



- **ADVOCACY**
- **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**
- **WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

**JANUARY - MARCH
2023**



Table of Contents

January — Mental Health Advocacy:

Letter to Partners	2
For Youth	4
For Parents/Caregivers	5
For Teachers/School Staff	6

February — Black History Month & Self-Care:

For Everyone	8
For Youth	9
For Parents/Caregivers	10
For Professionals	11

March — Women's History Month:

For Youth	13
For Parents/Caregivers	14
For Professionals	15

LETTER TO PARTNERS



Happy New Year!

This quarterly kit provides resources for January through March 2023, and includes timely topics and issues such as mental health advocacy, Black History Month and related self-care, and Women's History Month. As always, we share resources for young people, for their families and caregivers, and for those who work with youth.

We hope you can apply some of our content to your lives and support the mental health of the young people around you.

To more frequently share updates and resources, we will continue to send our newsletter out every month. If you haven't subscribed already, you can do so [here](#). Our social media will also continue to be updated regularly.

Thank you for your interest in Free Your Feels and for your support of youth mental health!

TAKE ACTION

Follow us on Twitter,
Instagram and
Facebook
@FreeYourFeelsGA



**JANUARY:
MENTAL
HEALTH
ADVOCACY**

FOR YOUTH



Two of the biggest obstacles to better mental health care are stigma and access. By telling our stories we can change culture, norms and rules and tackle both stigma and access. When decision-makers hear our stories, they better understand what is needed on the ground. Here are a few tips for your storytelling:

1. Think about an experience that gets to the heart of the matter.
2. Keep your story concise: between 30 seconds to two minutes.
3. Suggest specific changes in an “ask” at the end of the story. The requested action should be concrete.
4. Offer to follow-up and say thank you!

TAKE ACTION

Download and use [this toolkit](#) to take informed action!



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225



FOR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

FREE
your
FEELS™

NAMI Georgia hosts a training titled “NAMI Smarts for Advocacy” each year. Attendees will learn effective techniques for speaking with legislators, get briefed on NAMI Georgia’s legislative priorities, and more. Be the first to know when their next training will be:

<https://namiga.org/support-and-education/presentations/nami-smarts-for-advocacy/>

NAMI SMARTS
for
ADVOCACY

Learn the most effective techniques for speaking with your legislators, get briefed on NAMI Georgia's Legislative Priorities, and more.

TAKE ACTION

Advocate: NAMI National has many ways to take action immediately. Want to write to your congress members? Feel like signing a petition? Check out [this list](#) of ways you can be a mental health advocate.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225



FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH YOUTH



In 2022, Voices for Georgia's Children conducted behavioral health focus groups with youth and caregivers in Georgia. Findings revealed that youth and caregivers view schools as places that should be equipped to promote mental wellness, provide quality behavioral health services, or help families navigate the system in identifying needed supports. Our recommendations to improve mental health in schools include:

Schools

- Actively and frequently promote existing SBMH and community-based behavioral health services and supports to students and caregivers.
- Leverage existing training and resources (e.g., Sources of Strength, Teen Mental Health First Aid, 4-H, Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential, Community Resiliency Model, **Free Your Feels (FYF) campaign**), including afterschool and summer learning programs, to develop teen-led or -focused mental health support programs and initiatives, including those that support healthy educator-student relationships (e.g., promote strategies to minimize oversharing of student mental health challenges through FYF).
- Explore opportunities to expand available SBMH services and supports, including leveraging school-based health centers and telehealth programs and integrating Certified Peer Specialists–Youth and –Parent into SBMH programs.
- Consider mechanisms to reduce staffed counselors' academic demands to create time for counselors to serve as a navigator for and/or to provide mental health supports.

TAKE ACTION

Read: Other recommendations to improve youth mental health.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225





**FEBRUARY:
BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH
& SELF-CARE**

FOR EVERYONE

During Black History Month, we acknowledge the impact of racial trauma on the mental and physical health and well-being of the Black community. We want to offer educational resources to celebrate Black History Month while also offering resources which promote self-care.

FREE
your
FEELS™



TAKE ACTION

Read [this comprehensive list](#) of resources, provided by Be the Bridge, for Black History Month and Black self-care and wellness.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225



FOR YOUTH

FREE
your
FEELS™

Self-care is about improving your physical and mental health. As we all have different needs, self-care will look different for all of us. Take the time to learn what helps you feel good. How does avoiding social media for a day make you feel? What about expressing yourself creatively? How do you feel when you get enough sleep? Self-care is about noticing what makes you feel secure and confident and doing more of that.



