# Healthy minds 101 Facilitator Guide

## live session: In person or at home (Virtual)

This guide is designed to help your PTA facilitate an in person or at home (virtual) ***Health Minds 101*** session for families.

Approximate length: 60 minutes

## Event goal

1. Educate families about mental health, way to prioritize it, and how to get help.
2. Facilitate family discussions about mental health and wellness and ways to build healthy minds.

## Participant Handouts

1. Healthy Minds 101 Agenda
2. [Healthy Minds: Overview](https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/programs/mental-health/healthy-minds-overview.pdf)
3. [Healthy Minds: What Can Families Do](https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/programs/mental-health/healthy-minds-what-can-families-do.pdf)
4. [Healthy Minds: Family Discussion Guide](https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/programs/mental-health/healthy-minds-families-discussion-guide.pdf)
5. [Healthy Minds: Family Action Plan](https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/programs/mental-health/healthy-minds-family-action-plan.pdf)
6. [Healthy Minds: Helping Kids Cope](https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/programs/mental-health/helping-kids-cope.pdf)
7. [Healthy Minds: Get Help](https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/programs/mental-health/healthy-minds---get-help.pdf)
8. Mental Health Support Team

**Note:** If virtual, add all handouts to the virtual platform you are using ahead of time, or put them in the chat at the beginning of the session.

## Facilitator’s Script

This script accompanies the ***Healthy Minds 101*** Session [slide deck](https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/programs/mental-health/healthy-minds-101-synchonous-presentation.pptx).

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| **Slide** | **Facilitator Script** |
| **1: Intro**  | **Note:** Add school name, date and school branding.**Say:** Hello and welcome to the Healthy Minds 101 Session.**{Click to next slide}** |
| **2: Session Objectives** | **Say:** During this one-hour session we are going to:1. Discuss the difference between mental health and mental illness, and the factors that influence both.
2. Explore ways families can prioritize mental health together.
3. Review what mental health supports and services are available to families.

This will be both an educational and interactive session. We want to give all of you lots of opportunities to talk to and learn from each other. We also have handouts that include more detailed information about what we are discussing today.I will now introduce **{insert speakers name and title},** who is going to kick off this session.**{Click next slide}** |
| **3: Mental Health** **vs Mental Illness** | **Say:** Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community. Mental Illness is when you have a mental, behavior or emotional disorder, such as generalized anxiety, bipolar disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder. In the United States, [**18.5%**](https://www.mhanational.org/issues/2020/mental-health-america-adult-data) of adults are experiencing a mental health illness or disorder and [**17.8%**](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html) of kids age 2-8 have been diagnosed with one. Also, in 2021, 13.8% of youth aged 12-17 have reported suffering from at least one major depressive episode.The good news is that mental illness is treatable and, in many cases, can be avoided from happening altogether with positive, proactive mental health practices. **{Click next slide}** |
| **4: What Impacts Mental Health?** | **Say:** Our mental health is constantly impacted by what happens around us, both good and bad. How we feel emotionally can change from day to day, or even minute by minute, depending on what we are experiencing on that day or in that moment. Can anyone tell me some strategies for maintaining mental health?**{Let the audience provide three or four answers, then click once.}**There is a strong link between our physical well-being and our mental well-being. This is called the mind/body connection. When we take good care of our bodies by eating lots of fruits and vegetables, drinking water, moving our bodies, and getting the right amount of sleep, we can produce “feel good” chemicals and give our mind the nutrients it needs to stay healthy. Connecting to others is also one of the best things you can do for your mental health.Next, can anyone tell me some things that can make it harder for a person to have good mental health? **{Let the audience provide three or four answers, then click once.}****Say:** Experiencing racism, hate, bigotry, poverty or abuse makes it harder to have good mental health. Having a chronic illness like cancer, heart disease or obesity makes it harder. Being stressed out, isolated from others for a long period of time or feeling uncertain about the future…things we’ve all experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic…makes it harder.Can anyone tell me some things that can help us have good mental health? **{click next slide}** |
| **5: Prioritizing Mental Health as a Family** | **Say:** We must take care of and prioritize our mental health just like we take care of and prioritize our physical health. When we are proactive about our mental health and make taking care of it a priority, we are better able to prevent the advancement of mental illness or stop a mental disorder from happening in the first place. This is especially true for kids as they become adults. For example, some stress and anxiety are normal parts of a child’s life. But if their anxiety is constantly ignored or dismissed by families, if they feel they are unable to express their feelings, or if they live in a chaotic or stressful home, that child with anxiety could become an adult with chronic anxiety who is unable to reach their full potential.You can prioritize mental health in your family by:1. Communicating openly, honestly and often about your feelings. We’ll talk about this more in a minute.
2. Eat a healthy diet. As we discussed, eating lots of fruits and vegetables is a great goal. You should also really try to drink water instead of sugary beverages like soda or energy drinks.
3. Move your bodies for at least 30 minutes every day. There is no need to join a gym or try a formal workout. Move your body throughout the day in whatever way works best for you, even if it is five or 10-minute chunks of time while doing house or yard work.
4. Limit screen time. People on screens are usually not moving, sleeping, paying attention or connecting to the people around them…all of the things that positively effect mental health.
5. Get the recommended amount of sleep each night. The National Sleep Foundation recommends kids ages six to 12 get nine to 12 hours of sleep a night, teenagers get eight to 10 hours, and adults get seven to nine hours. For many of us, that is hard to do. There are too many things to accomplish and not enough time in the day. We feel too stressed out or anxious to sleep. But remember, sleep keeps our brain chemistry and hormones balanced, which regulate our emotions. We must give our bodies and minds time to rest and recharge, so we have the ability to meet our daily demands in a productive, healthy way. That is more important than crossing one more thing off our to do list before going to bed.
6. Identify what’s causing you stress, then try to figure out healthy ways to manage it.
7. Establish a consistent routine. Routines help everyone feel more organized and prepared and gives structure and purpose to the day.

