



Supporting Back to School Wellness

Prepare for Mixed Feelings from Students

Some may have:

- △ Lacked privacy or had distractions they're happy to be away from
- △ Been in unsafe conditions and school is a welcome change
- △ Thrived on their own and may be nervous about coming back
- △ Gotten attached to being close to family and may experience separation anxiety
- △ Felt free from bullying or trauma from racism

Bottom line? It's important to be responsive to individual needs of students.

Learn the Warning Signs of Something More Serious

It's likely most students will experience some anxiety and sadness, but not all will develop a serious mental health issue. Look out for students who are:

- △ Increasingly more socially withdrawn
- △ Missing multiple days of school
- △ Falling behind academically
- △ Expressing interest in harming themselves (get them immediate attention)

Normalize the Conversation

- △ **Model behavior:** Students will take cues from you, so don't be afraid to share your own experiences and emotions about coming back to school — and how you're coping with them
- △ **Ask students to share** if they feel comfortable; encourage them to share both worries and hopes
- △ **Discuss strategies for coping** and encourage school administrators to make resources visible and accessible
- △ **Connect with your local NAMI** to bring a NAMI Ending the Silence presentation to your classroom

Prioritize Your Mental Health, Too

Make sure you are taking care of yourself so you can take care of them by:

- △ Eating and sleeping well
- △ Getting in regular exercise in whatever way works for you
- △ Practicing relaxation methods like deep breathing and meditation

For additional resources, visit www.nami.org/youth.
To sign up for an on-demand education course about youth mental health, visit www.basics.nami.org.