



Mental Health Toolkit

- The Vital Role of Social Support
- Mental Health Communications
- Fostering Social Support
- Mental Health in the Metro
- Turn Awareness into Action
- Coloring Sheets

The Vital Role of Social Support

The Power of Social Support:

Human connection is essential to overall wellbeing. Social support—the network of relationships that provide emotional, practical, and informational assistance—plays a critical role in helping individuals navigate life’s challenges. Whether it comes from family, friends, colleagues, or online communities, strong social support fosters resilience, reduces stress, and enhances mental and physical health.

Why Social Support Matters:

A strong support system provides more than just companionship—it directly impacts mental and emotional wellbeing. Studies have shown that individuals with strong social connections experience lower levels of stress and anxiety, improved coping mechanisms, and a reduced risk of depression. Organizations are uniquely positioned to foster social support through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and other workplace initiatives, creating an environment where employees feel connected and valued.

The Benefits of Strong Social Support:

Social support influences multiple aspects of life, including:



- **Reduced Stress and Anxiety** – A strong support network provides a sense of security and belonging, making challenges feel more manageable.
- **Improved Mental Wellbeing** – Meaningful relationships contribute to higher self-esteem, greater empathy, and a more positive outlook on life.
- **Enhanced Coping Mechanisms** – Supportive relationships help individuals develop healthier ways to handle stress and adversity.
- **Lower Risk of Depression** – Those with strong social connections are less likely to experience prolonged feelings of sadness or isolation.
- **Better Physical Health** – Social ties have been linked to lower blood pressure, a stronger immune system, and improved overall health.
- **Increased Resilience** – A strong support system helps individuals recover from hardships more quickly.

The Vital Role of Social Support (cont.)

- Greater Sense of Belonging and Purpose – Feeling connected to others fosters a sense of value and meaning in life.
- Longer Lifespan – Studies suggest that people with strong social connections tend to live longer, healthier lives.

Building and Strengthening Your Support System:

If you're looking to expand or deepen your social connections, here are some steps to get started:

- Identify Your Support Network – Make a list of supportive friends, family members, or colleagues who positively impact your life.
- Prioritize Communication – Commit to regularly reaching out, whether through calls, emails, or in-person visits. Even a quick check-in can make a difference.
- Be Open and Honest – Share your thoughts and feelings openly with those you trust. Express your needs clearly—whether it's a listening ear, advice, or encouragement.
- Practice Active Listening – Strengthen relationships by showing genuine interest in others' lives and offering support when needed.
- Plan Social Activities – Create opportunities to connect with others through shared interests, whether it's a hobby, volunteering, or simply catching up over coffee.



- Be Open to New Connections – Building a strong support system doesn't always mean reconnecting with old friends—it can also involve forming new relationships with colleagues, neighbors, or people in shared communities.
- Seek Professional Support When Needed – If you're struggling with loneliness or social anxiety, consider reaching out to a therapist who can provide guidance in building meaningful relationships.

Assessing Your Social Support:

It's important to periodically reflect on the strength of your support network. Ask yourself:

- Do I have enough social support?
- Would I benefit from deepening my current relationships?
- Could I use new social connections or outlets?

If the answer to any of these is yes, consider taking proactive steps to strengthen your relationships. Social support is a fundamental pillar of wellbeing, and investing in meaningful connections can significantly enhance your quality of life.

Final Thoughts

No one should navigate life's challenges alone. Whether offering or receiving support, fostering strong relationships can make a lasting impact on mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Take the time to build and nurture your social connections—it's one of the most valuable investments you can make for your health and happiness.

Sources: American Psychological Association, CDC, HelpGuide, Mental Health America, National Council for Mental Health, NIH, Smart Therapy PC, Verywell Mind



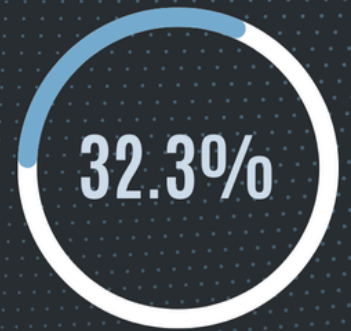
Mental Health in the Metro

1 IN 5



Metro Area adults rate their mental health as fair or poor.

Source: 2024 Metro Community Health Assessment



Of Metro Area adults have been diagnosed by a physician or other health professional as having a depressive disorder

Source: 2024 Metro Community Health Assessment



3 IN 4

Metro Area adults report having someone to turn to all or most of the time, if they needed or wanted help.

Source: 2024 Metro Community Health Assessment



28.6%

of adults in the Metro Area are currently receiving treatment for a mental health condition.