TAKE ACTION

Watch — A roundtable discussion with a goal to enhance engagement with HBCU leadership to increase awareness and address behavioral and mental health disparities with African American and minority youth and young people.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225



FOR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS



Taking care of your own physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs, will help you better show up for the children in your life. Watch the video below as reminder on why it's important to model healthy behavior for your kids

Read: A team of Black mental health professionals in Atlanta are working with teens of color and are making a meaningful impact.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225



FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH YOUTH

FREE
your
FEELS™

Schools that offer mental health care or services typically see increased graduation rates. Data show that Black youth tend to receive quality mental health care at lower rates than their peers and their needs are often unmet. To better support Black students' mental wellbeing, we encourage you to determine whether your school policies and practices are culturally responsive and consistently implemented fairly across all student populations. [Read this article](#) to find out more!



TAKE ACTION

[Read](#) self-care strategies from other youth-serving professionals.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225





**MARCH:
WOMEN'S
HISTORY
MONTH**

FOR YOUTH



The 2022 Georgia Student Health Survey reported that 90% of girls reported feeling stressed, 65% of girls reported feeling sad in the last month, and 52% of girls reported feeling debilitating anxiety in the past month. For comparison, 75% of boys felt stressed, 42% of boys reported sadness and 26% of boys reported anxiety that got in the way of daily activities. Women and girls are faced with unique stressors, ranging from double standards to unrealistic expectations.

This roadmap shares useful tools to foster mental wellbeing for girls, including learning to say no and letting go of guilt.



TAKE ACTION

[Read](#) additional resources from the Mental Health Coalition!



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225



FOR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS



Women are often expected to take care of others in empathetic and nurturing ways, especially when there are children around. Meeting and fulfilling these expectations can be draining and leave fewer resources to focus on maintaining mental health. We encourage women to take time for themselves, prioritize sleep and healthy eating habits and get some sunshine when possible. Click the image below to read "Women's Mental Health 101: Statistics, Symptoms & Resources".



TAKE ACTION

Read these tips to ensure the women in your life have the tools to be mentally and physically healthy.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225

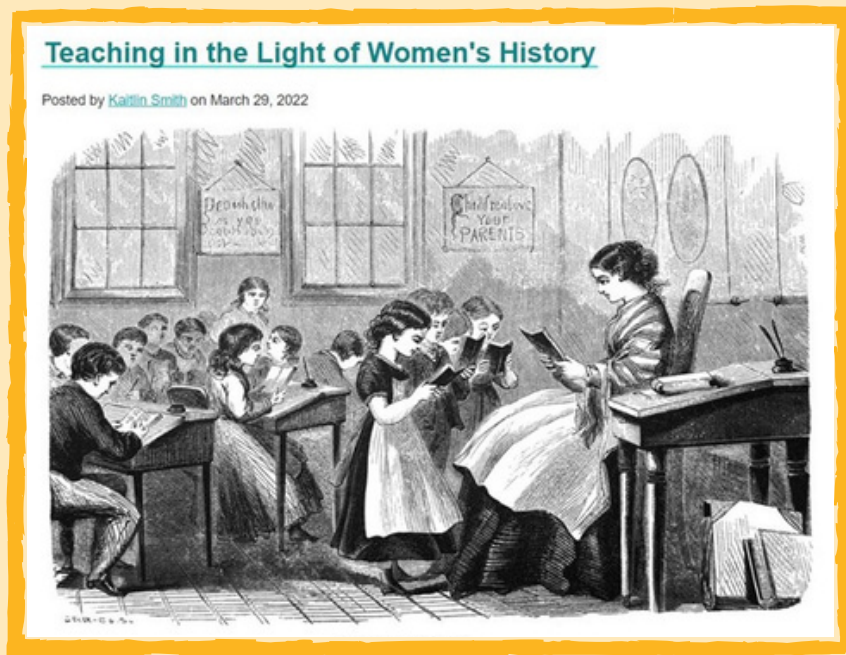


FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH YOUTH



80% of teachers in Georgia are women and the gender imbalance seems to be growing. Teaching used to be a male-dominated profession, as men would teach during non-farming months or before committing to a career in law or medicine. As more women have become teachers, our expectation of teachers has changed from pure education to include caregiving. What does it mean to be a teacher today? How can we better support teachers and students?

Read how the history of education and women's history month intersect.



TAKE ACTION
Check out how this organization is supporting schools and educators through education, resources and events.



QUESTIONS? CONTACT

Maria Ramos
Sr. Program Specialist
Voices for Georgia's Children
mramos@georgiavoices.org