



# Mental Health Awareness Month

May 2021

**Building Resilience for a  
Stronger Maryland**



## **Mental Health Awareness Month 2021 Toolkit Guide Building Resilience for a Stronger Maryland**

Thank you for downloading our toolkit for 2021's Mental Health Awareness Month. May has been observed as Mental Health Awareness month since 1949. The goal of Mental Health Awareness Month is to provide education, support, and advocacy to those in need. This year's theme, Resilience, calls for Marylanders to learn skills that promote their individual resilience and advocate for their communities to build resilience.

In this toolkit, you will find ..... to help you or your organization.

### **Mental Health Awareness Month Pledge**

Download a copy of the Mental Health Awareness Month pledge to show your commitment to as an individual or an organization. After signing the pledge, don't forget to share it on social media by using the hashtags #buildingresilience and #StrongerTogetherMD. You can also tag our social media accounts: @PrevSuicideMD on Facebook and Twitter. If you don't have social media or want a chance to be featured in our Weekly Scoop, share your completed pledge with us by emailing it to [mdh.mdmindhealth@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.mdmindhealth@maryland.gov).

### **Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation**

Proclamations can be a good way to help raise awareness of an important issue or topic at the city, jurisdiction, or state level. The sample proclamation is designed to provide a starting point for a Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation to be submitted to your city/town or county/jurisdiction. The proclamation can be edited to add information specific to your community. After completing the proclamation, you can submit it to your local government office responsible for issuing proclamations. You can find more information on where to submit your proclamation through your local county council or county executive's website. Send us a photo of the official signing of the proclamation or a photo of the proclamation! Tag us @PrevSuicideMD on Facebook and Twitter or send us an mail at [mdh.mdmindhealth@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.mdmindhealth@maryland.gov) for a chance to be featured on our social media or weekly scoop!

### **Social Media Posts**

We've developed several images, cover photos, and social media posts for you to share on your Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter pages to help spread awareness of Mental Health Awareness Month. You can use the posts in the toolkit or come up with your own posts. Use the hashtags #BuildingResilience and #StrongerTogetherMD. You can also tag our social media pages @PrevSuicideMD on Facebook and Twitter!

### **Mental Health Awareness Month Events**

Below are additional ways for you to get involved and raise awareness during Mental Health Awareness Month while connecting with others!

### **Wear Green on May 5<sup>th</sup>**

We need your help to spread the word about mental health and wellness. You can help spread awareness and start a conversation about mental health by wearing green on Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. Ask your coworkers or students to wear green on May 5<sup>th</sup> and snap a virtual Zoom photo together! Be sure to take a picture and tag @PrevSuicideMD on Facebook and Twitter and use the hashtags #BuildingResilience and #StrongerTogetherMD to connect with other Marylanders observing Mental Health Awareness Month. If you'd like to be included in an edition of our weekly scoop, send us your photo at [mdh.mdmindhealth@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.mdmindhealth@maryland.gov).

### **Twitter Chat on May 25<sup>th</sup>**

Join us (@PrevSuicideMD) on Twitter at 12 pm for a chat to share your ideas and experience with individual and community resilience.

### **Get Involved**

Looking for additional ways to learn about mental health and to spread awareness? Check out our Resilience Calendar for webinars, events, and skill challenges to learn more about resilience.

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH PLEDGE

Through the past year, many of us have faced challenges with our mental health as we navigated through the chronic stress and uncertainty of 2020. During the pandemic, about 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. have reported symptoms of anxiety or depression which is up from 1 in 10 adults that reported similar symptoms from January to June 2019. It is important to care for your mental health and wellbeing as we continue to fight COVID-19.

I pledge to be open by learning more about mental illness.

I pledge to be aware of the language I use and correct someone when I hear them using stigmatizing language.

I pledge to educate others when I see someone using misleading stereotypes.

I pledge to never forget to see people for who they are, not for how they act during their darkest days.

I pledge to take care of myself and prioritize my needs to maintain my mental health.

I pledge to encourage acceptance, understanding and turning Mental (I)llness into Mental (We)llness.

Name:

Email:

Signature:

Date:





# Sample Proclamation

## Mental Health Awareness Month 2021

WHEREAS, mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, all Marylanders experience times of difficulty and stress in their lives; and

WHEREAS, stigma leads people to avoid living, socializing or working with, renting to, or employing individuals with mental illness; and individuals living with mental illness often internalize the stigma that exists in our culture, damaging hopes for recovery;

WHEREAS, with effective treatment, those individuals with mental health conditions can recover and lead full, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, each business, school, government agency, healthcare provider, organization, and citizen have an opportunity to help create a broader understanding of mental health, overcome stereotypes, break down barriers, eliminate stigma and replace it with help and hope.