Source: 2024 Metro Community Health Assessment



[Find Local Resources](#)



Mental Health Awareness Month Communications

How to Use these Resources

The Wellbeing Partners invites community members, organizations, and businesses to bring attention to mental health during Mental Health Awareness Month this May:

- **Social media images** and suggested copy, pages 6-10 of this toolkit, may be utilized on any social media platform. Please tag @TheWellbeingPartners and @WhatMakesUsMW and use hashtag #WhatMakesUs when posting on social media channels so we can help amplify your messages and gauge participation.
- Support the message of hope and stigma reduction by wearing your “What if it all works out?” **t-shirt**. More information is available on page 11.
- Provide a mental health break by sharing the WhatMakesUs **coloring sheets**, pages 24-28 of this toolkit, with employees, community members, and others.

Message 1

Feeling connected to others isn't just a nice-to-have—it's essential for mental well-being!

Studies show that strong social ties can reduce stress, boost resilience, and even improve physical health.

Who in your life makes you feel truly seen and heard?

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW

#WhatMakesUs



Message 2

Did you know loneliness can be harmful to your health?

Lack of social connection increases the risk of depression, anxiety, and even heart disease.

Let's check in on each other—who can you reach out to today?

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW #WhatMakesUs



Message 3

A simple “How are you?” can change someone’s entire day.

A smile, a quick text, or grabbing coffee with a friend—small actions strengthen social bonds and support mental health.

What’s a way you show people you care?

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW #WhatMakesUs



Message 4

Social media connects us, but does it truly make us feel connected?

While online interactions have their place, face-to-face time with loved ones is crucial for mental health.

Try a "phone-free hangout" challenge this week!

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW #WhatMakesUs

DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT



Message 5

No one should have to struggle alone.

Having even one trusted person to talk to can make a difference in mental health recovery.

Be that person.

Support without judgment. Listen with empathy.

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW #WhatMakesUs

LISTEN

SUPPORT

EMPOWER



Message 6

Good friends reduce stress, boost self-esteem, and even help you live longer!

If you haven't checked in on a friend lately, today is the perfect day to do it.

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW #WhatMakesUs



Message 7

Feeling lonely? You're not alone.

Here are some ways to build connection:

Join a club or group

Volunteer in your community
Reach out to an old friend
Schedule weekly social time

What helps YOU feel more connected?

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW #WhatMakesUs



Message 8

Whether it's a book club, or weekly dinner with friends, being part of a community is a natural mood booster.

Where do you feel most at home with others?

@TheWellbeingPartners

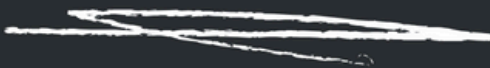
@WhatMakesUsMW

#WhatMakesUs

COMMUNITY: THE ULTIMATE MOOD BOOSTER



BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD.



Message 9

People with strong support systems bounce back faster from challenges.

Whether it's friends, family, coworkers, or a therapist, having someone to lean on strengthens resilience.

For local resources visit:

<https://linktr.ee/whatmakesusmw>

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW

#WhatMakesUs



Message 10

Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

If you're struggling, reach out to a friend, a therapist, or a support group. You deserve help just as much as anyone else.

For more information on mental health resources in our community, visit:

<https://linktr.ee/whatmakesusmw>

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW

#WhatMakesUs



Message 11

Spending time in nature with others is a double win for mental health!

Fresh air reduces stress, and social connection boosts happiness. Take a walk, have a picnic, or just sit outside with a friend today.

@TheWellbeingPartners

@WhatMakesUsMW #WhatMakesUs





Exclusive Offer!

During the month of May only, The Wellbeing Partners is teaming up with RAYGUN to sell our limited-edition “Brighter Days Ahead” t-shirt in support of mental health awareness. Starting May 1, you can grab yours at www.raygunsite.com!

We’re inviting you to join us in wearing your shirt on Wednesday, May 14th to show your support for mental health and help spread the message of hope. Take a photo, tag @TheWellbeingPartners, and we’ll repost you on our social media!

The best part—other than looking awesome—is that 20% of proceeds from each shirt sold will go directly to supporting our mission: building wellbeing into the way our communities and organizations grow through advocacy, collaboration, and education.



Turn Awareness into Action

The attention given to mental health has been increasing steadily over the past few years, helping break down stigma and encouraging open dialogue. This growing recognition is a powerful starting point, but awareness alone isn't enough to create meaningful change. We can turn this heightened understanding into actions that improve lives—not just on a community level, but starting with ourselves. What better time than May--Mental Health Month? You have the power to take charge of your mental health and wellbeing, and it begins with small, intentional steps.