**{click on next slide}** |
| **6: What Can Families Do?** | **Say:** The more proactive we are about addressing our mental health, the more resilient we can be at navigating difficult situations throughout our lives. Your family can be proactive about your mental health by:1. Communicating openly and often
2. Building healthy coping skills
3. Creating a Healthy Minds Family Action Plan

**{click to next slide}** |
| **7: Communicating Openly and Often** | **Say:** It is important to know what is happening in your child’s life and how they are feeling. It is also important for your child to know how you are feeling, if you have ever struggled with your mental health, and how you cope with your feelings in a healthy way. Talking about mental health can be uncomfortable. Hearing that someone you love may be struggling emotionally can be very upsetting. Asking personal questions may feel like you are being nosey or intrusive. We can’t let our discomfort or fears prevent these conversations from happening within our families. Everyone has mental health, so it is important to talk about it.Many people are hesitant to talk about their feelings, because they are afraid that what they share may get them in trouble or make the person they are talking to upset. To create a safe space where people feel comfortable talking about their feelings, try to:1. Speak less and listen more.
2. Listen without judgment and reaction and try to keep your opinions and advice to yourself unless asked. You don’t want to put the person sharing their feelings on the defensive and stop sharing.
3. Don’t jump to worst-case scenario. When things are made out to seem like a catastrophe, it could end up making the person sharing feel worse.
4. Resist the urge to try to relate by sharing a story about yourself. It is time for the person to talk about them, not your time to talk about you.
5. Avoid lecturing. Talking at people will make them shut down.
6. Believe what they are saying to you about how they are feeling. They are not making it up.
7. Prevent all distractions so you can give the conversation your full attention.
8. Avoid listing all the things the person sharing has in their life to feel good about. This can end up making them feel worse about themselves for feeling bad in the first place.
9. And, do not change the subject no matter how uncomfortable you are.

Try to make these conversations a natural part of the day and have them at a time and in a way that works best for your family.**{Click next slide}** |
| **8 Family Activity: How Are You?** | **Say:** Now it’s time for you to learn a little bit about your family member. Over the next seven minutes, take turns asking each other these questions. I’m going to set the timer for seven minutes. Ready? Start talking!**{Set the timer for seven minutes. When it’s finished, say:}**Ok time is up. I hope you learned something new about each other just now. The Healthy Minds Family Discussion guide has suggested questions you can use to keep your conversations going at home to connect more deeply with your family.**{Click next slide}** |
| **9: Building Healthy Coping Skills** | **Say:** Families play an important role in helping each other identify feelings, prepare for life’s challenges, build resiliency, process strong emotions, feel supported, and meaningfully engage with the world around them. Life is full of ups and downs. It is important to develop healthy ways to cope with the ups as well as the downs. For example:If you feel worried: * Engage in necessary activities and situations, even if you feel worried about the outcome. The more positive experiences you have, the more your self-confidence will grow, and your fear will subside.
* Talk through your version of a “worst case scenario” and how you could deal with that situation.

