

Make It **OK**

MAY 2024

**MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS MONTH**

TOOLKIT



Healthiest State
INITIATIVE

Make It OK

Thank you for participating in Mental Health Awareness Month 2024!

Mental Health Awareness Month is a great time to reduce stigma by starting conversations, increasing understanding, and educating those around you about mental illness throughout the month of May.

The Make It OK campaign is a resource and messaging tool to help you share your passion for mental health with your friends, family members, neighbors, and co-workers. With nearly 1 in 5 adults living with a mental illness, raising awareness about the importance of mental health, and reducing barriers to treatment, such as stigma, are more important than ever.

This toolkit will give you the tools and resources to educate your networks about mental health.

This toolkit includes:

- Links to Make It OK and mental health resources
- Links to Back the Black resources made for the Black community
- Social media posts and graphics
- Make It OK Events through May
- Mindful Moments resources and activities to support mental health
- Make It OK posters (print and display in home or office window)

Together we can eliminate mental illness stigma and support those who are struggling to find the resources and treatment they deserve. Ready to Make It OK in Iowa? [Take the Pledge now.](#)

#MAKEITOKIOWA



SOCIAL MEDIA

MAKE IT OK SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Help us spread the word about Make It OK and mental health! Feel free to also write your own posts including personal experience or company efforts related to mental health. Remember to always include the hashtag #makeitokIOWA.

CLICK TO DOWNLOAD: MAKE IT OK SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

COPY + PASTE THESE MESSAGES TO SHARE:

May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Together, let's end mental illness stigma and support those who are seeking treatment. Learn more: MakeltOK.org/Iowa #makeitokIOWA

It's OK to have a mental illness — many people do. #makeitokIOWA is a community campaign to reduce stigma by increasing understanding about mental illness. Learn more: MakeltOK.org/Iowa

Talk about mental illness. By starting conversations about mental health we can fight stigma in Iowa, join me in making it OK to not be OK in Iowa! MakeltOK.org/Iowa #makeitokIOWA

It's OK to talk about mental illness — talking makes people feel less alone. #makeitokIOWA is a community campaign to reduce stigma by starting conversations. Learn more: MakeltOK.org/Iowa

Ending mental illness stigma starts with understanding. Learn more about mental illness and how to be supportive: MakeltOK.org/Iowa #makeitokIOWA

#MAKEITOKIOWA

SPREAD THE WORD

FOR WORKPLACES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

- Share Make It OK social media posts on company channels
 - Hang Make It OK Posters in public office spaces
 - Share mental health resources via internal newsletters or intranet
 - Create a wellness challenge that rewards mental health activities
 - Re-circulate EAP benefits related to mental health
 - Casual for a Cause
 - Encourage employees to donate \$5 to wear jeans to work.
- (Consider donating to Support Make It OK)*

FOR AMBASSADORS AND INDIVIDUALS:

- Share Make It OK social media posts
- Participate in weekly mindful activities at home through the Mental Health Awareness Activity calendar
- Share mental health resources via personal email or social media pages
- Check-in on others: Schedule phone calls or video chats with loved ones, deliver care packages to nearby friends
- Take care of yourself: Move your body daily, start a mindfulness routine
- Donate to Make It OK

BLOGS TO SHARE:

- Mental illness: What is it & common conditions.
- How to help someone experiencing a mental health crisis
- What to say & what not to say: Tips for talking about mental illness
- Stories: First-hand experiences from lowans living with mental illness

VIDEOS TO SHARE:

- Make It OK: Let's talk about mental illness
- Make It OK Video Series presented by Kum & Go - Share one with your staff or followers every week of May!
 - Video 1: What is Mental Health?
 - Video 2: What are Common Conditions and Symptoms?
 - Video 3: What to Say vs. What not to Say
 - Video 4: How does stigma show up?

Make It

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- **Make It OK Store**
- **Make It OK Posters**
- **Share the Stories of Other Iowans**
 - Stories from Iowans sharing their mental health journey
 - Make It OK Stories: the Podcast
- **Mindful Moments Resources**
 - Make It OK Habit Tracker
 - Mental Health Checklist
 - Scanlan Center Coloring and Activity Sheets
 - Mental Health Word Search
- **Mental Health Awareness Month Events**
 - **May 3** - Make It OK Presentation (Virtual)
 - **May 14** - Back the Black Make It OK Presentation (Virtual)
 - **May 15** - Make It OK Mural Unveiling Event
 - **May 16** - Make It OK Presentation (Virtual)
 - **May 16** - Wear Green for Make It OK! - Share a photo of you in your favorite green clothes to support mental health awareness with #MakeItOK

GET INVOLVED

- **Weekly Mental Health Activities!**
 - **Week 1** - Tie Dye
 - **Week 2** - Stop and Smell the Flowers
 - **Week 3** - Wear Green!
 - **Week 4** - MIO Mural & Art Engagement
 - **Week 5** - Keep the Conversation Going
- **Take the Make It OK Pledge**
- **Become a Registered Make It OK Workplace**



The Back the Black campaign was crafted over months by a dedicated focus group of Black professionals, who worked to brainstorm, strategize, and present ideas on how to modify the message from Healthiest State's general Make It OK campaign and present it more effectively to the Black community. Get involved with Back the Black and access free resources below.