By starting with yourself, you can create a ripple effect, inspiring others and contributing to a society where mental health is prioritized and supported. Let's dive into how you can take A.C.T.I.O.N. to make improving your mental health a priority in May and beyond.

A - Assess your mental health needs and the resources available to you

Start by taking an honest look at your mental health. Are there areas that need more attention? Consider taking an online mental health test at mhascreening.org to get a clearer picture.

Once you've identified areas for improvement, make a list of what resources are available to you. For instance, do you have health insurance? An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at your job?



Are you a student with services available through school, like a university health center? Or maybe you're interested in helping yourself and the only resource you need is some internet access to learn about what you can do.

C - Choose a course of action

Based on your needs and available resources, choose your first action step. This could be anything from starting a daily meditation practice to seeking professional help. Choose something that resonates with you and feels achievable.

"The experience I have had is that once you start talking about [experiencing a mental health struggle], you realize that actually you're part of quite a big club." - Prince Harry



Turn Awareness into Action (cont.)

T - Take steps toward care

Now it's time to put your plan into action. If you've decided to see a therapist, make that first appointment. If you want to incorporate more exercise for mental well-being, lace up those sneakers and take a walk today.

[Take Action Now](#) ➡

Click here for a list of local mental health resources.

I - Identify additional supports

Remember, you're not alone. Identify people, pets, or even objects that can support your mental health goals. This could be a trusted friend, a support group, or creating a cozy corner in your home for relaxation.



Source: Mental Health America
Mental Health Month 2025 Planning Guide

O - Observe what's working... or not

As you implement changes, take time to reflect on their impact. Are you feeling better after a week of daily walks? Or perhaps that meditation app isn't quite clicking for you. Adjust your approach based on what you observe.

N - Nurture yourself

Last but certainly not least, prioritize self-care and emotional wellbeing. This could mean different things for different people – from making breathing exercises part of your daily routine to attending a community event. The key is to engage in activities that replenish your mental and emotional reserves.

Your Mental Health Matters

As we celebrate Mental Health Month, remember that every step you take toward better mental health is a victory. Whether it's a small act of self-care or a big decision to seek professional help, you're contributing to a healthier, happier you. So, are you ready to turn awareness into A.C.T.I.O.N.? Your mental health journey starts now. Take that first step, however small it may seem. Your future self will thank you.

For more tips about mental health, follow the WhatMakesUs campaign on Facebook and Instagram @whatmakesusmw



Fostering Social Support in the Workplace

A workplace where employees feel connected, supported, and valued leads to stronger collaboration, higher morale, and improved overall well-being. Social support in the workplace isn't just about casual friendships—it plays a critical role in fostering psychological safety, reducing stress, and creating an environment where employees thrive.

To cultivate social support, organizations should prioritize open communication, peer-to-peer connections, and a culture of belonging. Here are key strategies to enhance social support in the workplace:

Key Strategies for Building Social Support

1. Encourage Open Communication

A culture of transparency and trust allows employees to feel heard, valued, and safe in expressing their ideas and concerns.

- Promote Psychological Safety – Create an environment where employees feel comfortable sharing feedback, asking for help, and offering ideas without fear of judgment.
- Maintain Regular Communication – Keep employees informed through team meetings, updates, and open-door policies to encourage engagement.
- Provide Constructive Feedback – Encourage a feedback culture that supports growth and collaboration rather than criticism.

2. Strengthen Peer-to-Peer Connections

Building relationships among colleagues enhances teamwork, productivity, and overall job satisfaction.

- Host Team-Building Activities – Organize group activities, retreats, or social gatherings to strengthen relationships.
- Implement Mentorship Programs – Pair employees with mentors to provide support, guidance, and career development.

Resources

- [Health and Human Services Social Connection](#)
- [Surgeon General Connection & Community Resources](#)
- [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#)
- [NAMI Support Groups](#)
- [Mental Health America: Social Connections](#)
- [NIH Social Wellness Toolkit](#)
- [Findhelp.org](#)

Enhance your organization's health and wellbeing strategy by becoming a TWP Workplace Partner. Save time and money with tailored design, personalized advice, and readily available resources. [Discover more details here.](#)



Fostering Social Support in the Workplace (cont.)

- Encourage Cross-Team Collaboration – Foster a cooperative environment where employees can share knowledge and work towards shared goals.

3. Create a Supportive Workplace Culture

A culture that prioritizes employee wellbeing and recognition leads to higher engagement and retention.