If you feel down:* Try to get dressed every day, even if you are staying home all day.
* Reach out to friend or family member, go outside for a walk, or write down your feelings.

 If you are stressed out:* Do something together with a member of your family that you like playing outdoors, being creative, cooking, listening to music or watching a movie.
* Try deep breathing, yoga or meditation.

The Healthy Minds Helping Kids Cope handout has more suggestions you can try.**{Click to next slide}** |
| **10: Breathing Exercise** | Now, we are going to do a two-minute breathing exercise together. **{Play two-minute video}****{When the video finishes, click to next slide.}** |
| **11: Family Activity: What Helps You Cope?** | **Say:** Over the next six minutes, take turns asking each other these questions.I’m going to set the timer for six minutes. Ready? Start talking!**{Set the timer for six minutes. When it’s finished, say:}**Ok time is up. I hope you all came up with some great coping strategies. **{Click to next slide}** |
| **12: Healthy Mind Family Action Plan** | **Say:** Making small changes in lifestyle and behavior as a family today can make a big difference for everyone’s mental health and wellbeing tomorrow. Making healthy choices is much easier to do together. Creating a healthy minds action that your family completes together:1. Allows everyone in the family the chance to decide for themselves what healthy changes they want to make individually and together.
2. Gives parents/caregivers the opportunity to be mental health role models.
3. Holds everyone in the family accountable.
4. Helps create an environment at home that supports being connected and good mental health practices.

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| **13: Family Activity: Create a Healthy Minds Family Action Plan** | **Say:** Take the next 10 minutes to discuss how your family will commit to keeping your minds healthy and strong, then complete the Healthy Minds Family Action Plan worksheet. As you’re completing it, be sure to think about what is realistic for your family. Be ambitious but also realistic. Also, make sure everyone’s opinions are considered; it is only going to be helpful if everyone is willing to commit. Finally, keep in mind that this is going to be a living document. You can add to and update it as you go!**{Set time for 10 minutes. When it ends say:}**Ok time is up. I hope you all came up with a plan that will work for your family.**{Click to next slide}** |
| **14: Getting Help** | **Note:** Complete the Mental Health Support Team form ahead of time.**Say:** Feeing sad, anxious, worried, stressed, lonely or overwhelmed are normal in everyday life. When those feelings:* Last longer than three months
* Create difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships
* Negatively impact school or work performance or health
* Prevent the ability to complete routine tasks or enjoyment of favorite activities
* Cause low self-esteem or thoughts of suicide.

It may be time to get help.If your child has a primary care provider, you can talk to them about your concerns. Depending on your conversation and the results of a routine physical exam and a mental health assessment, the doctor may then refer you to a mental health professional for further evaluation and treatment. Treatment options may include talk therapy, medication, or a combination of the two.  If your child does not have a primary care provider, families can talk to our **{insert the name of who at your school provides mental health services: school counselor, psychologist or nurse.}** You can find their contact information on the Mental Health Support Team form that was handed out. You can reach out to them even if you are just a little bit worried about your child. They are there to help families figure out what their options are, not judge your parenting. All discussions are confidential and free.Additionally **{insert the name of who at your school provides mental health services}** keeps a list of local community organizations that families can reach out to, will know what is free and what requires insurance, and can provide referrals for families. The Healthy Minds Get Help handout goes into more detail about help that is available to families.Finally, if you would like more information about depression, anxiety, grief, loss and resiliency, or loneliness and isolation, National PTA has also created topic specific education and tools that families ca use to figure out if you or your child needs helps with one of these issues. You can find these resources at PTA.org/HealthyMinds. |
| **15: Q&A** | **Say:** Now we would like to give everyone the chance to ask questions.**{Total time 5 mins. If no one has questions, move on.}** |
| **16: Thank you** | **Note:** If virtual, put the survey link in the chat.**Note:** Share information about any upcoming mental health sessions/events/activities.**Say:** We want to learn from you so we can keep improving the programs we offer. Please complete the event survey. **{If virtual, say}:** We’ve included the link in the chat. We will give you all time to open the link now.**{If in person, say}:** We will email it to you after this event. Thank you for attending and for your participation! |