THEREFORE, I [NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL], do hereby proclaim May 2021 as Mental Health Month in [STATE OR COMMUNITY]. As the [TITLE OF LOCAL OFFICIAL], I also call upon the citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools in [STATE OR COMMUNITY] to recommit our community to increasing awareness, support, and understanding of mental health, the steps our citizens can take to protect their mental health, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental health conditions. Together, we can encourage acceptance and understanding. Together, we can advocate for a better world.

## Sample Social Media Messaging

Hashtags: #buildingresilience, #StrongerTogetherMD

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MAY IS  
MENTAL  
HEALTH  
AWARENESS  
MONTH

2021 #MDBuildingResilience

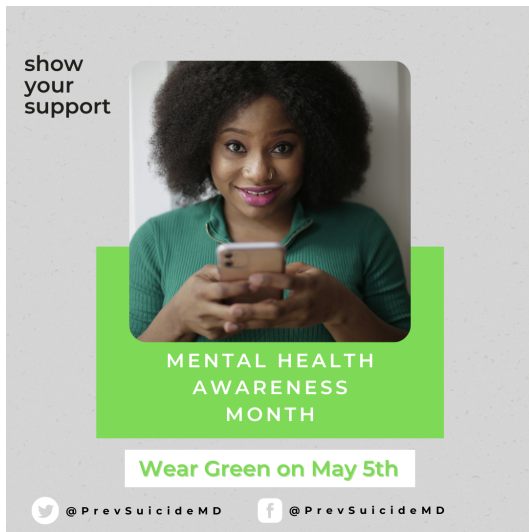


@PrevSuicideMD



@PrevSuicideMD

1. May is #MentalHealthMonth! This year promote skills that you can use to improve #mentalhealth and increase resilience. Download the toolkit: <http://bit.ly/mham2021> #buildingresilience
  2. You can be supportive of those who are struggling with life's challenges and their mental health. This #MentalHealthMonth show your support by sharing resiliency tips that everyone can use. Download the toolkit: <http://bit.ly/mham2021> #buildingresilience
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1. Show your support for #MentalHealthAwareness by wearing green on May 5. Share your pictures with @PrevSuicideMD on Facebook or Twitter @PrevSuicideMD.
2. Be a role model during Child Mental Health Awareness Week! Show children that #MentalHealthMatters by wearing green on May 5. Have an open conversation about how mental health affects everyone. #buildingresilience



1. Take the pledge to learn more about mental illness and prioritize your mental health needs for #MHAM. Find the full pledge here: <http://bit.ly/mham2021> #buildingresilience

**WHAT IS RESILIENCE?**

RESILIENCE IS THE ABILITY TO ADAPT TO CHANGES AND APPROACH NEGATIVE EVENTS (SUCH AS STRESS AND TRAUMA) AS EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE, IT IS THE ABILITY TO "BOUNCE BACK".

[@PrevSuicideMD](#) [@PrevSuicideMD](#)

1. Want to develop resilience? Check out @PrevSuicideMD's fact sheet to learn 10 ways you can build better resilience: <http://bit.ly/indresilience2021#buildingresilience>
2. Building resilience won't stop negative things from happening, but it can reduce the impact and the time it takes to recover. Learn more about Individual Resilience: <http://bit.ly/indresilience2021#buildingresilience>

“  
But what makes people resilient is the ability to find humor and irony in situations that would otherwise overpower you  
”

Amy Tan

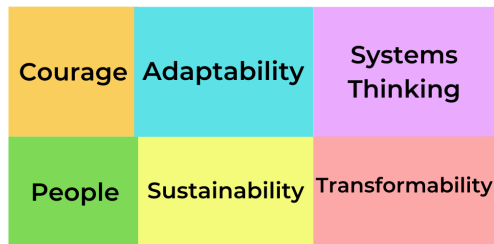
[@PrevSuicideMD](#) [@PrevSuicideMD](#)

1. #DYK that one way to build resilience is to laugh out loud each day? Having a positive outlook can have a big impact when you're facing challenges. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
2. By building resilience, you can protect your mental health and well-being from negative events. For people who are experiencing mental illness, resilience can help them handle setbacks and challenges, while developing confidence in managing illness and recovery. Fact sheet: <http://bit.ly/indresilience2021#buildingresilience>



