

Building Belonging: Turning the Tide on Bullying

Hilary Bowers, MD, FAAP

Director of Behavioral and Mental Health Services
Children's Primary Care Medical Group



Overview

- Defining bullying
- State of bullying
- Impact of bullying
- Building tools and skills for the home
- Additional resources

What is Bullying?

The person who bullies:

Individual who engages in aggressive behavior that is intended to harm or intimidate others

Bystanders:

Individuals who witness bullying incidents

Recipient:

Subjected to bullying behaviors

Ally:

Person who helps individual being bullied





One in Five

**12- to 18-year-olds report
being bullied**

Forms of Bullying

1

Physical

2

Verbal

3

Social

4

Cyber

1 Physical



- Pushing
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Biting
- Hair pulling

2 Verbal



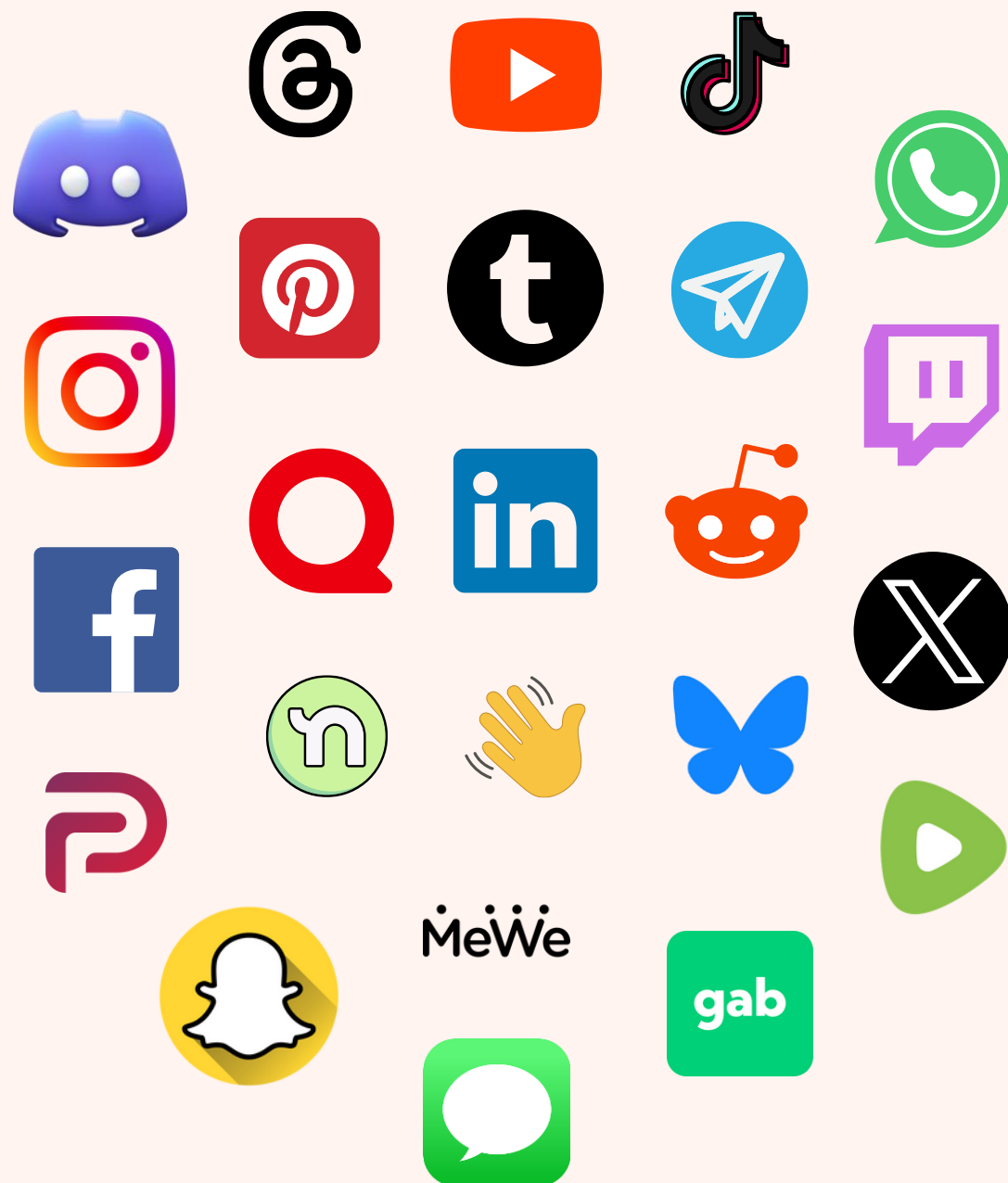
- Name calling
- Teasing
- Insults or derogatory remarks
- Threatening statements