- **Back the Black Store**
- **Back the Black Posters**
- **Meet the Back the Black Committee Members**
- **Share Back the Black Social Media Graphics**
- **Access Mental Health Resources Made for Black Iowans**
- **Back the Black Coloring Sheet**
- **Upcoming Back the Black Presentations**
 - **May 14 - Back the Black Presentation (Free, Virtual)**
 - **June 11 - Back the Black Presentation (Free, In-person)**
 - **July 25 - Back the Black Presentation (Free, Virtual)**
- **Get Involved**
 - **Make a Commitment**
 - **Become a Representative**

Make It










MINDFUL MOMENT IDEA STARTERS

Often times, self-care gets misunderstood for having to do something for yourself that requires more time than you have or something elaborate such as taking a bubble bath. Self-care really can be simple, try these mindful moments as part of your self-care to get started.

- Stay hydrated.
- Take a 5 minute walk in between meetings or activities.
- Try a breathing exercise such as the 4-7-8 breathing technique which involves breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 seconds, and exhaling for 8 seconds. This breathing pattern aims to reduce anxiety or help people get to sleep.
- Start a gratitude journal.
- Listen to your favorite song in between meetings or activities to give your brain a break.
- Take a break and color for 5 minutes (check out our coloring sheets included in this toolkit!).



MAY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 Tie-Dye MIO shirts	2	3 11A MIO Presentation	4 
5 	6	7	8	9	10	11
Participate in Stop and Smell the Flowers challenge						
12	13	14  11A Back the Black Presentation	15 Join us at our Mural Unveiling in Cedar Rapids!	16 	17 	18
19	20	21 	22	23	24	25
Engage in local art in your community						
26 	27 Take action with 	28	29	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take the Pledge/Commitment• Attend a Make It OK Presentation• Become an Ambassador• Donate• Follow and tag us on social media	31	

MAKE IT OK TO NOT BE OK. END THE STIGMA!




Make It **OK**



Healthiest State
INITIATIVE

TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

**IT'S OK TO NOT
BE OK!**

Make It  **OK**

 Healthiest State
INITIATIVE

**YOU ARE
NOT ALONE**

#makeitokIOWA

Make It OK

MakeItOK.org/IOWA



Healthiest State
INITIATIVE



Mental illnesses are OK

It's OK to have a mental illness – many of us do.

One in five Americans experience a mental illness each year. On average, people live with the symptoms of a mental illness for 10 years before seeking treatment, largely due to the stigma.

The sooner people get treatment, the greater their chances of recovery.

It's OK because it's a physical ailment – not a character flaw.

Mental illnesses are biological conditions that can be treated, just like cancer and diabetes.

They cannot be overcome through “will power” and are not related to a person’s character or intelligence.

It's OK because it's treatable – life can get better.

The best treatments for serious mental illnesses today are highly effective. In fact, more than 70 percent of symptoms are reduced and people feel better when following their treatment plans.





Learn what to say to Make It OK

Talking about mental illnesses can be difficult. Here are some tips:

do say:

- “Thanks for opening up to me.”
- “How can I help?”
- “I’m sorry to hear that. It must be tough.”
- “I’m here for you when you need me.”
- “I can’t imagine what you’re going through.”
- “Can I drive you to an appointment?”
- “How are you feeling today?”

don’t say:

- “It could be worse ...”
- “Just deal with it.”
- “Everyone feels that way sometimes.”
- “We’ve all been there.”
- “You’ve got to pull yourself together.”
- “Maybe try thinking happier thoughts.”
- “Oh man, that sucks.”



Stop the silence – Make It OK

Mental illnesses are a touchy subject, creating voids in conversation. Here are some tips to help you.

Stop the silence. If someone shares with you that they're experiencing a mental illness, they are opening up to you in a big way. Ask questions, show concern and avoid awkward silences.

Be nice. It sounds simple enough, but try to say the right things with openness, warmth and caring.

Listen. In your conversation, try to do more listening and less searching for a solution.

Keep in contact. Offer to be available by phone, text, email or meet up in person. Just be there.

Don't ignore it. Don't be afraid to ask about someone's well-being if you think they might be hurting. Trust your judgment.

Offer support. Everyone is different, and may want very specific help or no help at all. Either way, ask and be open to the answer.





Mental Illnesses *are OK*

Do you know if you have a mental illness?

More than 7 million Black people in the U.S. are living with a mental health condition. So although mental health illnesses are very common, stigma keeps us from talking about and recognizing it.

Real talk: you might be ignoring the signs

Do you sleep too much? Or zone out in front of the TV a lot? Do you suppress your emotions? Feel down and can't seem to snap out of it? Or maybe you lost interest in things you once enjoyed? Maybe you struggle with relationships and controlling your moods? There are so many different symptoms of different mental illnesses. That's why speaking with a professional is important to get the right kind of help.

