your school administration, teachers, and school counselors to learn about what the school is already doing and what the challenges are.
- Gathering feedback from parents directly through a school-wide survey or a parent focus group(s).

This information will help you determine the needs of your school and if there are any specific topics your Healthy Minds program may need to address.



Resources:

- **Guide: Understanding the Needs of Your School Community (en español)**
- **Tool: Healthy Minds School-Wide Needs Assessment Survey (en español)**
- **Tool: Healthy Minds PTA Discussion Guide (en español)**

Once you have received feedback from your school community, identify who can help with planning, promoting and implementing your program. A key **partner** for you is your school's leadership and staff. Start planning your program by meeting with them to:

1. Share the goals of the PTA Healthy Minds program and feedback from the needs assessment or plan to use the needs assessment.
2. Find out what the school is already offering to support students' mental health and build students' social and emotional skills.
3. Ask them to share existing school or district data on student mental health to build parents' understanding of the needs of their students.
4. Brainstorm ideas for PTA's Healthy Minds program in partnership with school leadership.

Resources:

- **Guide: Creating Strong Partnerships with School Leadership (en español)**
- **Healthy Minds Team Description (en español)**
- **Template Letter to School District Leadership (en español)**
- **School-Based Mental Health Support Team Template**

You not only want to promote whatever programming you are doing but also share resources to empower families with the information and tools they need to make mental health a priority.

- Promote and distribute National PTA's Healthy Minds **family tools and resources**. Share throughout the year and/or focus a certain time period such as Mental Health Awareness Month in May.
- Use social media/email/newsletter messaging to reach families.

Resources:

- **Guide: Communicating Effectively About Mental Health (en español)**
- **Building Healthy Habits and Healthy Minds:** mental health content to use in social media, emails, newsletters, website, or tip sheets.
- **Healthy Minds Flyer - Blue Background**
- **Healthy Minds Flyer - White Background (Tagalog) (Somali) (Mandarin)**
- **Sample Social Media**



WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE PTA HEALTHY MINDS PROGRAM?

To meet the above goals, you can utilize one or more of the following components to create your Healthy Minds programming based on the feedback received from you school community:

Host a PTA Healthy Minds Parent Education Session or Series

Create opportunities for families to learn together and discuss important Healthy Minds topics as a group. This helps to build community and show everyone that they're not alone. Distribute resources and materials during In-Person sessions or by email. A PTA member can facilitate, or you can partner with your school or community organization to facilitate.

- Host an In-Person or At-Home "PTA Healthy Minds Session". This lets everyone participate and interact together. All of the materials you'll need can be found in the [Hosting section of the Toolkit](#) and in the Hosting a [PTA Healthy Minds Parent Education Session Guide](#) on the Community Needs Assessment you can choose to host one or all three. On the Community Needs Assessment, you can choose to host one or all three.

Or, if it better meets the needs of your community, you can also give families an At-Home Self-Paced option where they can watch these videos which cover similar (but shortened) content from the PTA Healthy Minds Sessions. These can also be found on the website.

All three learning sessions come with a slide deck with talking points for the facilitator. You can utilize the planning guide to make hosting the series easy for PTA leaders! We also have an at-home version! The learning sessions take about an hour each and can be done either at-home or in-person, depending on what works best for your community.

For additional support and user-friendly guides, please feel free to visit the Community Resource Finder. In this compact list, you will find a variety of self-help online tools and printer friendly handouts to share with your community.

Host a PTA Community Mental Health Education Event Wellness Fair

Utilizing feedback from you school community, host an event that creates the opportunity to share information, have activities related to mental health and/or work with community partners focused on mental health to connect families to community resources.

- Create a wellness fair that offers diverse opportunities to engage and learn about mental health for the whole family
- Host a community education program that focuses on one mental health topic or the opportunity to learn about multiple and/or highlighting school or community resources and partners



Advocate for Mental Health Supports

While typically the goal of advocacy is to create some type of systems change, [advocacy can also be used as self-care!](#) Use the areas identified in the community needs assessment to identify local, state or federal opportunities to advocate for policies or procedures that would increase support for the mental needs of your school community.

- Local: work with your school administration and local school board as a starting place to understand the policies, procedures, and resources available and the process to advocate for systems change if there are unmet needs.
- State: Find out specifically where your state is in terms of youth mental health and action steps you can take here through the [Hopeful Futures Campaign](#).
- Federal: National PTA is championing efforts for welcoming, inclusive and supportive schools. Refer to our [two-pager](#) from National PTA's Legislative Conference to read more details on this specific issue and specific legislative asks.

National PTA's Public Policy Priorities for the 118th Congress includes those related to mental health. Find the full list of priorities [here](#).

CELEBRATE YOUR PTA'S IMPACT:

Not only at the end, but throughout your process make sure to share what your PTA is doing to be able to highlight the impact being made through your PTA! Utilize the same channels to celebrate your PTA as you do for promoting your program!

Make sure to have participants complete a [survey](#) at the end of your event or program by visiting pta.org/survey. You can contact Programs@pta.org with your PTA Name, date of the program and name of the program to get your survey data.

Check out [#HowWePTA](#) for more stories and examples of program successes.

For any additional questions related to planning, promoting or hosting your Healthy Minds program, email Programs@PTA.org and a member of our team will be happy to help!



WHAT OTHER ACTIONS HAVE PTAS TAKEN TO SUPPORT HEALTHY MINDS?

Here are just a handful of examples from local PTAs who have successfully implemented the PTA Healthy Minds program. PTAs have:

- Facilitated three In-Person Healthy Minds learning sessions at the monthly "Coffee and Conversations" already scheduled at school. Created a Healthy Minds spotlight in school newsletter to share resources and information. Created a new Staff Wellness Room and added new materials for the Restorative Room for students.
- Partnered with school counselor and community mental health professional to host the three (3) Healthy Minds parent sessions and also partnered with a community mental health professional to create programming specific to anxiety which was a big need identified in the Community Needs Assessment. Offered childcare for all sessions.
- Held a Healthy Minds fair during open house night. Invited mental health community professional so families could connect and learn about available resources and pickup handouts printed from the National PTA website.
- Utilizing feedback from the Community Needs Assessment, held a "Who's Who" night where the staff in our school responsible for academic support, mental wellness and family connections introduced themselves to our families. Worked with school counselors and bought age appropriate SEL books for each classroom-based teacher.
- Organized monthly lunch bunches with parents to raise awareness of mental health issues and the impact of COVID-19 on students.
- Created a Kindness Program that used books focused on SEL as a starting point and had parents and middle school students engage with the younger classrooms (K-5) to have discussions and activities to go with the book readings. Met regularly with middle school students who are part of the Kindness Team to discuss ways to create a better school climate where everyone can feel healthy and safe.
- Created a Mental Health Toolkit that was published on their school system's website and created a QR code for ease of access.
- Provided Healthy Minds materials in the office, at special events and directly from Guidance Counselors to families and students who came in for help.
- Based on the survey responses, implemented a comprehensive Mental Health & Wellness Week program: daily theme/classroom activities, extra daily activities/videos for students to do on their own, interactive student workshops for 8th grade students led by an LPC that the school partners with.
- Partnered with school's Foundation, Counseling and Physical Education departments to turn the month of March into Wellness Month at the school. Provided a range of social emotional to physical activities each day to engage students and school staff.