3 Social or Relational



- Spreading rumors or gossip
- Intentionally excluding someone from a group
- Public humiliation
- Sabotaging friendships

4 Cyber



- Occurs on digital platforms
- Posting false/embarrassing content
- Impersonating someone else
- Sending threatening messages
- Excluding from online group

1 in 4 teens has experienced cyberbullying

1 in 6 has been a perpetrator

1 in 5 tweens involved in cyberbullying

Location

- 47% of bullying happens in the classroom
- <50% of the students notified an adult at school about the incident



Reasons for being bullied: physical appearance, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, and sexual orientation

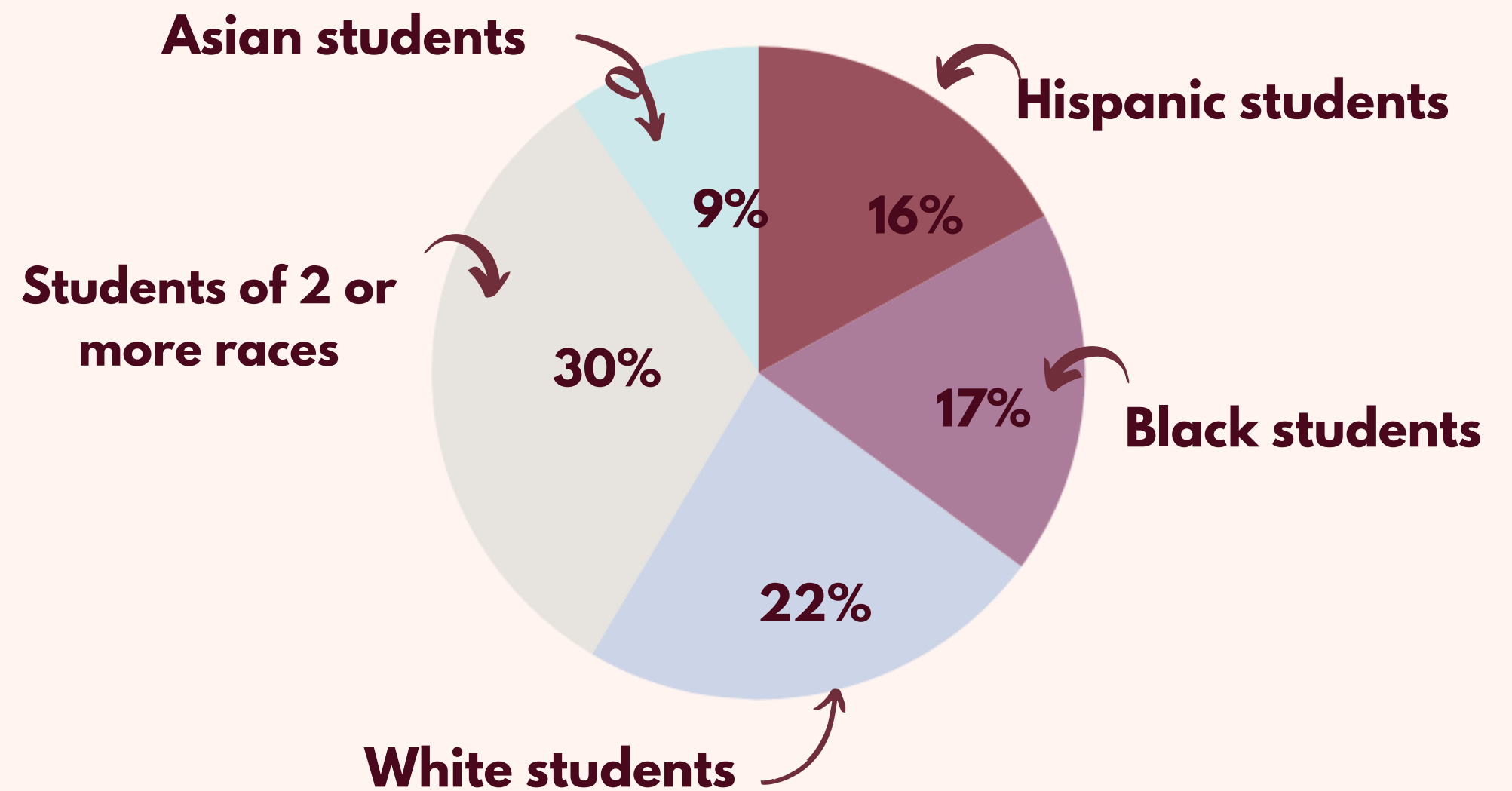
Who

Kids of every ethnicity, gender, grade, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status are impacted

