

MIND MATTERS.

NAVIGATING
MENTAL HEALTH
CONCERNS WITH
COVID-19 THROUGH
STUDENT AND
TEACHER
RESOURCES



PREETI CHEMITI • ERIC LIN • EMMA WATTS

MIND MATTERS.



PREETI CHEMITI

• AUTHOR •

ERIC LIN

• DIRECTOR OF DESIGN •

EMMA WATTS

• OUTREACH COORDINATOR •

■ TABLE OF CONTENTS ■

About the Team • 2

About the Book • 3

How to Use This Book & Acknowledgements • 4

I. FOR STUDENTS • 5

1. Overview of Mental Health • 6

Definition of Mental Health • 7

Mental Health in High Schools • 9

Mental Health in Higher Education Institutions • 11

2. Impacts of COVID-19 • 14

Students & the COVID-19 Pandemic • 15

Mental Health Concerns • 17

Changes in Our Personal Lives • 24

Technological Impacts • 29

Looking Ahead • 36

3. Addressing Mental Health in the BIPOC Community • 46

Why is Access to Mental Health Resources Inequitable? • 47

Systematic Barriers • 48

Responsive Mental Health Treatments • 51

4. Additional Student Resources • 54

Mental Health Support • 55

Physical Health Support • 57

II. FOR TEACHERS (& ADMINISTRATORS) • 60

1. Our Meaning of Mental Health • 61

Facilitator Tips • 62

Discussion Questions • 63

2. Sharing Our Experiences • 65

Discussion Questions • 66

3. Community Challenges • 68

Discussion Questions • 69

4. Administrative Support • 70

Discussion Questions • 71

5. Discussing Solutions • 72

Discussion Questions • 73

Additional Teacher Resources • 75

Online Learning • 76

Appendix (Sources) • 78

ABOUT THE TEAM



PREETI CHEMITI is a rising sophomore at Princeton University studying in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs with certificates in History & the Practice of Diplomacy as well as Values & Public Life. On campus, she is a captain for Princeton Mock Trial, a staff writer for the Princeton Legal Journal, a Peer Academic Advisor, and a student fellow at the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding. In her spare time, she loves to volunteer and play tennis. As a college student, Preeti aims to continue her trajectory of public service work by shining a light on the importance of mental wellness for high school and college students across the country.



ERIC LIN is a rising sophomore at Princeton University majoring in Architecture with a certificate in Journalism. As a member of Princeton's Business Today, he is the Assistant Director of Design for both the 2020 Design Nation and the 2020 International Conferences. He is also an officer for Sympoh Urban Arts Crew, a Princeton breakdancing group. Outside of school, Eric dabbles in freelance graphic design as well as writes and produces original songs.



EMMA WATTS, a National Honor Society Scholar, recently graduated with highest honors from Century High School. Twice elected Class President, Emma also served as Student Body President her senior year. Throughout her student government career, she focused her leadership skills on making CHS a welcoming, inclusive community for students and staff. Emma received the Idaho Governor's Cup Award for her high school achievements. Presently, Emma is a member of the Idaho State University Honors Program, majoring in Biochemistry with a minor in Political Science. She is considering a career in health professions to work with underserved populations and is looking forward to challenging inequities in health care policy.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Mind Matters provides a comprehensive overview of mental health concerns in the midst of COVID-19. Throughout its discussion of important healthcare information, the guidebook supplements critical research with over 150 student interview responses to better engage readers with the material provided. Not only does Mind Matters focus heavily on student perspectives, but it also contains research and resources specific to high school students, college students, the BIPOC community, and even teachers, with a specialized section on facilitating teacher-student conversations to encourage sustainable interactions. Overall, this guidebook aims to address several pressing needs, such as creating a sense of community, highlighting student perspectives for school administrators and teachers, and educating people about how significantly mental health can be impacted while isolated and in quarantine.

Our work is written by students and for students in order to encapsulate real experiences as we collectively face this pandemic. Millions of people are struggling with the uncertainty, anxiety, and stress that stem from this pandemic and other distressing events, with repercussions to follow for years. Now more than ever, the importance of considering our mental health has become imperative in our daily lives. As we are faced with new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, online learning, and a lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues, caring for our mental health in these difficult times is an integral step to wellness.

Considering that young adults typically spend a significant portion of their days in their schools, providing this mental health guidebook is a valuable opportunity to access a large population of students and improve their health, educational, and social outcomes later in life. No matter how a student is affected by mental illness, being equipped with the information and resources in order to effectively cope will change lives.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK...

We understand how busy educators are during these trying times. Your time with your students is valuable, and with this in mind, Mind Matters was designed to be easily adaptable to a variety of academic settings. Even if you face time constraints, spending just a few minutes to protect your mental health as a teacher or student is critical right now. Our student support section contains many perspectives and resources that are tailored to young adults, while our teacher support sections can be adapted into curriculums within 15 minutes or less. Please feel free to use whatever resources and specialized sections you feel would best suit your needs!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding for this guidebook was provided by the John C. Bogle Fellowship in Civic Service on behalf of Princeton University. The material in 'Mind Matters' was written and designed by Preeti Chemiti, Eric Lin, and Emma Watts. Designs and images incorporate modified photos and vectors from freepik.com, pexels.com, unsplash.com, and all-free-download.com.

Thank you to all students who contributed to the final publication with their interview responses.

Special thank you to Kira O'Brien for her dedication to the success of this project and ongoing support of student work.

[STUDENT] [SUPPORT]



1 OVERVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH



DEFINITION OF MENTAL HEALTH

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health “as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” According to the World Health Organization, positive mental health is linked to a range of development outcomes, including better health, higher educational achievement, enhanced productivity and earnings, improved interpersonal relationships, better parenting, and improved quality of life.



Being well in emotional and mental health means individuals can find safety in relationships and their environment in addition to learning how to positively cope with life’s challenges. The phrase “mental illness” encompasses a wide variety of different conditions that range from very mild to very severe. It is important to consider what mental health means to you and how you currently maintain it.



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

"Mental health, to me, is a lot of balance. It requires me to hold myself accountable and constantly watch how I'm thinking in addition to allowing myself to make mistakes."

– Lauren, College Freshman, VA

"Being happy and at peace with myself, and having my stress at a manageable level."

– Poppy, High School Junior, OR

"To me, mental health does not mean being happy all the time. Mental health, for me, is knowing where your thoughts and mental state are, and being able to acknowledge and assess what that means."

– Danica, College Freshman, TX

"Mental health to me is your state of mind and how you are able to manage your emotions and inner thoughts."

– Nichole, College Senior, FL

MENTAL HEALTH IN HIGH SCHOOLS



Mental health disorders affecting children and adolescents encompass a wide range of mental illnesses, such as ADHD, behavioral issues, depression, eating disorders, generalized anxiety disorder, and many others. Students suffering from these conditions face significant barriers to learning and *are less likely to graduate from high school.*



LEARNING OBSTACLES

- Nationally, only 40 percent of students with emotional, behavioral and mental health disorders graduate from high school, compared to the national average of 76 percent.
- According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), one in five youth suffer from a mental health condition, and less than half receive treatment. NAMI also states that half of all people living with a mental illness experience the first symptoms by the age of 14.
- 1 in 10 young people have a mental health challenge that is severe enough to impair how they function at home, school, or in their community.

Many estimates show that even though mental illness affects so many students in high school, between 50-80% of them do not receive the mental health care they need.



Being able to recognize and support students' mental health in high schools matters for several reasons:

- ***Mental health problems are common.*** Ignoring the prevalence of mental illness is statistically proven to let down the students who need help the most.
- ***Early detection is possible.*** These issues often develop during childhood and adolescence.
- ***Intervention strategies work!*** They can help improve resilience and the ability to succeed in school & life.

MENTAL HEALTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Higher education institutions can also present a unique and dynamic set of difficulties when it comes to maintaining your mental health.



Dr. Anthony Rostain, co-author of *The Stressed Years of Their Lives*, states that today's college students are experiencing an "inordinate amount of anxiety" — much of it centered on "surviving college and doing well."

"What we're seeing now are growing numbers of students coming [onto] campus who are already being treated for mental illness...and who really have learned to manage their illnesses at home," he says, "but suddenly they're on their own."

Being placed in a new environment can be daunting and intimidating for anyone. As several statistics show, mental health within colleges and universities has become an increasingly larger concern over the years.

According to the American Psychological Association, over one-third of incoming college students are impacted by mental health.

Ninety-five percent of college counseling center directors said the number of students with significant psychological problems is a growing concern in their center or on campus. (surveyed from the Association for University of College Counseling Center Directors in June of 2013)

Seventy percent of directors believe that the number of students with severe psychological problems on their campus has increased over the past several years.



TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN SCHOOL

Whether you already know that you have a mental illness, or find yourself experiencing one for the first time in college, you can take some actions on your own to strengthen your health.

1 • Maintain and build support systems. Connections with friends and family at home are an important source of stability, but building support networks is also important for a smooth transition. College provides opportunities to make new friends through settings like clubs and classes. Allow yourself the space to hold on to friendships from home while consciously connecting with the people around you at your new home.

2 • Monitor symptoms. Maintaining a daily record of key symptoms such as mood and anxiety levels can help you notice if symptoms are getting worse. College can make it hard to stay on a regular schedule, which also makes it harder to notice changes in your eating or sleep patterns. If you notice worsening symptoms, consult a doctor or therapist.

