

# Children's Mental Health Awareness Day 2020

Stories from Young People to Share on Social Media

## Short Stories

- “I help because I don’t want to lose the people I love and care about.” What motivates you to help others with their mental health and well-being?
- “Receiving #PeerSupport has opened my eyes to the network of people who I can come to in times of need. By knowing I have those peers in my corner, I am more comfortable going to them when I need help or just want to talk.” Thanks for sharing Bridget #YouAreNotAlone #ShareMyStory
- “Teens are more likely to talk to each other more openly about their mental health. It’s easier to talk to someone who can relate to you better, someone who can understand what you’re going through.” – WI high school student tells it like it is #PeerSupport #YouAreNotAlone
- Niyati in Brookfield said that #PeerSupport from her sister “helped me realize I am not alone in this journey we call life. We all need that one person we can lean on and look towards to guide us during those dark periods in life.” #YouAreNotAlone #ChildrensMentalHealthMatters
- “Many people believe no one cares for them, but that’s not true. Sometimes they don’t know you need their help. It’s important to let people who love you know you need their support and love, even if it’s one of the hardest things you’ve ever done.” – Jahnavi, Wisconsin High School Student #PeerSupport #ShareMyStory
- “When I am feeling alone, I like to do activities that make me happy and remind me of my talents. Some of these activities include drawing, running/working out, listening to music, cooking, and spending time with my family.” - A teen in WI #YouAreNotAlone #ShareMyStory
- “When I realized that I had a friend I could count on, I knew that I was not alone, that someone related to me and cared for me. It made me extremely grateful for those around me and gave me a shoulder to lean on. Having peer support has helped me manage my mental health.” #ShareMyStory #PeerSupport

Let us know how you will be participating on May 7! Email [OCMH@wi.gov](mailto:OCMH@wi.gov) to tell us how you will join the social media campaign!

## Longer Stories

- It's Children's Mental Health Awareness Day today! One teen in Wisconsin told us why it is important: "Mental health has no barriers. Everyone deals with it in some capacity, and as uncomfortable as it can be, it should be talked about. By opening up the conversation of mental health, we are normalizing the topic, and making those who may have felt alienated and alone now feel comfortable in a safe environment."
- Bridget knows the value of #PeerSupport. "I have helped my friends when they appear to be struggling. Usually, I will meet up with them or check in with them over text. I didn't push them to talk about things they were uncomfortable with. Instead, we talk about little things they were struggling with and eventually the bigger things." #YouAreNotAlone #ChildrensMentalHealthMatters
- Who is your biggest supporter? For high-schooler Niyati, "When I feel alone with my mental health struggles, I talk to my mother above anyone else. She is the one person in my life that has always been my rock, my steadfast supporter and friend. Before talking to her, I try working out the problems myself. However, I always discuss my feelings with her because I know she will be able to see things in a new light and comfort me, reminding me that I have someone who will always love me and show concern for me no matter what." Who reminds you that you are not alone?
- HOPE Squad is one of the many peer-led mental health groups in Wisconsin. One HOPE Squad member shared the importance of peer support: "As a HOPE Squad member, I have firsthand seen the impacts of my support to others. It creates a ripple effect; those who get help from their friends now have the strength and passion to help others. Being a HOPE Squad member creates a lasting effect in the lives of others, one that is desperately needed." Learn more about peer-led groups in Wisconsin at [children.wi.gov/Pages/YouthMentalHealthGroupsWI.aspx](https://children.wi.gov/Pages/YouthMentalHealthGroupsWI.aspx)
- "This is the best piece of advice I could give to a young person or the parent of a young person with mental health challenges: Find support, seek counseling, and take everything day by day. Don't hesitate or procrastinate starting recovery for fear of judgement. I wish I started getting help earlier, and taking that first step to get the help I needed was such a challenge, but ended up being the best decision I ever made." Thanks to Olivia for sharing your story.
- What's your story? One teen in Wisconsin shared her journey with mental health: "During my 2nd year of high school, I underwent a very hard period of my life where I was burdened with school work and extremely hard classes along with problems in my social life. All that stress and anxiety consequently made my self-esteem and mental health extremely weak, causing a period of deep depression. Thankfully, my sister was the one that really pushed my road to recovery and helped me motivate myself to be better and push forward in life."

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- “In high school, I had extremely crippling anxiety. There was one particular day where I felt so overwhelmed with everything going on in my life that I just started crying as I was walking down the hallway. A person that I didn't even know very well stopped to ask me if I was okay, and if I wanted to talk. Just that simple act of reaching out, made such a profound impact on my mental health journey, and how much I value the idea of peer support. When someone chooses to reach out, it makes others aware that they are not alone, and that in itself can make a world of difference. That is why now, as a college student, I go out of my way to make sure that others know that I am a safe person to come to, and encourage others to use me as a resource when they are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, depressed, or just need someone to listen.” How did peer support impact you?
- “Oftentimes I would have feelings of worthlessness, and feel a great lack of motivation. I often wondered what the point of doing anything in life was if we were all going to die anyways. No one was aware of how I felt, but I had an extremely pessimistic viewpoint on life. Eventually, I talked to my best friend about it, because I knew that she would understand and accept it without judging me. I'm very grateful that she did. She asked me questions and shined a light on my positive characteristics when all I could do was focus on the negative. Her encouraging words and by being there were enough to make me happy again. Sometimes, I still have bad days and don't feel valued, but I try to remember that a bad day does not equal a bad life. My friend still checks on me, and I still check on her. The continuous support we give each other allows for us to be stronger mentally, but also develop a stronger bond.” This is the power of peer support, as told by Wisconsin high school student, Jahnavi. How do you support your friends and loved ones?
- “Teens are more likely to talk to each other more openly about their mental health. It's easier to talk to someone who can relate to you better, someone who can understand what you're going through. It's usually a judgement-free zone, whereas it might be harder for a parent to understand what their child is going through and unfortunately, many times parents blow it off as 'just a phase.' A peer or friend can do this job, because they might be familiar with the mental struggles many go through during adolescence. Even more importantly, during the school year, we tend to see our friends more than our families, causing a bond to develop between students, like a second family.” That is one high school student's perspective on the importance of peer support. Why do you think it is important to have help from a friend or peer when talking about mental health and wellness?

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