1. Attention Community Influencers: check out the Community Resilience Factsheet to promote planning for Community Resilience! Step 1: is to strengthen social and cultural networks and establish relationships with partners. <http://bit.ly/comresilience2021> #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  2. How resilient is your community? Can your community begin building resilience? Check out ideas for Building Resiliency on the Community Resilience Factsheet: <http://bit.ly/comresilience2021> #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
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# The Foundations of Community Resilience



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1. This Mental Health Awareness Month we are promoting Community Resilience- the ability of a community to use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from negative situations. We are #StrongerTogetherMD. Toolkit: <http://bit.ly/mham2021> #buildingresilience
  2. This Mental Health Awareness Month join @PrevSuicideMD in promoting community resilience. All month long learn more about the foundations of community resilience. Download the toolkit: <http://bit.ly/mham2021> #StrongerTogetherMD #buildingresilience
  3. Community Influencers stay tuned @PrevSuicideMD will be highlighting the foundations of community resilience: people, systems thinking, adaptability, transformability, sustainability, and courage. #buildingresilience
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PEOPLE: THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF EVERY COMMUNITY ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR ITS STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE.


#BUILDINGRESILIENCE #STRONGERTOGETHERMD

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1. People have the power to imagine the future of the community and strengthen it. The individual members of every community are the foundation for its strength and resilience. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  2. Community members inspire and create innovative solutions to community problems. Our individual resilience strengthens the community as a whole. Check out @PrevSuicideMD's fact sheet to learn 10 ways you can build resilience: <http://bit.ly/indresilience2021#buildingresilience> #StongerTogetherMD
  3. As a community member do you know where you can find the resources you need for medical, mental health, education, or financial problems? Everyone should know how and where to find resources when in need. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  4. Build social connectedness: People are more empowered to help one another after a crisis in communities in which members are regularly involved in each other's lives. Building social connectedness can be an important emergency preparedness action. #buildingresilience
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Systems Thinking- aimed at seeing how things are connected to each other within a larger entity.



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1. Systems thinking encourages a holistic approach to problems by exploring relationships, perspectives, and boundaries. How each individual and community organization contributes is equally important and unique. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  2. Strengthen and promote access to public health, healthcare, and social services. Strong day-to-day systems can be better used to support health resilience during crises. People should know how to access care and are not limited by barriers to services. #buildingresilience
  3. Expand communication and collaboration. Build networks that include social services, community organizations, businesses, academia, at-risk individuals, and faith-based stakeholders in addition to traditional public health and healthcare partners. #buildingresilience
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Adaptability- the quality of being able to adjust to new conditions.



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1. Adaptability- a community that adapts to change is resilient. But because communities and the challenges we face constantly vary, adaptation is an ongoing process. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  2. The ability to react to unexpected events is a sign of resilience. One way to enhance adaptability is to build new skills. Learn more tips for community resilience: <http://bit.ly/comresilience2021> #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  3. Develop your adaptability skills by reorganizing your room or office. Being able to accept small changes can help you accept larger changes when they occur. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
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Transformability- is the ability to create a fundamentally new system when the environment, economic, or social structures make the existing system unsupportable.



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1. Some challenges are so big that it's not possible to simply adapt; transformation may be necessary. Identifying challenges and making changes not only those at-risk and disadvantaged but the entire community. #buildingresilience
  2. Transformation can be a long process. Set yourself up for success by having clear intentions, realistic expectations and achievable goals. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  3. Engage at-risk individuals and the programs that serve them: Engaging individuals with potential vulnerabilities to take an active part in protecting their health and aiding their community's resilience strengthens the community as a whole. #buildingresilience #StrongerTogetherMD
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Sustainability -ability to exist constantly;  
meeting the needs of the present  
without compromising the ability of  
future generations to meet their needs



1. Community resilience needs to work for us, and future generations. #Resilience can be sustainable by learning skills that help you be resilient and teaching others (like kids) those skills, so they are better prepared for challenges in the future. #BuildingResilience
  2. Sustainability in #mentalhealth is the ability to provide complete care now and in the future in the face of challenges and emergencies. Learn more tips for community resilience: <http://bit.ly/comresilience2021> #BuildingResilience #StrongerTogetherMD
  3. Promote health and wellness with preparedness. Education and info on public health, behavioral health, emergency preparedness, and #resilience can help people face everyday challenges as well as major crises. Overall well-being helps the community's recovery. #buildingresilience
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Courage- strength in the face of pain or grief.