3 • Maintain healthy habits. Exercising, eating a balanced diet and getting enough sleep each night will give you more energy, help you focus better, and keep you emotionally resilient. Given the high academic demands of many schools, remember that it is not a failure on your behalf to struggle with perfectly navigating and balancing your work with self-care.

4 • Avoid drugs and alcohol. Alcohol and other drugs are poor ways to cope with stress. If you have a mental illness, you should avoid or at least limit your use of drugs and alcohol. Think about social activities you enjoy that don't involve drugs and alcohol and seek out these activities on campus.

5 • Reduce academic stress. Using academic supports such as study groups and campus resources can make your academic work easier and boost your confidence. Because one's college workload can vary considerably, experiment with time management methods and find the ones that personally work best for your needs. Your college may even offer first-year students advice on study skills.



2

IMPACTS OF COVID-19

STUDENTS & THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

2

IMPACTS OF
COVID-19

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted nearly every aspect of a students' lives. Students have been forced to move back home with their family, learn virtually, and even adjust their summer plans due to a lost internship or job offer. On top of these concerns, people everywhere are also generally struggling with death and loss in their communities. The American Psychological Association specifically notes that "this disruption, coupled with the threat of contracting this potentially deadly virus, is leading many people to experience anxiety, stress and depression."

"Now that the country is slowly emerging from lockdown, we might consider what effect this vast experiment in social isolation has had ... prolonged isolation can bring about anxiety, depression and insomnia and worsen many medical problems."

— Richard A. Friedman, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical



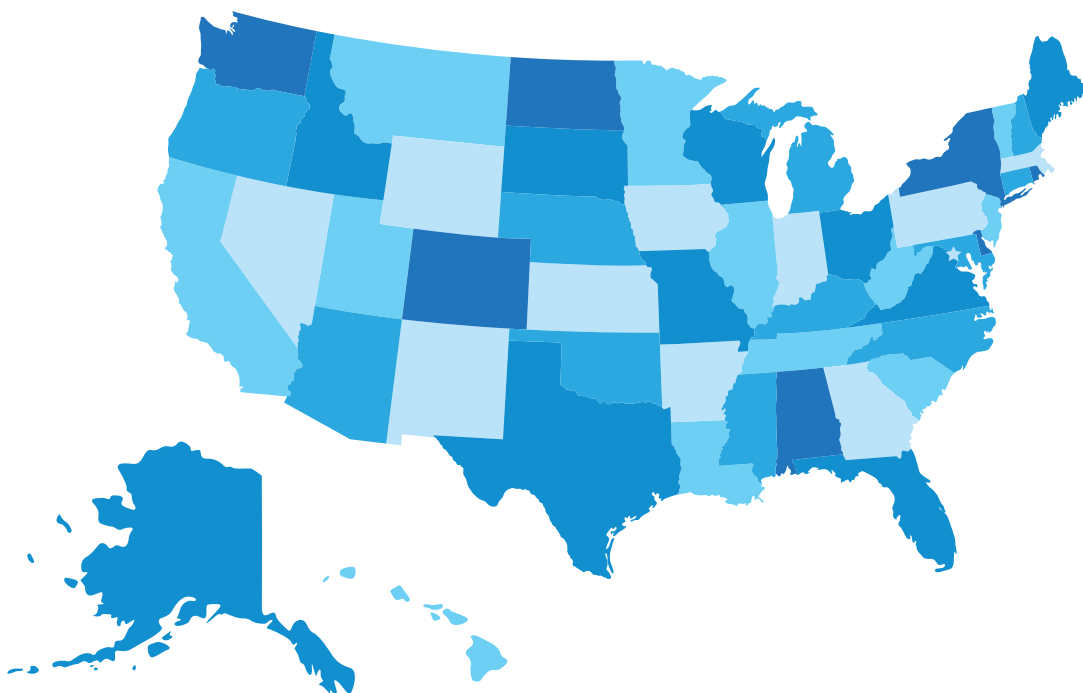
Additionally, the Center for Disease Control declares the types of stressors that could arise during this time include widespread implications like...

- Loss of support services.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol and/or other substances.

The impacts detailed above provide a fundamental baseline on how various types of people may react to this pandemic according to professional sources. However, by no means is this list representative of each reader's unique experience. By turning to the real-life perspectives of students, we can emphasize student voices in these difficult times.



Please note that many of the following students who are mentioned below have given us editorial permission to publish their first name, grade level, and state to be disclosed in 'Mind Matters'. For privacy purposes, some entries include omitted information, as granted on an individual basis for personal reasons.



After interviewing over 150 high school and college students across all 50 states and outside of the U.S., we analyzed student stressors, coping behaviors, interpersonal recommendations, and the most beneficial learning resources and expectations as we anticipate returning to our schools.

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Elevated feelings of stress, anxiety, and fear can inflict many concerning impacts on one's mental health. From negatively impacting performances in school, work, and altering close relationships, many of our student interviewees reported mental health concerns due to economic hardships, lack of social opportunities, trouble concentrating on daily tasks, and more.



IS THERE A DEFINITION OF MENTAL HEALTH THAT YOU PERSONALLY HAVE?



"Feeling self secure and motivated. It's not just my happiness but the joy I take from being able to do things in the world around me."

– EMMA, HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR

Daniel, High School Senior, Armed Forces Pacific - Japan: For me, mental health is growth. I need to be able to go to sleep at night and confidently tell myself I grew that day. Whether it is reading, learning new languages, doing exercise, or just building a connection with another person, I find myself very ill at ease when I haven't accomplished something in a day.

Kelly, College Junior, OH: Maintaining healthy habits and inner dialogue that are good for my overall well being.

Ujjaini, High School Junior, TX: I define mental health as my mental and emotional well-being, and how prepared I feel to tackle the day ahead.

Alysha, College Freshman, OK: I see mental health as a set of characteristics and the way an individual takes care of themselves. For me, given that I just started college this past year, it has become really important for me to maintain my mental health.

Natalia, College Freshman, NJ: An assessment of your personal psychological state that may affect your day-to-day life.

Anonymous, High School Senior, WA: I think of mental health as a general term that refers to the thinking and emotional patterns of a person. It is a measure of how "healthy" these patterns are and how they impact the person.

Elijah, High School Senior, ID: The ability to handle long term situations of emotional suffering.

Anonymous, High School Senior, CO: Mental health to me means addressing my personal wellbeing and emotional state and seeing how that is affecting my everyday actions.

Joe, College Freshman, ME: The ability to maintain drive, uphold a positive idea of self, and expressing care for others.

Charnice, High School Senior, IL/VA: Mental health is a person's emotional, social, psychological, cognitive, behavioral, and overall wellness. To me, I judge my mental health on the clarity of and how positive my feelings, thoughts, words, and emotions are.

Hannah, High School Junior, NY: Personally, I believe mental health is maintaining a stable frame of mind and complying to your needs without feeling incriminated for what you feel. Mental health is simply just doing things to take care of yourself so that you are able to cope mentally with life.

Anonymous, College Freshman, RI: I would say that the definition of mental health is the state of an individual's emotional, social and psychological well being and the "measure" of balance within those.

David, College Freshman, IL: Overall satisfaction with life and confidence that you will be able to endure life's hardships are good indicators of being mentally healthy.

Lyssa, College Sophomore, ID: Being holistically well enough to complete all of my tasks for the day without losing stamina. Physical, emotional, and spiritual health all culminate in mental health.



HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY MAINTAIN YOUR HEALTH DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR?



"At times when I felt my mental health was in a bad place, I would set up a couple of weeks of appointments with one of the counselors that worked for the College."

– ALLEN, COLLEGE FRESHMAN

John Paul, College Freshman, AZ: I often schedule in time for myself to think and critically analyze what's been going on in my life and how I can love myself better in the future (whether it be during a bike ride or early morning walk).

Kirsten, College Freshman, MT: The best ways I have found to maintain my mental health is to have a routine. While I will have classes that vary day to day, I always have a set routine with that specific day. Another huge part of my day is going to the gym or running....Finding that healthy balance between alone time, socializing, and school is so important.

Anonymous: I am mindful of all the privileges I have in life, and I take time to reflect on them every day. Sure, schoolwork is difficult but somewhere across the world, people have unreliable/nonexistent housing and don't know where their next meal is coming from so I'm very grateful for what I have in the present.

Caroline, College Freshman, MT: During the school year, I find it helpful to take intentional lunch breaks where I meet with friends, watch YouTube Ted Talks, or catch up on my favorite Netflix episodes. As a busy student it would be easy to pass over lunch, but a break in the middle of the day is something I can look forward to and take as a moment to relax.

Francis, Graduate Student, OR: I let go and placed barriers with things and people I identified to have a negative effect on my mental health. It was a very difficult thing to do, but as students, our academics are a priority at these educational institutions and we have to remind ourselves of that and not allow people and activities to drain our energy that we could otherwise put into studying or showing up for class.

Abby, High School Senior, ID: I think that one of the best ways to maintain your mental health is to keep school work under control. When things just pile up, it doubles stress and anxiety. If you can stick to a schedule and set aside time for work and play, you can reduce some of that stress.

