

Youth Mental Health Awareness Event Toolkit



Spring 2026

Purpose

This toolkit is designed to support schools and community organizations in planning and implementing a Youth Mental Health Awareness event. The goal of this event is to normalize conversations about mental health, highlight the availability of help, and connect students to supportive adults and resources.

This event aims to:

- Reduce stigma surrounding mental health challenges
- Increase awareness of common youth mental health concerns
- Highlight available support systems, including school and community resources
- Empower students to seek help for themselves or others
- Strengthen connections between students and trusted adults

33.7%

of Indiana high school students reported that their mental health was most of the time or always *not good* (including stress, anxiety, and depression)

[Click here for the entire 2023 YRBS Data](#)

Scan the QR code below to view and/or broadcast Hoosier youth discuss their own mental health challenges



Audience

This event is designed to engage a broad school community:

- Students (all grade levels, adaptable by age)
- School staff and administrators
- Coaches and extracurricular leaders
- Families and caregivers
- Community mental health partners

YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE WHEN
SUPPORT COMES EARLY.



Event Options

Schools and organizations can choose a format that best fits their environment and goals:

- School sporting event
- Family engagement night or back to school event
- Full school convocation
- Student assembly

Components of the Event

1. Visible Administrative Support

- Ensure at least one administrator is present to demonstrate leadership commitment
- Administrators should wear the event's color theme to model participation
- Provide a brief statement (live or recorded) emphasizing the importance of mental health awareness and school support
- Engage with students and attendees during the event

2. Opening and Ongoing Messaging

- Deliver a clear opening message at the start of the event (and/or between games/activities), *see sample scripts on page 3*
- Use consistent, stigma-reducing language that promotes help-seeking
- Incorporate student voice when possible (live speakers, recorded clips, or testimonials)
- Share key messages such as: "You are not alone," "It's okay to ask for help," and where to find support
- Consider displaying messages on scoreboards, screens, or printed signage throughout the event

3. Promotion of Mental Health Resources

- Provide a clearly labeled resource table with printed materials (988 info, local services, school contacts, etc.) *see page 4 to request free resources*
- Ensure materials are youth-friendly and easy to understand
- Highlight both crisis and non-crisis supports (prevention, coping, peer support)
- Make announcements reminding attendees where resources are located

4. Strategic Placement of Resources

- Set up resources in high traffic areas-entrance, concession stands, ticket booths, etc.
- Use signage to direct attendees to resources
- Ensure tables are supervised by staff or student leadership who can answer questions
- Create a welcoming environment: setup-friendly signage, approachable staff, color theme, etc.

5. Student Leadership and Engagement

- Involve student groups (teams, clubs, student council, peer mentors, etc.) in planning and execution
- Have students help distribute materials, make announcements or share personal messages
- Encourage student-led initiatives such as pledge boards, awareness activities or social media campaigns
- Provide leadership roles that empower students to normalize conversations around mental health

6. Onsite Support

- Clearly communicate how attendees can access immediate help if needed-988, local support services, etc.
- Ensure administration, school counselors, social workers, school staff or community mental health professionals are present



**Scan the QR code to learn
more about 988 Indiana**



7. Unified Color Theme

- Select a simple color theme-988 suggest teal or purple
- Encourage participants, staff, and attendees to wear the color
- Incorporate the theme into decorations, signage, and promotional materials
- Use visuals (posters, banners, digital graphics) to reinforce the message

8. Event Promotion

- Announce the event in advance through school social media, and announcements, local media outlets, and newsletters
- Clearly communicate the purpose and the importance of the event
- Share how students, families, and community members can participate

9. Post Event

- Debrief with the event planning team
- Gather feedback from students and staff to improve future events
- Share event success with local media outlets
- Continue messaging to reinforce support is ongoing

Promotional Materials

- [Indiana Dept. of Health](#)
- [Indiana 988](#)
- [SAMHSA](#)

Sample Scripts

A. "Hello, this evening we are doing something that matters for every student, teammate and friend. We're here to say mental health *is* health. If you or a friend are feeling overwhelmed, struggling or just need someone to talk to, help is available in this building, in our community and across the state through the 988 hotline. You can call or text the 988 hotline anytime for support—day or night. We also have resources available in the _____. Just like in all parts of life, we all need support sometimes. Asking for help IS a sign of strength."

B. "Tonight, we're helping raise awareness about youth mental health. If you or someone you know is struggling, you're not alone. By calling or texting 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, you can connect with trained counselors who are ready to listen and help-24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We also have resources available in the _____. Mental health matters just as much as physical health. If you ever need support, remember help is only three numbers away: 988."

C. "Hello, this evening our school community is recognizing youth mental health. We want everyone to know that their feelings matter, their wellbeing matters, and support is always within reach. The 988 hotline connects people with trained counselors who can help during moments of emotional distress, mental health struggles, or thoughts of suicide. You can call or text 988 at anytime, or chat online to reach someone who cares and wants to help. We also have resources available in the _____. Taking care of each other is part of being a strong team and community. Remember, support is available 24/7-at 988."

D. "Tonight is about connection, understanding and hope. Our goal is to create a space where conversations about mental health are safe, honest and supportive. We want everyone here to know you matter; your feelings matter and that asking for help is a sign of strength. Tonight, we encourage conversations and remind our community that mental health is just as important as physical health."

IDOH Resources Available

All resources are *free* and can be shipped to any organization throughout Indiana

Youth Mental Health Postcards

Available in packs of 25

Postcard 1:



Postcard 2:



Postcard 3:



Trifolds:

Follow the links below to view the trifolds

[Mental Health Matters Trifold](#)

[Mental Health Conversation Guide](#)

[Suicide Prevention Trifold](#)

These trifolds are available in Spanish, Burmese, and Haitian Creole.

Scan the QR code to view the different versions available



988 Magnets:



To request resources, contact Olivia Hesler at OHesler@health.in.gov

For additional information on hosting a Youth Mental Health Event, contact Heather Montgomery at Hmontgomery@health.in.gov