- Demonstrate Leadership Commitment – Leaders should model supportive behaviors and provide resources to help employees succeed.
- Celebrate Achievements – Recognize and reward accomplishments, both big and small, to boost morale and motivation.
- Foster Inclusion and Belonging – Ensure all employees feel respected, valued, and an integral part of the organization.
- Support Employee Wellbeing – Offer flexible work arrangements, mental health resources, and wellness programs.

4. Build Social Networks

Encouraging personal and professional connections strengthens workplace relationships and engagement.

- Facilitate Regular Interactions – Create opportunities for employees to connect through formal meetings and informal gatherings.
- Host Social Events – Plan activities outside of work, such as happy hours, volunteer events, or wellness challenges.
- Leverage Online Platforms – Utilize digital tools to maintain connections, especially for remote and hybrid teams.

Final Thoughts

Creating a workplace where employees feel supported and connected is essential for fostering engagement, wellbeing, and productivity. By prioritizing open communication, peer connections, a strong workplace culture, and social networks, organizations can build an environment where employees thrive both personally and professionally.

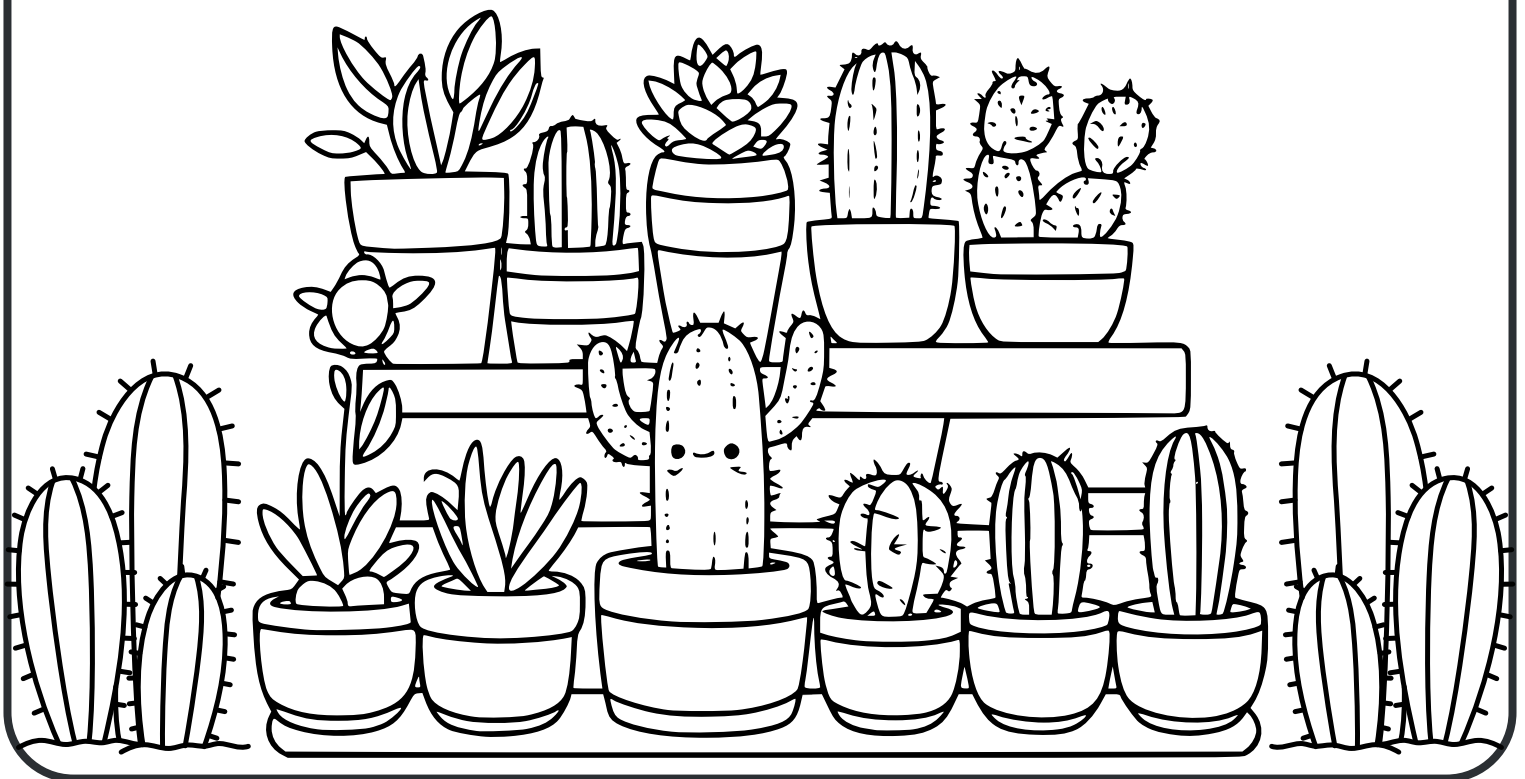
Start fostering social support today—because when employees feel connected, everyone benefits!