Anonymous, High School Senior, CO: Some nights when I was really stressed, I wouldn't do any school work at all and would just have a self care night, with a bubble bath, face mask, good dinner and dessert, and watch tv to calm myself down. On the weekends, I would go outdoors and offline for a bit to clear my head. The best part about living in Colorado is the mountains, and the fact that when you are in the middle of mountains, you don't have service, so you can't do anything about the things that are stressing you out. All you can focus on is breathing and being in nature.

Lauren, High School Senior, SC: The best way I have found to maintain my mental health is to write! I write daily about notable things that happened, emotions, thoughts, rants, etc. It's been helpful for me to get my thoughts down. When I'm stressed, it helps me plan and understand the situation better. It also helps me remember the happy moments!

Sydney, High School Sophomore, ID: Take it one step at a time. This year was super busy for me but I just kept reminding myself to take a breath or two and just focus on the task at hand.

Shannon, College Freshman, SC: It's really easy to overextend yourself, especially your freshman year of college. I got involved in a lot of extracurriculars that I ended up not being able to manage. Even if it seems like your friends are doing so much more than you, that's probably not true! If you find that you've bitten off more than you can chew, it's okay to let go of a few things. You're not disappointing anyone, and your peers will understand.



WHAT IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE HAS MADE YOU MORE ANXIOUS ABOUT THE FUTURE?



"The uncertainty surrounding whether or not my college will allow students to live on campus next fall causes me anxiety. If I'm unable to live on campus, that would create a significant burden for my family."

– LISA, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Richard, High School Senior, ID: The things that have increased my anxiety at this point have been school, loss of relationships, and a general malaise about the state of affairs in the world.

Anonymous, College Freshman, RI: While some stress was relieved by leaving the school environment, a different set of challenges became present. Being thrown out of my typical working environment led to a relaxed state that led to a less productive work ethic. Academic courses added an extra layer of worry as I would need to ensure that these grades do not negatively affect my academic standing.

Anonymous: The uncertainty of the future. I don't know if I will be going to college in the fall, if graduation will happen or what life will look like in a month. I just don't know.

Charnice, High School Senior, IL/VA: I'm a little anxious about what the future holds. College and my life beyond has so many uncertainties, and I'm not sure what will end up happening. In addition, the world seems to be falling apart. Political, social, cultural, humanitarian, racial, environmental, and medical issues (among others) are coming to the forefront. Everyday, a new terrible event is brought to my attention, and the state of the planet worries me.

Amy, College Junior, CA: What worries me most currently is the safety of my family. I worry for my parents/aunts/uncles, who are all doctors (most of them are continuing to go into the hospital regularly, and my parents specifically continue to interact with infected patients on a daily basis), and I especially worry about my grandparents, who are much older and prone to health issues. Luckily, my grandfather is out of the hospital and back home, so he is relatively safe. Still, it worries me that the virus could be brought into their home when getting groceries and other supplies.

Bella, High School Senior, OH: I am most anxious about affecting the health of others, as well as maintaining my relationships since I can rarely see people. Going back to school in the fall is also making me anxious, as I do not know who is healthy and I will have to be around many people who may be carrying the virus.

Tabitha, College Freshman, OH: One of the largest stressors has been the fact that everyone seems to be in a huge rush to get back to "normal" without recognizing the long-term impacts of doing that so quickly. I'm not concerned about my or my family's health in the moment as I am about the future effects of this virus. With the lack of research done on the lasting health impacts and there being so much that we don't know about the virus, I am scared that people will write this off as something that we'll all just recover from!

Caroline, College Freshman, MT: I recently moved permanently and also began a new job. Both of these were large transitions on top of the COVID pandemic. Specifically related to COVID, I have most consistently found myself anxious about future economic conditions and my continued education. I am also heavily involved on campus outside of academic activities, and I find myself concerned with the feasibility of ensuring various programs continue successfully throughout upcoming challenges.

Anonymous: I struggled a lot during the latter half of the semester when my school decided to move everything online. There was a learning period where I had to adjust to not only online schooling, but also worry about my family's financial status. There was a period where I worried a lot about my mother who had a large financial burden with her surgery even before COVID-19 started affecting the United States. Knowing that she was getting a reduction in income and my father was losing income from his second job was worrisome. Knowing that my parents had to stress about supporting our family was a lot for me to think about, especially as I was nearing finals.

YOUR RESPONSES...

Is there a definition of mental health that you personally have?

How do you typically maintain your health during the school year?

What in your personal life has made you more anxious about the future?

**CHANGES IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES**

Reactions to anxiety and stress are circumstantial and individual. With a distinct response to the pandemic, students formed modified behaviors and new habits. These coping mechanisms give insight to proactive teaching styles and educational programs during the fall and spring semesters for 2020 and beyond.

HOW ARE YOU NOW MAINTAINING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WHILE AT HOME?



"While at home, I am savoring the time I get to spend with my family and taking day trips to towns around my area."

– KENNEDY, COLLEGE FRESHMAN

Caroline, College Freshman, MT: More recently, I have been making a greater effort to play musical instruments, read, and catch up with friends and family. I find it valuable to remain busy doing enjoyable activities in a time where society is largely shut down. If I don't remain active, I find myself becoming preoccupied with concerns about COVID and related issues.

Kelly, College Junior, OH: Trying to create some kind of schedule, find what makes you feel good, setting goals, listening to your body and mind, get creative about maintaining relationships and friendships.

Julia, High School Junior, OR: I think that having a quiet place in the home is extremely important so you can feel at peace while everything is so chaotic.

Lisa, High School Senior, MI: Even if you can't go out much, scheduling times to meet with people or learn something new gives you something to look forward to and a reason to get out of bed.

Leora, College Sophomore, CO: I also would add that building a home routine and trying to get fresh air are largely important, if at all possible.

Anonymous, High School Junior, ID: Avoid social media and find some way to express yourself.

Anonymoys, College Freshman, RI: I have taken a lot of time at home to decompress from the high stress environment of school. The amount of free time and freedom has allowed me to get some much needed rest and relaxation.

Danica, College Freshman, TX: It was a struggle at the beginning. I am someone who loves to be with others; I am almost always with a friend on campus. Suddenly switching from being surrounded by people to being at home with the same four people took a toll on me, especially since my siblings and I were all so busy with school work. However, I am fortunate enough to be able to facetime and interact with friends through social media. I have also made a larger effort to spend time with my siblings, whether it be working out together or watching movies together. It is not exactly the same, but trying to recreate the same routine I had on campus and even picking up new hobbies greatly helped me improve my mental health while at home.

Anonymous: I listen to a lot of music. Finding comfort in melody and lyrics help me set my mind at ease and distracts me from the problems going around.

Anonymous, High School Senior, WA: Maintaining some structure during the weekdays helps me stay motivated and happy. Also, getting enough sleep and exercising every day allows me to maintain a positive mindset and unwind for the day.

HOW HAVE YOUR PHYSICAL EXERCISE, SLEEP/ EATING HABITS, AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS BEEN AFFECTED DURING THIS TIME?



"I'm a lot less active than I previously was. I don't really socialize with my friends anymore which is really difficult for me. I eat and sleep the same though."

– MYA, COLLEGE SOPHOMORE

Toby, College Freshman, WY: Going from casually communicating with others on a daily basis to doing so almost never has made me feel like a significantly worse interpersonal communicator.

Holly, High School Junior, MO: My sleep schedule has greatly been thrown off and I go to bed way too late. I have also been snacking more than usual.

Zhoucai, High School Senior, FL: The most difficult part is definitely maintaining connection with my friends. I really miss them.

Malaina, High School Freshman, ID: I've truly been really lazy. My normal habits have curved, staying up really late has become a normal thing and I don't eat as much as I used to on more regular times. Everything in my life has been affected honesty.

Anonymous: My eating habits have gotten very bizarre where my parents have noticed and have tried to support me with having meals together and trying new things out every weekend. Sometimes, it gets really hard to eat and I've skipped many meals. I tried exercising in the beginning of the pandemic but with more worries getting over me, I found comfort in sleeping all day. I don't talk a lot with my friends anymore because I'm worried they'll think bad of me.

Sydney, College Freshman, NV: I have considerably more insomnia and I find myself eating less during the day and then eating a lot of snacks at night. I work out regularly to cure boredom but I'm definitely more quiet when in social settings.

Anonymous, High School Senior, AZ: My eating, sleeping, and exercise is at an all time high because I can focus on putting my energy into those areas of life.

Lyssa, College Sophomore, ID: I'm training for Miss Idaho, which I only decided to do because of the amount of free time on my hands. This, this training impacts every part of my daily life — I'm eating healthier and exercising more. However, this is only a response to the fact that I was drastically undereating due to the stress of COVID whilst also not working out, which left my body starved of nutrients and losing weight in an extremely unhealthy manner. I have not been able to retain a regular sleep pattern since March.

Malia, High School Senior, ID: It has been quite a bit harder for me to do physical exercise because my routine before was to go to the gym but then the gyms closed so I found myself often lacking the self motivation to work out at home. I went on the occasional run but that was it. My sleeping habits have been absolutely horrible since this all started. I usually went to bed at around 3am and would wake up around 10am or 11am. Part of that could be due to my schedule since I work from 2pm - 10pm but oftentimes would get home until 11pm. I would consider myself a fairly outgoing person but since this all started and everyone is trying to ease back into normal life I have found myself getting a lot of social anxiety. This wasn't a problem I had ever had before but within just a few minutes of talking with people I would get extremely shaky and my heart rate would increase.