More likely to be bullied

- Middle schoolers
- Public school students
- Students in rural communities

Percentage of students being bullied by ethnicity



Impact of Experiencing Bullying

External Expression:

- Weight changes
- Clothing choices
- Hygiene
- Failing grades
- Unexplained injuries
- Physical ailment



Behavioral Changes:

- Withdrawal/isolation
- Irritation, anger, and aggression
- Disconnect from friends

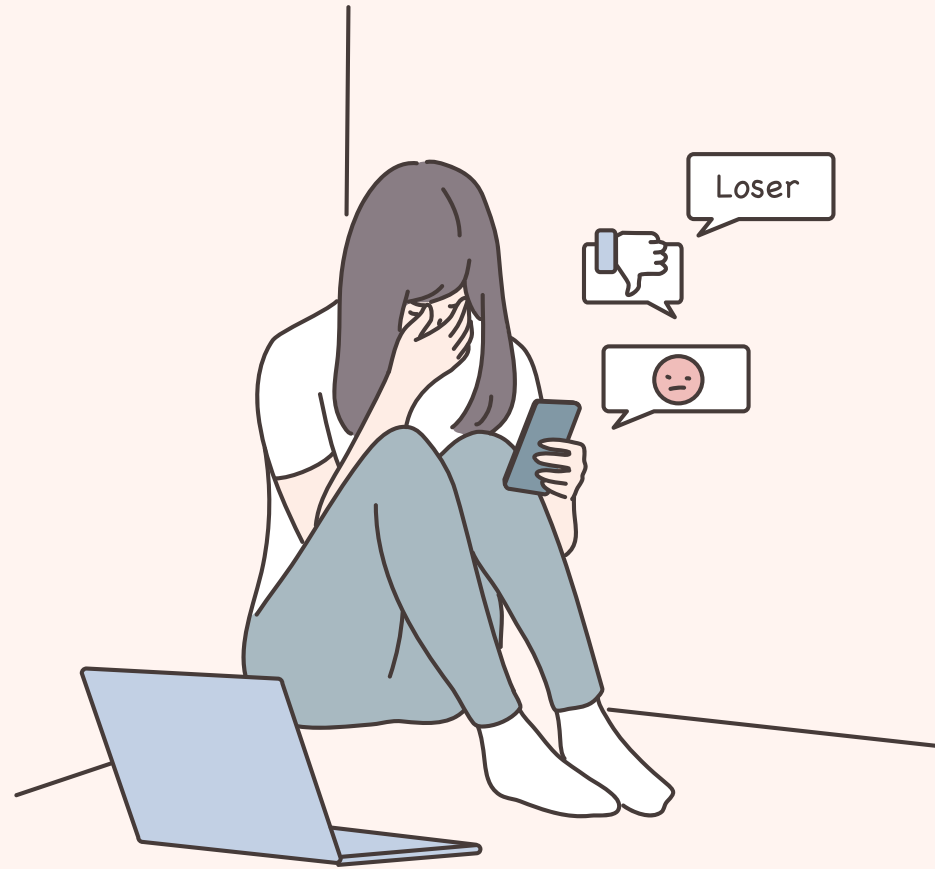


Significant consequences of bullying

Behavioral and mental health concerns



Cyberbullying Impact



- Elevated anxiety and stress levels
- Increased risk of depression
- Reduced self-esteem
- Social withdrawal
- Concentration issues

Social Media Impact



May Contribute To:

- Dissatisfied body image
- Eating disorder behaviors
- Comparison to others
- Low self-esteem
- Perfectionism

At Risk for Bullying Others

- Frequently fight
- Associate with aggressive peers
- Regular disciplinary actions
- Have unexplained money or belongings
- Blame others
- Overly competitive



How **YOU** Can Build Belonging



Connecting Youth to Each Other

- Encourage participation in groups
 - Clubs and activities
 - Community service
 - Mentorship opportunities
 - Support peer connection



Empowering Youth

THINK

- T** Thoughtful
- H** Helpful
- I** Interesting or Inclusive
- N** Necessary
- K** Kind

Be a Buddy (NICE)

- N** Notice
- I** Intervene
- C** Comment
- E** Escape

Educate and Empower

- Educate about bullying
- Keep open communication
- Encourage engagement in enjoyable activities
- Model how to treat others

In the Moment

- Question the bullying
- Use humor to redirect
- Intervene as a group
- Walk with the target to defuse interaction
- Privately check in to show support and care