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1. Courage- as individuals and as a community, we need courage to confront challenging issues and take responsibility for our collective future. #BuildingResilience #StrongerTogetherMD
2. As a community agency promote #Resilience by promoting ways that individuals can get involved and help one another, and celebrate community strengths. #BuildingResilience #StrongerTogetherMD



**TWITTER CHAT  
COMMUNITY  
RESILIENCE**

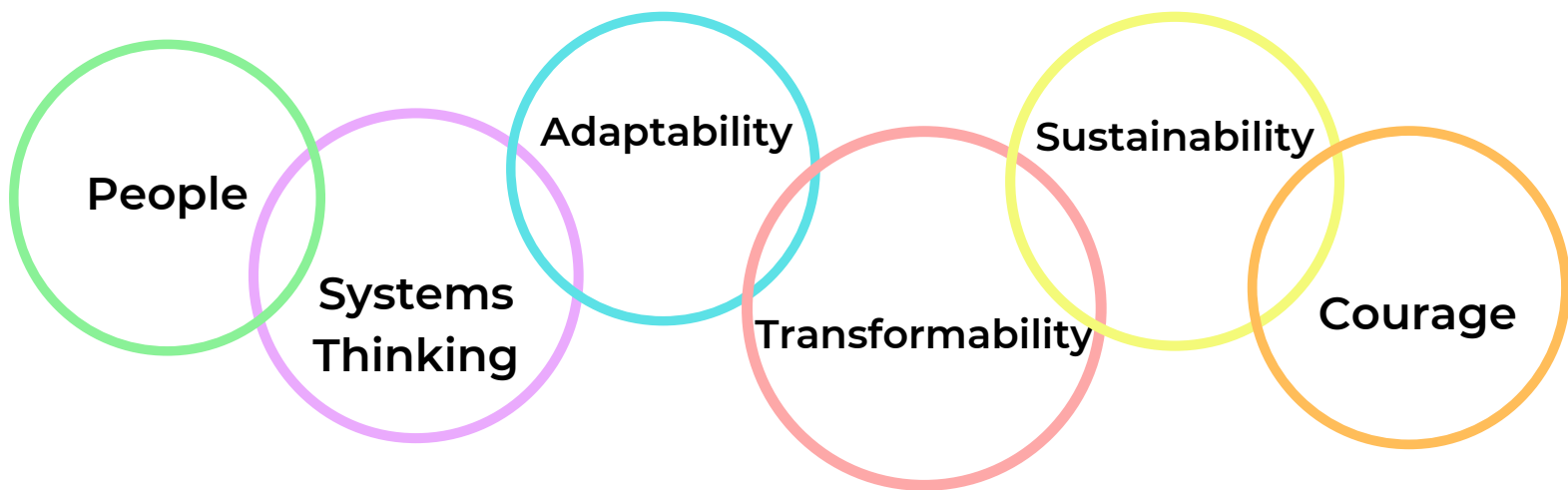
Join  
**@PrevSuicideMD**  
on 5/25 at 12pm

1. Join @PrevSuicideMD on May 25 at 12pm for a Twitter Chat on resilience in individuals and communities. #BuildingResilience #resiliencechat2021

# Community Resilience

## What is Community Resilience?

Community resilience is the ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. By building a supportive community, individual resilience is improved as well as that of the whole community.



## Planning for Community Resilience

If you are a leader in your community, or local organization consider these ways to help create resiliency in your community:

- Strengthen social and cultural networks, and establish relationships with nontraditional partners to promote social re-engagement activities after a traumatic event.
  - Examples of these partners include faith-based organizations, non-governmental social support organizations, consumers of mental health services, family and child advocacy organizations, non-English speaking communities, and drug and alcohol abuse agencies, among others.
- Integrate key capabilities into planning, such as economic development, social capital, community competence, and information and communications. Include community members in planning at all levels.
- Develop a range of communication tools that are appropriate and responsive to the community's health literacy and cultural diversity.
- Leverage the diverse resources of communities through public-private sector collaborations and partnerships.
- Address the psychological health of a community, specifically by fostering adaptive coping responses to adversity.
- Develop and implement community-level public education plans detailing how individuals, families, and households prepare for health incidents. Include information for topics pertinent to people who might be at an increased risk for health problems.