YOUR RESPONSES...

How are you maintaining your mental health while at home?

How have your physical exercise, sleep/eating habits, and communication skills been affected during this time?

• • •

TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACTS

Widespread access to technology has served a prominent role in this pandemic. While technology typically helps us all stay connected, during COVID-19, students experienced both positive and negative impacts socially.

**HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY INFLUENCED
HOW YOU SOCIALIZE WITH OTHERS?**

"Technology has allowed for more opportunities to connect, but more disconnect when connecting with others through a virtual platform. There's a missing physical and tactile element, which can often distort what emotions a person is trying to communicate."

– JOHN PAUL, COLLEGE FRESHMAN

Zachary, High School Senior, AZ: I don't like socializing over technology very much so I try to avoid it.

Delphinia, College Freshman, ID: In times of quarantine, it definitely has boosted my socialization. I do believe that it does hinder in person interactions since people get occupied by their phones.

Jocelyn, High School Senior, NY: I have felt less inclined to be on social media or communicate that way. Part of the excitement in communication online is the promise that I will see my friends, but it definitely depresses my mood when I don't have that or there isn't much to talk about. However, I do find that the people I care about make the effort for healthy contact.

Shannon, College Freshman, SC: Technology used to be a barrier in making friendships, but it has become the means by which I maintain them.

Charnice, High School Senior, IL/VA: I attended a boarding school, so I lived on campus with a lot of my friends. However, now we are spread out across the country and the world. We have been regularly texting and video chatting. I'm going to college in the fall, and I've been in many group chats with other incoming freshmen. We message and have weekly movie/show watching parties.

Lia, College Freshman, ID: It has definitely allowed me to stay in contact with my friends. I probably talked via zoom with my friends more during quarantine than during the school year.

Toby, College Freshman, WY: A lack of physicality and ability to read subtle cues has undoubtedly stiffened socialization. Having to schedule conversations makes them feel much more utilitarian than natural and enjoyable.

Devin, High School Senior, ID: With all the social media outlets and online communication options, it's allowed me to keep good relationships with others without having to take any extra steps.

Mira, College Sophomore, NJ: It has helped connect us better, but I don't think it's a substitute for being together in person.

Anonymous, High School Junior, ID: I have found new ways to see my friends without being near them.

Abby, High School Senior, ID: Personally, I've lost contact with many friends throughout quarantine. It's been difficult for me to maintain my friendships without any face-to-face interactions.

Malia, High School Senior, ID: In some ways it has made it easier and more convenient. However, I think it has instilled a good amount of social anxiety into all of us. It can often become troublesome as well because texts don't portray emotion in the same way as talking to someone face to face. This can lead to miscommunications and arguments.

Sarah, College Senior, OH: Leaves very little motivation or incentive to physically catch up with friends.

Raeef, College Sophomore, ND: Without technology socializing would have been extremely difficult and the situation would have been much more difficult to cope with. Talking to other people my own age helped me a lot to get my mind off of the situation and relax.

Anonymous, College Senior, AL: There have been a number of attempts to recreate the social experience over Zoom. Some have worked well (e.g., just hanging out and talking with a small group of friends), but others have been very awkward and honestly make you feel sadder about the situation (e.g., virtual party with a DJ but everyone is just awkwardly staring at their screen).



Abby, High School Senior, ID: It's important to keep in contact with friends. If you don't nourish your relationships, they will suffer, and now is not a good time to be feeling alone. Good connections can keep you positive and provide you with people to talk to when things get hard. It may seem difficult to nurture those relationships when you can't see them, but utilizing the technology you have can make things easier.

Raeef, College Sophomore, ND: Without technology socializing would have been extremely difficult and the situation would have been much more difficult to cope with. Talking to other people my own age helped me a lot to get my mind off of the situation and relax

Ujjaini, High School Junior, TX: It has transformed communication to be available almost all the time - whether it is through messaging or voice calls.

HOW DO YOU USE TECHNOLOGY TO STAY CONNECTED?



"I use social media to keep me updated on all the news in the world rather than watching television."

– HANNAH, HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR

Allen, College Freshman, LA: I have a nightly Zoom call with my girlfriend that is really important to me, but other than that, my electronic socialization is mostly limited to a one off Zoom every few weeks with my friends or a few memes sent in various group chats.

Danica, College Freshman, TX: I have always been an active user of social media. However, almost counterintuitively, I began depending on social media less during these times and started using more personal methods such as texting, calling, and facetimeing. I would ask people and we would converse about life updates rather than getting such things from social media.

Ryan, High School Sophomore, AZ: It has been my only way of communication because my parents are very adamant about staying in the house, so I have been spending significantly more time on technology than before.

Anonymous: I use Facebook, Instagram, and Discord more than before. For my personal project, I actually started an Instagram to promote it and entertain people, and it's been relatively successful! I am motivated and have fun working on my project and sharing bits of it online, and I'm pretty sure several of my friends have been entertained by virtual clips.

Joe, College Freshman, ME: I typically only use texting, email, and Snapchat to communicate in writing with friends. I try to shy away from other forms of social media as much as possible, because I don't usually see much added value that they could provide. The use of Zoom and Webex for school and business has been useful, but there are many things that email can still accomplish when most people are working at home.

Anonymous: I have a subscription with the New York Times where every morning I get a report on what's going around. I also read on what's trending on twitter.

Caroline, College Freshman, MT: Most of my communication with friends even prior to COVID was through Snapchat, House Party, Facetime, or text messages.

Anonymous, High School Senior, CO: I use it to find online opportunities (internship, camp, speakers, club meetings).

Maali, High School Senior, NV: I usually use Snapchat, Instagram, and Zoom to have little meetings with family and friends. We have a family zoom call every Sunday, which is really nice. There is no set schedule for my friends and I, but we stay in touch.

Julia, High School Junior, OR: FaceTime is what I use solely to chat with close friends. Zoom is much more for professional communication. Text is what I use for fast conversation with friends and Instagram is for sending funny videos and talking about extracurriculars or current events.

Anonymous, High School Senior, CO: FaceTime is an amazing tool, as well as snap chat videos that I can send to my friend. While I haven't tried Netflix party, that would be a fun alternative to having a movie night with my friends. Instagram dms and snapchat dms have helped me meet new people as well.

Emma, High School Junior, ID: I tend to use regular methods including: calling, texting, zoom meeting, and communication via social media.

Anonymous: I FaceTime some friends individually and Zoom with others while playing games like Quiplash, Cards Against Humanity online, and poker.

Richard, High School Senior, ID: The whole spectrum, from texting, video calls, to sharing interactive online experiences such as social media (tumblr, snapchat, tiktok, etc).



YOUR RESPONSES...

How has technology influenced how you socialize with others?

How do you use technology to stay connected?

LOOKING AHEAD

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the efficiency of administrative responses, technological capacities, and abilities to communicate with students. Despite these concerted efforts, there are more questions and concerns about the fall and spring semester than ever before. Students are continuing to find difficulty in planning for the future, with some facing the prospect of continued online learning or even taking a gap year.



DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL IN THE FALL?



"How will classes work? Will I be able to or feel comfortable hugging my friends? How will my job be affected? Can I do the same projects and extracurriculars? Will there be jobs when I graduate? What happens if there's an outbreak?"

– KELLY, COLLEGE JUNIOR

Mya, College Sophomore, NE: I'm planning on taking a gap year because my school has said that half of students will be on campus and everyone will be taking classes from their room.

Shannon, College Freshman, SC: I still have not decided what I will be majoring in, let alone what my future will look like. My school has not provided much clarity on what the next year will look like. Because of that, part of me is hesitant to start planning for the immediate future just in case the situation is different than what I anticipated.

Tyler, College Freshman, IL: I am concerned about the health of students should we return to on-campus instruction and the quality of education if we remain online.

Zhoucai, High School Senior, FL: I am most concerned about the status of campus reopening during the fall. I am worried that this pandemic is going to affect the funding of my state school. This will trickle down and affect my learning experiences.

Toby, College Freshman, WY: Yeah, many. I worry about my health, finances, and ability to achieve a quality education. I also worry about losing the invaluable experiences I have had outside of the classroom.

Lyssa, College Sophomore, ID: First of all, University of Montana — you need to require masks. Period. I hate wearing one, it gives me a panic attack almost every time I have to wear one for an extended amount of time, but I would rather wear one and still be able to obtain a quality IN PERSON education than let the administration move forward with its “masks optional” policy just to end up closing campus again. The student population can’t do this again — the constant cycle of confusion isn’t sustainable and is definitely NOT a good look for incoming freshmen. Moreover, I have large concerns about my education as a whole, as UM is embroiled in an ongoing financial crisis which has only been exacerbated by COVID. I am scared that key people in my educational path — such as advisors, faculty mentors, and sorority-fraternity related personnel — will be furloughed to offset the financial strain the pandemic has caused.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE IN THE SPRING OF 2020?



"I'm concerned about how I'll be able to socialize with people on campus if social distancing and other regulations have been put in place. Freshman year is an important time to make friends, and if social opportunities are limited, it'll create some concerns for me."

– ELI, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Sara, High School Senior, LA: Absolutely. No college freshman wants to hear that they won't be getting the college experience that they dreamed about. As for graduation, I was disappointed at first, but I have come to be complacent with the circumstances.