It's not a spiritual flaw or weakness

Health conditions are treatable: they're not flaws or anything wrong with you as a person. Mental illnesses are biological and medical conditions that can be treated, just like cancer or diabetes.

You matter: life can get better

Today, treatments for mental illnesses are very effective. Once people seek treatment, more than 70% of symptoms are reduced and people feel better.

Join us in the Movement and learn more at:

www.iowaHealthiestState.com/BackTheBlack





It's OK to not be OK

Mental illnesses are something we don't talk about enough.

It's okay to not be okay though. When we talk about mental illnesses, we start healing together. Here are some tips to stop the silence and start talking about mental health in our community.

Show you care

Be a safe space for the people you know to talk about their mental illnesses and health concerns. Ask questions and avoid awkward silences. Encourage people to open up.

Be kind

Try to stay open-minded, positive, and caring. Show the person opening up to you that you care about what they're trying to say, and that their health matters.

Listen

Try to listen more instead of offering solutions or being dismissive. Avoid phrases like, "Nothing is wrong with you." Or, "You're just sad right now, you'll get through it."

Keep in contact

Offer to be available by phone, text, email or meeting up in person. Just be there for the person opening up to you, and let them know you've got them.

Don't ignore it

If someone seems like they're struggling but they aren't saying anything, don't be afraid to ask. Sometimes stopping the silence means starting those hard conversations.

Offer support

Everyone is different, some people want help and some don't. Either way, just let the people around you know you're there for them and will support them.

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Learn what to say to **Make it OK**

Talking about mental health is hard.

That's why we're on a mission to make it ok to talk about mental health illnesses in the Black Iowan community. Here are some helpful phrases you can use or not use when you're ready to talk about it!

HELPFUL:

"I love you."
"Thanks for trusting me."
"What can I do for you in this moment?"
"How can I help?"
"I apologize this is happening to you"
"I'm here for you when you need me."
"How are you feeling today?"
"Are you looking for my perspective or would you rather I listen?"

NOT HELPFUL:

"It could be worse ..."
"Just deal with it."
"Snap out of it."
"Everyone feels that way sometimes."
"We've all been there."
"You've got to pull yourself together."
"Try thinking happier thoughts."
"You may have brought this on yourself."
"All you need is ..."

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Make It OK

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**44% of
Black LGBTQ youth
seriously
considered suicide
in the past 12
months,**

*including 59% of
Black transgender and
nonbinary youth*



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Tener enfermedades mentales está bien

Está bien tener una enfermedad mental – muchos de nosotros pasamos por eso.

Uno de cada cinco americanos experimenta una enfermedad mental cada año. En promedio, la gente vive con síntomas de alguna enfermedad mental por 10 años antes de buscar tratamiento. Todo debido en gran parte al estigma que hay. Entre más pronto reciben tratamiento las personas, mayores son sus posibilidades de recuperarse.

Está bien porque es una dolencia física, no un defecto de carácter.

Las enfermedades mentales son condiciones biológicas que pueden ser tratadas como el cáncer y la diabetes. No pueden ser superadas por medio de la fuerza de voluntad y no están relacionadas con el carácter de una persona o su inteligencia.

Está bien porque son tratable – la vida puede mejorar.

Los mejores tratamientos para enfermedades mentales graves hoy son altamente eficaces. De hecho, más del 70 por ciento de síntomas disminuyen y la gente se siente mejor cuando sigue su plan de tratamiento.





Aprende qué decir – Make It OK

Hablar sobre las enfermedades mentales puede ser difícil.

Aquí hay unos consejos:

di:

“Gracias por tener confianza.”

“¿Cómo puedo ayudarte?”

“Lamento escuchar eso. Debe ser difícil.”

“Estoy aquí para cuando me necesites.”

“No puedo imaginar por lo que estás pasando.”

“¿Puedo llevarte a la cita?”

“¿Cómo te sientes hoy?”

no digas:

“Pudiera ser peor ...”

“Sólo lidia con eso.”

“Todos nos sentimos así a veces.”

“Todos hemos pasado por eso.”

“Tienes que recuperarte.”

“Ten pensamientos felices.”

“Es una lástima.”





Evita el silencio – Make It OK

La salud mental es un tema delicado, cuando aparece en las conversaciones, puede crear silencios incómodos. Aquí hay unos consejos para ayudarte.

Evita el silencio. Si alguien comparte contigo que está experimentando algún tipo de problema de salud mental, está confiando en ti de una manera sensible. Haz preguntas, demuestra preocupación y evita silencios incómodos.

Sé amable. Suena simple, pero intenta responder con franqueza, amabilidad y cuidado.

Escucha. Intenta escuchar más, no ofrezcas una solución.

Mantente en contacto. Ofrece estar disponible por teléfono, mensaje de texto, correo electrónico o reunirte en persona. Es muy importante estar allí para ellos.

No lo ignores. No tengas miedo de preguntar sobre el bienestar de alguien si crees que está sufriendo. Confía en tu criterio.

Ofrece Apoyo. Todos somos diferentes y algunas personas querrán ayuda específica, otras no. De cualquier manera, pregunta y mantente atento para la eventual respuesta.