## The Foundations of Community Resilience

1. **People.** The power to envision the future of the community and build its resilience resides within community members.
2. **Systems thinking.** Systems thinking is essential for understanding the complex, interrelated crises and what they mean for our similarly complex communities.
3. **Adaptability.** A community that adapts to change is resilient, and because communities and the challenges they face are dynamic, adaptation is an ongoing process.
4. **Transformability.** Some challenges are so big that it's not possible for the community to simply adapt. In these cases, fundamental, transformative changes may be necessary.
5. **Sustainability.** Community resilience is not sustainable if it serves only one community and is time-limited. Resilience needs to work for other communities, future generations, and the ecosystems on which we all depend.
6. **Courage.** Individuals and communities need courage to confront challenging issues and take responsibility for our collective future.

### Building Resiliency

Engage the community in fulfilling social activities that celebrate shared values and community strengths.

Create and encourage ways for community members to discuss their experiences.

Facilitate connection to support systems, including:

- Physical and mental health care
- Family supports like childcare
- Food security
- Stable, safe, and affordable housing

Facilitate connection to internet service (internet is necessary now to access support systems).

Bring together partners from all areas of the community.

Promote ways that community members can get involved and help one another.

Promote strategies that increase capacity for resilience and healing.

# Individual Resilience

## What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to adapt to changes and to approach negative events (such as stress and trauma) as constructively as possible. It is the ability to “bounce back.” Being resilient does not mean that a person never experiences difficult events. In fact, resilience is often built through the experience of difficult events and demonstrated through a person’s ability to cope with negative events when they occur. Resilience is not a fixed trait, but something all people have the potential to develop. Developing resilience won’t stop negative or stressful things from occurring, but it can reduce the level of disruption a stressor has on a person and reduce the time it takes them to recover from it.

## Key Characteristics of Resilience

- Having positive self-perceptions
- Having emotional intelligence and effective at managing emotions
- Understanding and accepting that life is full of challenges
- Believing they have control over the outcome of their lives
- Having communication skills
- Developing strong social supports
- Having the ability and/or willingness to ask for help



## Resilience and Mental Health

Resilience can help protect against certain risk factors that can increase the likelihood of experiencing mental health problems. By building your resilience, you can protect your mental health and well-being from negative stressors such as lack of social support, being bullied, and experiencing trauma. For people who are experiencing mental health conditions, resilience can help with the experience of setbacks and challenges, while promoting the development of confidence for the effective management of their condition and recovery.



## 10 Ways to Build Resilience

- Take time for yourself
- Be active every day in as many ways as you can
- Spend time with people who make you feel good
- Laugh out loud each day
- Build relationships with individuals close to you; invite your neighbor over for a cup of tea
- Do one thing now that you've been putting off
- Try things that you are interested in; sign up for that course or join that club
- Focus more on things you can control
- Have the courage to be imperfect
- Remember your current situation and/or emotional state is not permanent



### What else could help?

Change your thinking: what's going right for you?

Adopt a "growth" mindset

Be optimistic

Find what coping skills work for you

Increase your abilities and confidence to face challenges

Explore the benefits of therapy



# MAY

CONNECT WITH US ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA:

FACEBOOK:  
@PrevSuicideMD

TWITTER:  
@PrevSuicideMD



**Maryland**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2 SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE WHO MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD.	3	4 MHA-MD: YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID COURSE	5 WEAR GREEN IN SUPPORT OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS! TAG US IN YOUR PHOTO! BHA ANNUAL CONFERENCE	6	7	1/8
9 DO ONE THING NOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN PUTTING OFF.	10 TAKE THE PLEDGE AND COMMIT TO YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.	11 <u>YOGA FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE</u>	12	13	14 TRAINING-RESILIENCE: <u>HOW TO BE OKAY WHEN THINGS ARE NOT OKAY AROUND YOU</u>	15
16 BE ACTIVE EVERY DAY IN AS MANY WAYS AS YOU CAN.	17	18	19	20 <u>MENTAL HEALTH ACTION DAY</u>  <u>JOIN US AT 12 PM FOR A LUNCH &amp; LEARN ON RESILIENCE</u>	21	22 <u>JOIN NAMI WALKS- YOUR WAY MARYLAND</u>
23 TAKE TIME TO BE CREATIVE TODAY: COLOR, PAINT, SING, WRITE	24	25 JOIN US AT 12 PM FOR A TWEETCHAT ON RESILIENCE	26	27 <u>TRAINING-BUILDING RESILIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA</u>	28	29
30 FOCUS ON THE THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL.	31					