Anonymous: It is in such limbo. I'm not too concerned about graduation, but even though I want to continue with the fall of freshman year as normally as possible, I feel that I should plan for a gap year or other ways to be productive without having access to as many resources in college.

Anonymous, High School Senior, CO: I am worried about how my first semester of college is going to go. With COVID, I might not meet as many people, or be able to experience the same events that other students experience (football games, tailgates, freshman retreats) and I'm not sure if a surge in COVID diagnoses near my college could send me home for the semester.

Daniel, High School Senior, Armed Forces Pacific - Japan: I just graduated from high school, a very odd experience considering how anticlimactically my year ended. I'm very apprehensive over whether my college will even have in-person classes next year, but I find that I am nervous nonetheless if we do have in-person classes because of how I worry my social skills have been dulled.

MOVING FORWARD, WHAT STEPS ARE YOU TAKING TO RESITUATE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS WHILE COMPLYING WITH YOUR STATE'S GUIDELINES?



"I am going twice a week with a friend to play sand volleyball because it complies with social distancing regulations and acts as a stress reliever for me."

– JULIA, HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR

Anonymous: I make sure to regularly inquire about my friends' wellbeing and stay in touch with them. I plan to continue checking in on my friends until I can meet with them in person again.

Holly, High School Junior, MO: I have been more open with my family about my mental health.

Daniel, High School Senior, Armed Forces Pacific - Japan: I'm still committed to engaging with my friends on social media and, the moment regulations become loosened, in person once again. Beyond that, I will continue my leisurely activities (but probably play piano more, I find it very soothing) in order to maintain my mental health.

Lisa, High School Senior, MI: I try to spend time outside a lot in my backyard, and there are some really great video chat platforms that allow you to connect with people.

Allen, College Freshman, LA: I try to focus on rewarding things I can do at home such as learning to cook, playing music, etc. As far as my relationships with others, I just try to keep in contact with them digitally as best I can. I think it would be helpful to me if I made more of an effort to check in on the mental health of my friends and help them if they need it.

Francis, Graduate Student, OR: I reached out to my school's telemedicine mental health services to meet with a counselor.

Elvis, High School Senior, CO: Just continuing to try to shine a light on others around me.

Shannon, College Freshman, SC: Once I go back to campus, I plan to utilize their free psychological services. My state has opened up (more or less) but there are still many cases, so I plan to stay indoors for the most part and make occasional excursions to the grocery store.

Shanti, High School Senior, ME: I'm going to try to practice more routines and activities that benefit my mental health like journaling and mindfulness.

Lauren, High School Senior, SC: I plan to continue staying at home and connecting with others through technology for now; safety is still my top priority.

Anonymous: I have been journaling a lot to process my thoughts. Otherwise, socially-distance picnic dates and runs and bike rides have been helping.

Jocelyn, High School Senior, NY: I've grown up believing vulnerability was my weakness, but now that I take it as a strength I am more inclined to reach out for help or others. I am heavily considering online counseling as well as exploring more creative avenues.

Maali, High School Senior, NV: I have been going out on little social distancing outings. It is really nice to see your friends six feet apart, and it is way better than through a screen. We keep the groups under 5, and we usually picnic. Everyone brings their own blanket and food, and we can talk while enjoying the nice weather.

Bella, High School Senior, OH: I have been focusing on ways that I can prepare for the future, rather than focusing on everything that has changed these past few months, which has lessened my stress levels.



WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU FEEL YOU WOULD NEED IN THE FUTURE TO BEST SUPPORT YOUR EDUCATION?



"The biggest challenge was motivation this past semester because the environment I was in just wasn't conducive to focusing to the extent I was expected to at school. Increased flexibility and more online resources are things that would be beneficial in remote education."

– SHANNON, COLLEGE FRESHMAN

Chandler, College Sophomore, UT: Increased flexibility is the best support I can get in the future for my education. Finding the motivation to complete schoolwork while being quarantined is harder than most people think.

Anonymous, College Senior, AL: Improved Internet access (I thought that this wouldn't be an issue but when multiple students and parents are working from home and using Zoom, even what I thought was good Internet really falls short).

Anonymous, College Freshman, RI: One factor which is far beyond my control is the timing of classes. Class times were shifted two hours forward to accommodate different time zones, disrupting my typical school schedule.

Will, College Freshman, IN: Honestly, I feel like I have all of the resources needed to maximize the potential of virtual education. I just think that potential is incredibly limited.

Anonymous, College Freshman, PA: Increased financial aid.

Eli, High School Senior, KS: More detailed plans from administration and teachers.

Spencer, College Freshman, AZ: Better access to campus organizations so that I could still "be" a part of campus even from home.

Malia, High School Senior, ID: I think counseling could be a big help to me in every aspect of life. I am the type of person who doesn't manage their stress well and having a way to relieve some of that so I can focus on the things that matter would be great.

Ethan, High School Senior, HI: I feel like a more robust virtual learning environment/hub is needed.

Julia, High School Junior, OR: I think having online planning/organizing resources would be extremely beneficial to the educational process especially when attending so many different online meetings with different entry codes and passwords.

Toby, College Freshman, WY: I feel I have adequate resources to get the most out of a virtual education, but the maximal experience of a virtual education is below the minimal experience of an in-person education.

Amy, College Junior, CA: Luckily, Rice is having dual classes in the fall (offered in person and online), so I will be showing up to the classroom in person. Based on my experience this past semester with online learning, there was way too little flexibility for time zones, as well as a lack of clarity from teachers on what was going to happen with exams, assignments, etc. In addition, all professors were required to record their lectures, but many did not, so I feel like I missed out on a lot of learning. Improved Internet access also would have been nice. Hopefully, I won't have any of these problems since I plan to attend classes in person.

Anonymous: More connection with people in my classes. Online high school classes were fine because I already had a relationship with my teachers and peers, but meeting professors and classmates online for the first time is terrifying. So, somehow some online hangout/chat/get-to-know you sessions?

Kennedy, College Freshman, MS: I have everything I need, but around my state I feel rural broadband is the number one limiting factor to online education.

Emma, High School Junior, ID: More comprehensive training for teachers and staff, which I understand is hard, but as a student, I wished my teachers knew how to structure remote learning.

Lauren, High School Senior, SC: If we were to do distance learning this fall, I hope there are abundant resources to make it as close to the actual experience as possible, specifically accessibility to professors and TAs, ways to connect with classmates, etc.

Ana, High School Senior, ID: I think recorded zoom lectures are a necessity for any class, as timing isn't easy at home.

Maali, High School Senior, NV: I think that my teachers needed to be better at office hours. I understand that we were all trying this out for the first time, but I'm hoping that my teacher in the fall will be more open to help outside of class time. I also believe that in order to make online learning more accessible, there needs to be a way to get computers and internet access into every home.

**ADDITIONAL ADVICE
FOR FELLOW STUDENTS...**

"I would recommend that students always reevaluate their paths. There is more than one path forward... don't get yourself locked into something that makes you uncomfortable."

– ANONYMOUS

Anonymous: Honestly just try your best and communicate with your teachers. They are still there! Also take a break when you need to. Go out and be creative!

Brooke, High School Senior, ID: Just because you don't see your friends in person every day doesn't mean you can't have strong relationships with them. Pick up the phone and call them. Genuinely ask how they are doing.

Jocelyn, High School Senior, NY: I think students should know that it is okay to take a step back and not in a lazy sense, but to hone in on those creative elements. We don't have to come out of quarantine a different person to prove anything, but prove to ourselves what we can overcome moving forward.

Shanti, High School Senior, ME: With everything that has been going on throughout the pandemic it's easy to feel as though your own problems are too small compared to those who are actually sick or threatened. However, everyone is struggling during this time and everyone's experiences and emotions are valid! I think it's important to find ways to acknowledge your own struggles and accept them to help your mental health improve instead of dismissing them or comparing them to others.

Malaina, High School Freshman, ID: The best advice I can give anyone is to not tear yourself up over school. Yes, school is important, but your mental health is more important.

Francis, Graduate Student, OR: Check-in with yourself and protect your energy. There may be a lot of pressure to do more while you aren't physically on campus, but remember that you are also experiencing a pandemic so be kind to yourself and don't over commit. And it's okay to change your mind about something you committed to, just be open and honest with others and most importantly, with yourself.



YOUR RESPONSES...

Do you have any concerns about returning to school in the fall?

Do you have any concerns about graduating high school or college in the spring of 2020?

Moving forward, what steps are you taking to resituate your mental health and relationships with others while complying with your state's guidelines?

What resources do you feel you would need in the future to best support your education?

3

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR



There is an enormous unmet need for mental health services in student populations writ large, and students of color face an even greater number of unmet mental health needs relative to white students. Our collective well-being is interwoven across all groups, and allyship is also imperative in these trying times, from understanding the trauma the BIPOC community has experienced historically to its implications in our modern world. Comprehending and addressing the mental health needs of racially diverse students is essential to supporting their success and creating equity in other dimensions, including academic retention. The following section will analyze mental health in communities of color, but due to its complexity, we encourage our readers to educate themselves independently as well.



WHY IS ACCESS TO RESOURCES INEQUITABLE?