Sources: CDC, LinkedIn, MHA, My Workplace Health, National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and NIH



*Connection is the
sunshine that helps
us bloom!*



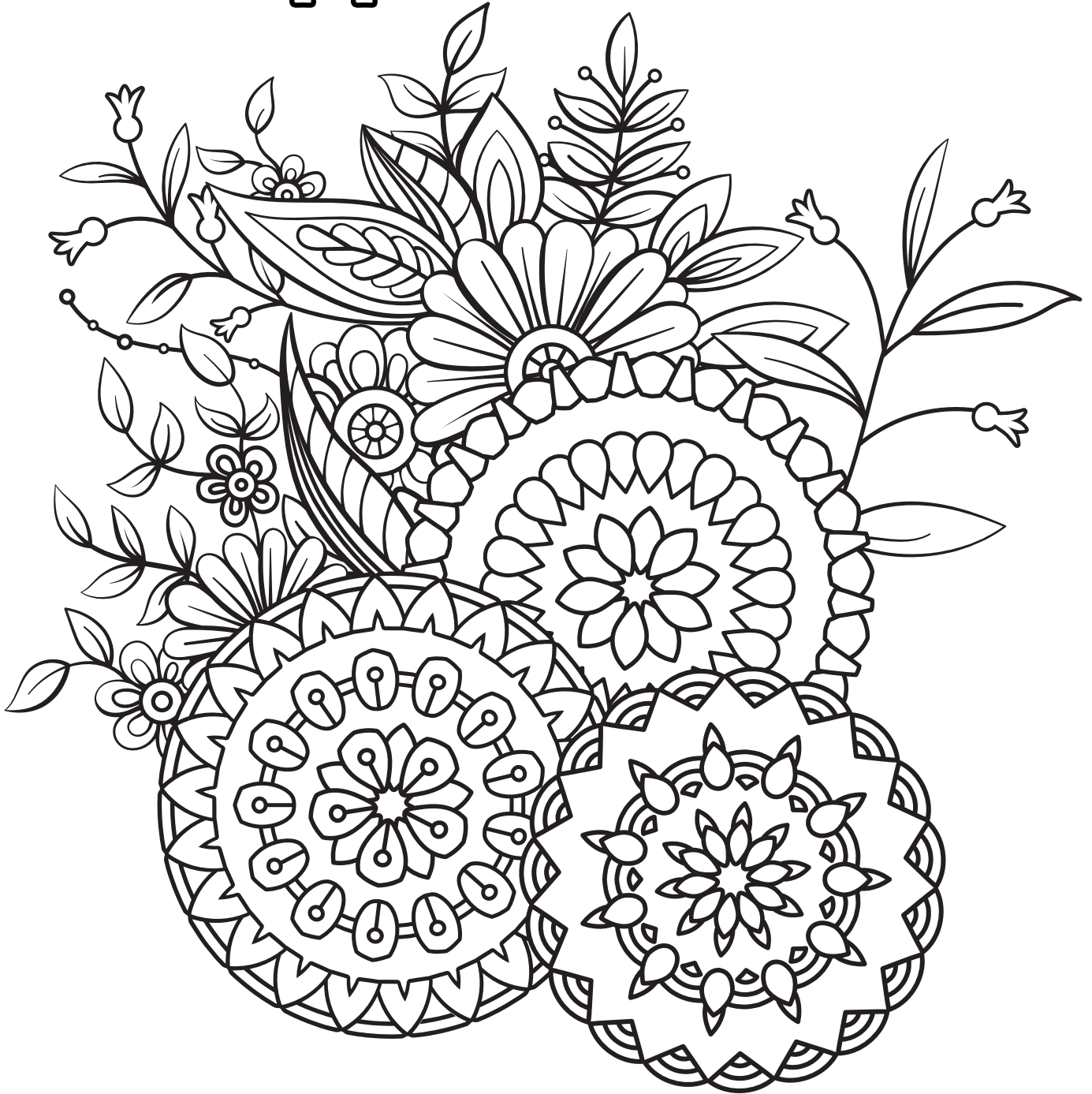
FIND LOCAL
MENTAL
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&

SHARE YOUR
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STORY



Support Comes



in Different Forms



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Connecting Communities & Organizations to Wellness