



Transition Newsletter

May 2026

Finding Strength in Every Journey

Since 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month has helped people better understand the challenges faced by millions of Americans living with mental health conditions.

Everyone’s mental health journey is different—but one thing we all share is **strength!**

What is mental illness?

Mental illness is a medical condition that can affect how a person thinks, feels, or behaves. It can also impact how someone connects with others and handles everyday activities.

Mental illness can affect anyone—no matter their age, race, religion, or income. It is **NOT** caused by personal weakness, bad character, or poor parenting.

The good news: **mental illnesses are treatable.** With the right support and care, many people feel better and learn ways to successfully manage their symptoms.

Why are students at higher risk for mental health issues?

Students with disabilities may face additional challenges that can impact their mental health, such as:

- Family history of mental illness
- Bullying and feeling left out
- Not having enough support or services
- Challenges in school
- Experiences of trauma
- Environmental stress (like difficult home situations)
- Other conditions that make things harder: trouble communicating, sensitivity to certain things, difficulty with change, and dealing with stigma or discrimination.



If you are struggling—or if someone in your family is—know this: **You are not alone. Your story matters. Your story has strength.**

There are people who care and want to help, including your teachers, school counselors, family, and community resources.

Reaching out is a strong and important step!



RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT



National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI)

works to educate, support, advocate, listen and lead to improve the lives of people with mental illness and their loved ones. NAMI believes in the possibility of recovery, wellness and the potential in all of us while practicing respect, kindness and empathy.

namisouthdakota.org

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Self-Care Activities to Consider

→Prioritize Sleep←

Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night to improve focus and energy levels.

→Stay Active←

Incorporate regular physical activity, even if it's just a short walk or a dance break, to boost mood and energy.

→Eat a Balanced Diet←

Nourish your body with nutritious foods and stay hydrated to support overall health and energy levels.

→Practice Mindfulness←

Engage in activities like deep breathing, meditation, or yoga to reduce stress and improve focus.

→Engage in Hobbies←

Pursue activities that brings you joy and relaxation, such as reading, listening to music, or spending time in nature.

→Connect with Others←

Spend time with friends, family, or support groups to build social connections and reduce feelings of isolation.

→Practice Gratitude←

Regularly acknowledge and appreciate the positive aspects of your life to foster a sense of well-being.

→Seek Support←

Don't hesitate to reach out to friends, family, counselors, or disability services for support when needed.

→Set Realistic Goals←

Break down large tasks into smaller, manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

→Time Management←

Utilize planners, calendars, or apps to organize your schedule and stay on track with assignments and deadlines.

→Study Effectively←

Find study methods that work best for you, such as using flashcards, creating summaries, or forming study groups.

→Utilize Resources←

Take advantage of available resources, such as tutoring services, disability support services, or academic advisors.

→Celebrate Successes←

Acknowledge and celebrate your accomplishments, no matter how small, to build confidence and motivation.



Self-care is essential for managing the challenges you face, improving your physical and mental well-being, and increasing your independence. It can help you learn how to advocate for your needs, seek support from those around you, and achieve success in both your academic and social life.

Remember, it's important to reach out to your friends, family, and professionals who care about you. They're there to support you!