While mental health is an essential part of overall physical health and satisfaction, marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted by its implications. For instance, the Black community suffers from an increased rate of mental health concerns, including anxiety and depression. The increased incidence of psychological difficulties in the Black community is related to the lack of access to appropriate and culturally responsive mental health care, prejudice and racism inherent in the daily environment of Black individuals, and historical trauma. Moreover, given that many Black communities exist at the intersection of racism, classism, sexism, and health inequities, their mental health needs are often exacerbated in comparison to other groups. Issues related to economic insecurity, violence, and criminal injustice further serve to compound mental health disparities across a variety of populations.

It is critical that we analyze how efforts to attain true social justice are hindered by inequalities embedded within the healthcare industry. In striving for a more just society, we cannot ignore the need for more accessible mental health resources.

Analyzing why such disparities exist in our healthcare system is a complex answer that can range based on a variety of factors. However, 'Mind Matters' aims to close these gaps and encourage those who need it to seek mental health help.



SYSTEMATIC BARRIERS



Due to the complex nature of mental illness, successful treatment often requires regular access to mental health care professionals and a variety of support services. Unfortunately, treatment can be drastically impacted by certain types of barriers.

Common barriers to mental health care access include limited availability and affordability of mental health care services, insufficient mental health care policies, lack of education about mental illness, and stigma.

**DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU FACE ANY CULTURAL
BARRIERS, I.E. STIGMATIZATION, IN TERMS OF
RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT?**



Kate, College Freshman, NJ: I think Asian-Americans face a unique set of challenges based on our cultural upbringing. It's difficult to actively seek help when Asian Americans are vastly underrepresented in the counseling field and it's difficult to relate and explain my experiences to a therapist who has never gone through similar experiences.

Pooja, College Junior, UT: Mental health is conventionally not spoken about often in my culture, and partially due to this, I feel like I don't consider my mental wellness on a daily basis. It fundamentally stems from a lack of education and personal knowledge about how to provide for my health in this way.

Trivan, College Freshman, KY: My friends, who come from a variety of backgrounds and races, were really supportive in letting me know that resources were available, but I think I was the one who talked myself out of pursuing the resources. I instead resorted to talking with one of my close friends about what I was going through, and I got through that disheveled state of mind not long later. I think I'm just more comfortable talking through my mental health with people who I know and trust.

Elijah, College Junior, KA: Mental health is important to me, but I don't consider myself to be included in the dominant narrative surrounding it. There's not a lot of diverse representation in its overall image.

In one study, researchers studied more than 13,000 college students of color in order to examine the prevalence of their mental health problems (Lipson and colleagues). Using data from 43,375 undergraduate and graduate students at 60 institutions over a three year span, researchers assessed data from African-American, Latinx, Asian/Asian-American and Arab/Arab-American students to analyze possible variations across race/ethnicity.

Their findings also pointed to shocking disparities in mental healthcare provisions. In total, 21% of African-American students with a mental health problem received a diagnosis compared with 48% of white students.



Overall, white students with mental health conditions had the highest prevalence of treatment (46%), while Asian/Asian-American students with mental health conditions had the lowest prevalence (23%), according to the release.

Systematic barriers can be pervasive in many communities of color. For instance, although the Black community roughly constitutes 12% of the United States population, they are overrepresented in high-risk

populations, which is defined by Columbia Psychiatry as a group that is often impacted by specific negative occurrences. For example, the Black community comprises approximately 40% of the homeless population, 50% of the prison population, and 45% of the children in the foster care system while exposure to violence, incarceration, and involvement in the foster care system can increase the chances of developing a mental illness and proliferates their mental health needs.



RESPONSIVE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENTS

If you decide to seek treatment, it is important to recognize the role mental health providers play and whether they are the best fit for your needs. Remember that there are a variety of treatment options that may work for you!

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

- » Black Emotional Mental Health Collective: BEAM is a 501 (c)(3) organization with the mission to remove the barriers that Black people experience getting access to or staying connected with healthcare. (www.beam.community)
- » Black Mental Health Alliance: The Black Mental Health Alliance aims to develop, promote and sponsor trusted culturally-relevant educational forums, trainings and referral services that support the health and well-being of Black people and other vulnerable communities. (blackmentalhealth.com)



- » National Alliance for Mental Illness: NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. (www.nami.org)
- » Inclusive Therapists: Inclusive Therapists is an online network that strives to provide more equitable access to healthcare by allowing people to connect with a culturally responsive therapist. (www.inclusivetherapists.com)
- » The Marsha P. Johnson Institute: The MPJI protects and defends the human rights of black transgender people by organizing and creating an intentional community to heal and develop transformative power. (www.marshap.org)
- » National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide: NOPCAS is a voluntary non-profit that provides support services, information on suicide prevention and intervention, and community training. (www.nopcas.org)
- » Therapy for Black Men: An online directory helping men of color in their search for a therapist. (www.therapyforblackmen.org)
- » Therapy for Black Girls: An online directory helping young women connect with therapists. (www.therapyforblackgirls.com)

- » National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network: The National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network is a justice organization committed to transforming mental health for queer and trans people of color (QTPoc). (www.nqttcn.com)
- » The Loveland Foundation: With a particular focus on women and girls of color, the Loveland Foundation brings opportunities and healing through fellowships, residency programs, and more. (www.thelovelandfoundation.org)
- » The AAKOMA Project: The AAKOMA Project is a non-profit focused on mental health for youth of color by conducting research and outreach for depression, anxiety, and mental illness. (www.aakomaproject.org)



TIPS FOR SEEKING OUT CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROVIDERS

- » Don't be afraid to ask a potential provider about their treatment approach. How would they describe it? Do they provide care that considers one's culture?
- » Seek attention from someone who is aware and affirming of your identities. These include considerations such as your race, class, gender, and cultural background.
- » Be mindful that some providers do not use methods that involve a cultural treatment framework!

*For additional youth mental health resources,
please refer to our next section.*

4

ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

4

ADDITIONAL
STUDENT RESOURCES



- Information About Mental Health: www.mentalhealth.gov
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or SAMHSA: www.samhsa.gov
- National Institute of Mental Health or NIMH: www.nimh.nih.gov
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: www.sprc.org
- National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention: www.promoteprevent.org
- Resource Center to Promote Acceptance, Dignity, and Social Inclusion: www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov
- The Institute of Medicine's *Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People, Progress and Possibilities*

55



EMERGENCY RESOURCES

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: [1-800-799-7233](tel:1-800-799-7233)
- Family Violence Hotline: [1-800-996-6228](tel:1-800-996-6228)
- The Trevor Project: [1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386)
- Self-Harm Hotline: [1-800-366-8288](tel:1-800-366-8288)
- Crisis Text Line: Text "[REASON](#)" to [741741](tel:741741) for free and confidential help
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Provides referrals to support groups and mental health professionals, resources on loss, and suicide prevention information at www.afsp.org
- SAMHSA Treatment Locator: Provides referrals to mental healthcare at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA): Provides information on the prevention and treatment of anxiety, depression and other related conditions at www.adaa.org
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Provides information on bipolar disorder and depression and offers in-person and online support groups at www.dbsalliance.org



10 MINDFULNESS APPS

1 • *Insight Timer* “Guided meditations and talks led by the world’s top meditation and mindfulness experts, neuroscientists, psychologists and teachers from Stanford, Harvard, the University of Oxford and more. With 80+ new free guided meditations added daily, more meditation is practiced on Insight Timer than anywhere else. Great for both beginners and experienced practitioners.”

2 • *Smiling Mind* “Smiling Mind is a free mindfulness meditation app developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to your life. Just as we eat well and stay fit to keep our body healthy, mindfulness meditation is about mental health and looking after the mind.”

3 • *Stop, Breathe, and Think* “Stop, Breathe & Think is an award winning meditation and mindfulness app that helps you find peace anywhere. It allows you to check in with your emotions, and recommends short guided meditations, yoga and acupressure videos, tuned to how you feel.”

4 • *UCLA Mindful* “With this easy-to-use app, you can practice mindfulness meditation anywhere, anytime with the guidance of the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center. Through regular practice, taught through this app, you can develop a meditation practice and learn to bring more mindfulness into your daily life.”

5 • *Ten Percent Happiness* “Guided meditations, videos, talks, and sleep content will help you build (or boost) your meditation practice, and stick with it. The app contains video and meditation combos that make it fun and straightforward to learn to meditate, a library of 500+ guided meditations, and a sleep section.

6 • *Lotus Bud* “Modeled after a practice in Buddhist monasteries, Mindfulness Bells are a powerful practice to remind you of your intention to be mindful. Activate the Mindfulness Bell and it sends you gentle reminders randomly throughout the day. Great for reminding yourself of your mindfulness practice while at work, commuting, at school or wherever your life takes you.”

7 • *Daily Yoga* “More than 100 yoga and meditation classes to help people from all levels. Daily Yoga has the biggest worldwide yoga community. Ask questions about yoga and make new friends to practice or simply share your yoga moments.”

8 • Oak “Oak helps the monkey-minded decompress by transforming meditation practices from experiments into habits. Individualize your meditations by duration, and customize with silence or calming background sounds. Oak tracks your progress and encourages you to continue building a healthy meditation practice.

9 • Calm “Calm is the perfect mindfulness app for beginners, but also includes hundreds of programs for intermediate and advanced users. Guided meditation sessions are available in lengths of 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 minutes so you can choose the perfect length to fit with your schedule.

10 • Aura “This mindfulness app provides the user with daily micro-meditations that last only three minutes apiece. Aura helps users relieve stress and anxiety with a technologically advanced, simple, and effective meditation platform. It was created by some of the best and most sought-after meditation teachers and therapists, and personalized by AI.”



HELP SUPPORT SERVICES

- American Psychiatric Association:

www.psychiatry.org

- American Psychological Association:

www.apa.org

- Children’s Mental Health Initiative Technical Assistance Center:

www.cmhnetwork.org

- College Drinking - Changing the Culture:

www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

[TEACHER] [SUPPORT]



1. OUR MEANING OF MENTAL HEALTH



As we navigate this dialogue, it is important to understand mental health issues and how they affect us. By sharing our personal definitions of mental health in a safe place, we can discuss why we care about mental health issues, better relate to each other, and develop a common understanding within our discussion group.



OBJECTIVES

- Familiarize yourself with the group.
- Set guidelines and regulations for the conversation.
- Explore the different meanings of mental health in a given community.

FACILITATOR TIPS

- » Welcome everyone and aim to make your group members feel as comfortable as possible.
- » Explain that you will be facilitating the discussion and not joining in with your own opinions.
- » It may be best to spend more time on the first few questions in order to give everyone a chance to contribute to the conversation. Alternatively, you could initially go around the circle and allow everyone speaking time.
- » Keep in mind that this section includes five parts whose suggested time limits can be modified based on the conversation or audience. You don't have to cover every discussion question that we have listed!
- » If you would like to, feel free to write down your group's thoughts on a flipchart to refer back to throughout the conversation.



PART ONE: INTRODUCTIONS & SETTING GUIDELINES

- » Welcome everyone in your group!
- » Have each person in your group introduce themselves.
- » After introductions, set the guidelines your group will follow for the rest of this conversation.
 - » Important values to consider are respect, considering the privacy of others, listening attentively, et cetera.
 - » Feel free to write down these guidelines in a visible place where all members can see what values the group has emphasized, such as a whiteboard.
- » After ensuring that everyone feels comfortable with moving forward, begin Part Two's discussion questions.



PART TWO: WHAT DOES MENTAL HEALTH MEAN TO US?

- » How important is mental health to you? To your community?
- » Is there a definition of mental health that you personally have?
- » How much do you prioritize your mental wellness in your daily life?
- » Refer to pages 17-19. Do you agree with the perspectives of any of the students that are quoted? Do you agree with the thoughts that your group members are currently sharing?

PART THREE: REFLECTIONS

- » Did anybody's personal definition of mental health change throughout this conversation?
- » What were some recurring topics in this conversation?
- » What do we collectively feel is important to continue discussing as teachers and students? What topics would you like to continue talking about?

Note: Feel free to take note of these ideas as well to ensure that they are covered later.



2. SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES



Mental health issues affect the majority of Americans. However, as a nation, we far too often struggle with holding open and honest conversations about our mental health. By sharing our own experiences, we can actively combat the stigmatization that surrounds this topic and delve further into its significance in our lives.

Note: Please consider whether this section seems adaptable and appropriate for your own purposes. Students may feel hesitant to share, so creating a comfortable environment is critical to effectively discuss with one another.



OBJECTIVES

- Identify the variety of factors that influence our mental health.
- Discuss the impacts of mental health and mental illness.
- Examine our different backgrounds and approaches towards mental health.
- Discover common ground to continue overcoming challenges.

PART ONE: EXAMINING THE IMPACTS OF MENTAL HEALTH

- » What factors impact our mental health?
- » If you are comfortable sharing, what has your experience been like with your mental health?
- » How do you view mental health issues as affecting young people?
- » How do these issues personally affect you or your peers? Feel free to not use actual names in your response.
- » In your experience, how are mental health issues intertwined with physical health issues? Are they related or not, in your opinion?



PART TWO: EXPLORING RISKS, BARRIERS, STIGMAS

- » What experiences in your life inform what you believe about mental health?
- » Do you feel that your cultural background influences how you perceive mental health?
- » Do you face any obstacles in receiving mental healthcare? What challenges do we collectively face in terms of providing mental healthcare?
- » If you do not personally experience any risks, barriers, or stigmas in accessing mental health experiences, how might certain communities be affected?
- » In your community, how important is mental health? Does this match how significant mental health is to you?

PART THREE: ANALYZING RESEARCH

- » If in high school, take a look at pages 9-10 in the 'Student Support' section.
- » If in college, take a look at pages 11-13 in the 'Student Support' section.
- » What are your reactions to the information presented?
- » Are there statements you disagree with? Is there anything you would like more information on?
- » **Optional** If facilitators have a handout with local data on mental health:
 - » What are your reactions to the information presented?
 - » Are there statements you disagree with? Is there anything you would like more information on?





3. COMMUNITY CHALLENGES



Even well-intentioned efforts to improve mental health can fail if we do not identify and address the challenges that stand in our way. An important step is to have an honest conversation about the difficulties we have experienced.



OBJECTIVES

- Address community during COVID-19 and beyond.
- Discuss personal disparities in education.
- Analyze the mental health impacts that COVID-19 imposed.

PART ONE: SOCIALIZATION DURING COVID-19

- » During COVID-19, how did your methods of socialization with your friends, family, and teachers changed?
- » Were these changes positive or negative?
- » How were you able to stay in touch with people while still abiding to your state's guidelines?
- » What impact did quarantining and limiting social interactions have on your mental health?



PART TWO: REMOTE LEARNING

- » What were the main difficulties in transitioning to remote learning?
- » Do you feel that virtual instruction is an adequate substitute for in-person classes?
- » What obstacles did you face as a result of your home environment?
- » Did you face any learning difficulties due to remote learning? This can include difficulties focusing, grade changes, etc.



PART THREE: ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

- » What technological platforms did you use for remote learning and to support your education?
- » Did you face technical difficulties when interacting in classes?
- » Was your participation in school affected by using technology?



4. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT



In a dynamic between students, teachers, and administrators, we aim to highlight current support networks while simultaneously addressing student needs. This section focuses on what your school has already done and what it can continue to do to best support you in the future.



OBJECTIVES

- Address current areas of support that a school's administration provides.
- Address current areas of concern for school administrators.

PART ONE: SUPPORTIVE TOOLS

- » Identify areas of your academic and/or personal life that you feel have been supported by your school's administration.
- » What are long-term and short-term goals that you think are most important as a student?
- » What resources (people, organizations, funding, etc.) do you already have in place to improve mental health?
- » **Optional** Teachers: please describe and share what steps you have taken to support your students.



PART TWO: AREAS OF CONCERN

- » Identify areas of your academic and/or personal life that you feel have been overlooked by your school's administration.
- » As students, what resources do you prioritize most with your education?
Examples may include tutoring services, access to counseling, online learning platforms, etc.



5. DISCUSSING SOLUTIONS



There are many ways that we can support solutions within our academic communities. Communities can work together to identify how existing resources can be leveraged to best support local priorities and to address mental health needs and gaps.



OBJECTIVES

- Consider different ways to improve mental health for young people.
- Identify specific areas that we might want to work on locally.

PART ONE: REFLECTIONS

- » **Optional** To begin this step, have each group write a summary that encapsulates what you have discussed in your conversations thus far.
- » What work has been done in your school system to strengthen mental health?
- » What work still needs to be done?
- » What solutions do you hope to adopt in the future? Consider what you can do as well as what your school administration can do.
- » **Optional** As a group, create a collective summarization of your thoughts.



PART TWO: BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS

Note: The amount of time allocated to this section is dependent on schedule flexibility and can be as long or short as a facilitator desires!

- » Either individually or in small groups, spend a few minutes generating solutions to the mental health issues that students have been experiencing.

Feel free to include topic areas and ideas that were prioritized in earlier sections.

- » If you have multiple ideas after the allotted time ends, prioritize your top 2-3 ideas.
- » Share these ideas with the rest of the group. Which ones did your group like the most? Which were the most feasible?

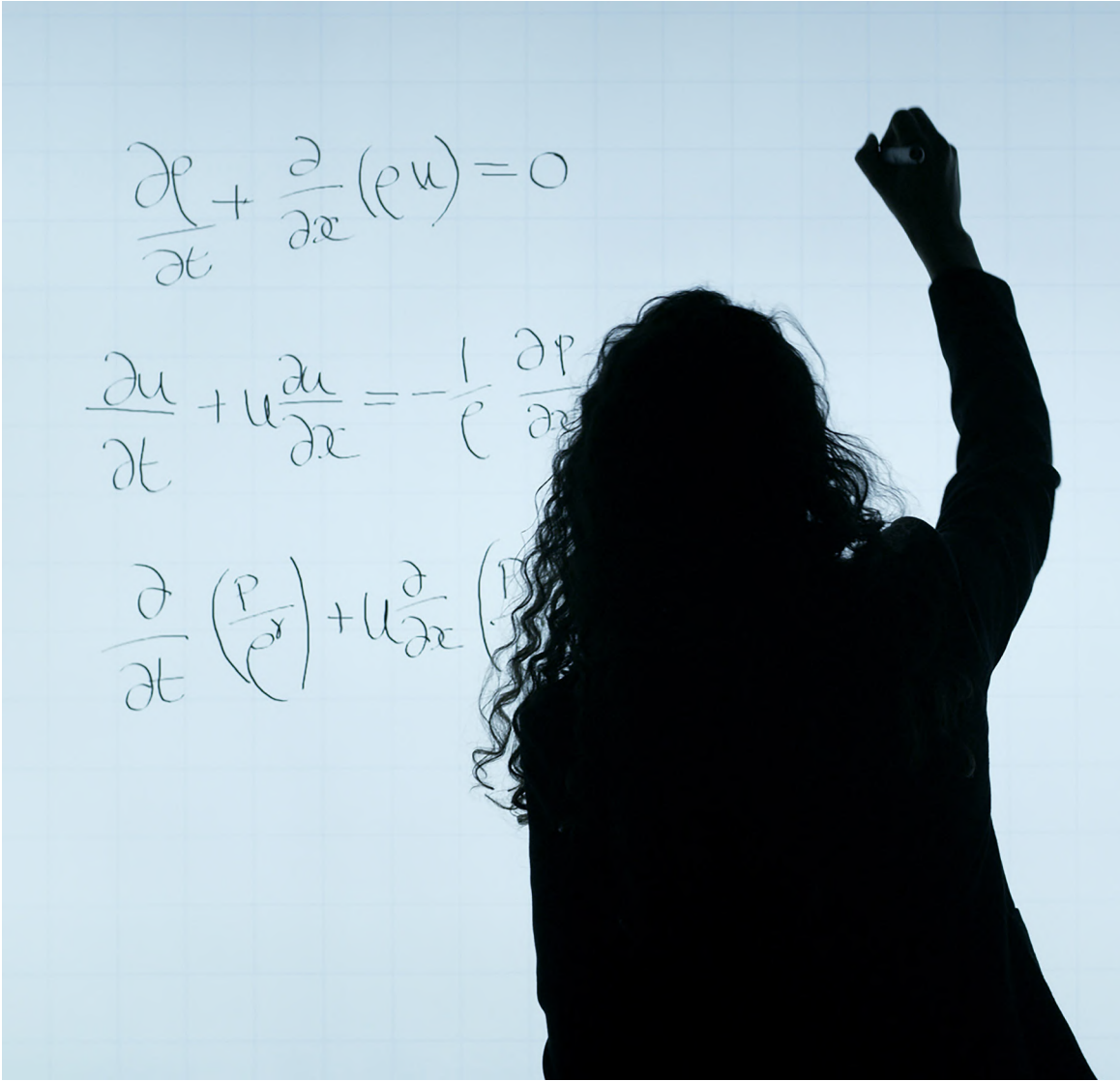
PART THREE: WRAPPING UP

- » What has surprised you about these conversations?
- » Have you changed your mind about these issues? If so, how?
- » How will you stay involved to help the young people in your community?
- » What might you do differently after taking part in this process?



ADDITIONAL TEACHER RESOURCES

TEACHER SUPPORT



- » Addressing Learning Barriers: smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/adressingtraumaandotherbarrierstolearning.pdf
- » Help Guide: www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention
- » Identifying Risk Factors: www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/educators
- » National Registry for Evidence-Based Programs and Practices: www.nrepp.samhsa.gov
- » National Center for Trauma-Informed Care: www.samhsa.gov/ntic
- » National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml
- » Suicide Warning Signs: www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention

ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES

- **Coursera** Join Coursera for free and learn online. Build skills with courses from top universities like Yale, Michigan, Stanford, and leading companies like Google and IBM.
- **Khan Academy** A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission of providing a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere.
- **MIT OpenCourseWare** A web-based publication of virtually all MIT course content. OCW is open and available to the world and is a permanent MIT activity.
- **ALISON** Free online courses with certificates. Join 2 million graduates and empower your career. Study, learn, certify, upskill with free online learning and training.
- **Academic Earth** Find free online courses, lectures, and videos from the best colleges in the country. Take online classes from schools like Yale, MIT and Stanford.
- **Open Learning Institute** OLI is a collection of evidence-based tools and approaches to learning that are proven to boost student success, and enable instructors to be more effective.
- **Udacity** An educational organization offering online course.
- **Open Education Database** OEDb is a comprehensive online education directory for both free and for-credit learning options with up-to-date, detailed program information from accredited online colleges.
- **Bartleby** Homework help and textbook solutions with access to thousands of textbook solutions written by subject matter experts.

- **iTunes U** With iTunes U, you can build lessons with apps and your own materials, collect and grade assignments from students, start class discussions or talk with students one-on-one to answer questions and provide feedback.
- **99U** The annual Adobe 99U Conference features a diverse group of thinkers and doers, who share actionable insights from a range of professional sectors and creative disciplines.
- **Wikiversity** A Wikimedia Foundation project devoted to learning resources, learning projects, and research for use in all levels, types, and styles of education.
- **Project Gutenberg** Project Gutenberg is a library of over 60,000 free eBooks. Choose among free epub and Kindle eBooks, download them or read them online.
- **The Free Library** One of the largest online libraries in the world!



APPENDIX (SOURCES)



GENERAL INFORMATION

- » Mental Health. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/MentalHealth.aspx>
- » Mental Health: Strengthening Our Response. (2018, 30 March). WHO. Retrieved July 13, 2020, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>
- » Mental Health Support Necessary During Covid-19 Pandemic. (2020, June 8). Human Rights Watch.
- » NIMH » Help for Mental Illnesses. (n.d.). Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/index.shtml>
- » NIMH » Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/index.shtml>
- » What is Mental Health? | MentalHealth.gov. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/>



COVID-19 RESEARCH

- » CDC. (2020, July 1). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/stress-coping/grief-loss.html>
- » COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/NAMI-HelpLine/COVID-19-Information-and-Resources/COVID-19-Resource-and-Information-Guide>
- » Finding Local Mental Health Resources During the COVID-19 Crisis. American Psychological Association. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/local-mental-health>
- » Guide to Mental Health Resources for COVID-19. Massachusetts General Hospital. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/guide-to-mental-health-resources>
- » Reger, M. A., Stanley, I. H., & Joiner, T. E. (2020). Suicide Mortality and Coronavirus Disease 2019—A Perfect Storm? JAMA Psychiatry. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.1060>
- » Richards, M., & DeBonis, K. (2020). Psychiatric Training During a Global Pandemic: How COVID-19 Has Affected Clinical Care, Teaching, and Trainee Well-Being. Psychiatric Services, appi.ps.202000277. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.202000277>



HIGH SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH STATS

- » Mental Health in Middle Level and High Schools. (2018, February 13). NASSP.
- » Mental Health By the Numbers | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2020, July 1). Retrieved July 13, 2020, from <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>
- » Nalin, D. J., & Psy.D. (2019, October 11). The Importance of Mental Illness Awareness in Schools. Paradigm San Francisco. <https://paradigmsanfrancisco.com/importance-mental-illness-awareness-schools/>
- » Opinion | What Social Isolation May Be Doing To Our Brains—The Washington Post. (2020, July 12). Retrieved July 13, 2020, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/>
- » Problems at School | Association for Children's Mental Health. ACMH. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <http://www.acmh-mi.org/get-help/navigating/problems-at-school/>



COLLEGE MENTAL HEALTH STATS

- » Campus Mental Health. (2017, July). American Psychological Association. Retrieved July 13, 2020, from <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/higher-education/mental-health/>
- » College in the Age of Physical Distancing". (2020, May 13). American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. <https://afsp.org/story/college-in-the-age-of-physical-distancing>
- » College Students of Color More Likely to Have Unmet Mental Health Needs. (2018, September 25). Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.healio.com/news/psychiatry/20180924/college-students-of-color-more-likely-to-have-unmet-mental-health-needs>
- » Coping with COVID-19-related stress as a student. (2020, April 14). Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/student-stress>
- » Rostain, A. (2020, May 28). College Students (And Their Parents) Face A Campus Mental Health "Epidemic." NPR. Retrieved July 13, 2020, from <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/05/28/727509438/college-students-and-their-parents-face-a-campus-mental-health-epidemic>



RESOURCES FOR POC

- » Addressing Mental Health in the Black Community. (2019, February 8). Columbia University Department of Psychiatry.
- » Black and African American Communities and Mental Health. Mental Health America. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/black-and-african-american-communities-and-mental-health>
- » Crossley, M. (2016). Black Health Matters: Disparities, Community Health, and Interest Convergence.



- » Lipson, S., Kern, A., Eisenberg, D., & Breland-Noble, A. (2018). Mental Health Disparities Among College Students of Color. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63, 348–356. Accessed from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.04.014>
- » Mental Health Resources for POC. 1N5.
- » Noguchi, Yuki. (2020, June 25). Bear Our Pain;: The Plea For More Black Mental Health Workers. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.kbia.org/post/bear-our-pain-plea-more-black-mental-health-workers#stream/0>
- » Mental Health Resources for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). (2020, June 23). Massachusetts General Hospital. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/guide-to-mental-health-resources/for-bipoc-mental-health>



RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

- » Top NAMI Helpline Resources | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/NAMI-Helpline/Top-Helpline-Resources>



RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

- » For Educators | MentalHealth.gov. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/educators>
- » Implementing Positive School Discipline. PromotePrevent.
- » Parents' and Teachers' Guide to High Schooler Mental Health. Maryville Online. Retrieved July 17, 2020, from <https://online.maryville.edu/online-doctorate-degrees/bsn-to-doctor-of-nursing-practice/high-school-mental-health/>



MINDMATTERSBOOK.ORG