Build Self-Confidence

- Focus on the positive
- Embrace imperfections
- Be kind to yourself
- Celebrate successes
- Identify strengths



Building Authentic Relationships

- Participate in activities they enjoy
- Show genuine interest when they speak
- Offer support
- Respect feelings
- Establish a safe and inclusive environment
- Encourage individuality
- Address bullying head on



**Listen to understand rather
than listen to respond**

Conversation Starters To Build Connection

- Ask open-ended questions
- Show interest
- Share about yourself
- Be playful
- Discuss shared activities
- Be supportive
- Use the environment
- Validate feelings

Conversation Starters

Showing Support Through a Challenge

- How can I help you with ___?
- Help me understand ___?
- How would you like things to be different?
- What are the good things about ___ and what are the less good things about it?
- When would you be most likely to ___?
- What do you think you will lose if you give up ___?
- What can I do to show you support?

Conversation Location

- While driving alone with your child
- During downtime at home
- After your child shares school or peer-related experiences



Conversation Time Outs

- With limited time (e.g., 10 minutes before an appointment)
- During or after a conflict about technology
- When your child's friends are present
- When your child is disengaging from the conversation



Benefit of Meal Times



How to Create a Healthy Relationship with Social Media

THE 5 C's

CHILD

CONTENT

CALM

CROWDING OUT

COMMUNICATION

Family Media Agreement



I, _____, will:

... take care.

- ☐ I will take care of the device I'm using and tell my family if it's broken, stolen, or lost. As a family, we have agreed on the consequences if I lose or break a device, and I understand those consequences.
- ☐ Unless I have paid for a device with my own money or it was a gift, I understand that the device belongs to the family member(s) who bought it.
- ☐ _____

... stay safe.

- ☐ I will not create accounts or give out any private information — such as my full name, date of birth, address, phone number, or photos of myself — without my family's permission.
- ☐ I will not share my passwords with anyone other than my family. I will ask my family to help me with privacy settings if I want to set up devices, accounts, or profiles.
- ☐ If anyone makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable or acts inappropriately toward me online, I'll stop talking to that person and will tell a family member or other trusted adult about it.
- ☐ _____

... think first.

- ☐ I will not bully, humiliate, or upset anyone online — whether through sharing photos, videos, or screenshots, spreading rumors or gossip, or setting up fake profiles — and I will stand up to those who do.
- ☐ I know that whatever I share online can spread fast and far. I will not post anything online that could harm my reputation.
- ☐ Whenever I use, reference, or share someone else's creative work online, I will give proper credit to the author or artist.
- ☐ I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true. I will consider whether a source or author is credible.
- ☐ _____

Family Media Agreement



... stay balanced.

- ☐ I will help my family set media time limits that make sense, and then I will follow them.
- ☐ I will be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens, and I will continue to enjoy the other activities — and people — in my life.
- ☐ If using media or being online is making me unhappy or it's hard to stop, I will take a break and talk to a family member.
- ☐ _____

... communicate openly.

- ☐ I will talk to my family about what media I use and what I do online and answer any questions they have openly and honestly.
- ☐ I will tell my family if I'm struggling with media use, have made a mistake online, or need help.
- ☐ _____

In exchange, my family agrees to:

- ☐ recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- ☐ talk with me about what worries them and why before saying "no."
- ☐ talk to me about my interests and embrace my world, including helping me find media that's appropriate and fun.
- ☐ _____

X

SIGNED BY ME

X

SIGNED BY MY PARENT OR CAREGIVER

Safe Social Media Use: Cyberbullying

- Explain what cyberbullying is, with examples
- Promote safe behavior online and off
- Encourage critical thinking around content
- Encourage reporting and help seeking behaviors



When More Help is Needed

- Where to go at school: counselor, IEP, Principal, ERMHS
- Visit the school website to view policies on bullying
- Connect with the school district
- Where to go outside school: Pediatrician, counselor, friends



Mental Health Resources

In the event of an emergency, suicidal or other mental health crisis (suicidal thoughts, homicidal thoughts, physical aggression, or concern for your safety or the safety of your child), please call:

- 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. If you are unable to transport yourself or your child safely, please contact 911 and ask for PERT (Psychiatric Emergency Response Team).
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or 1-800-273-TALK. Spanish line: 888-628-9454; TTY: 800-799-4TTY (4889) (8255). You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area, anytime 24/7. The 988 Lifeline provides free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
- Crisis Text Line- 741741 (text HOME to get connected) www.crisistextline.org
- It's Up to Us, <https://up2sd.org>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, <https://www.nami.org/Home>
- Healthy Children.org by American Academy of Pediatrics, www.healthychildren.org
- American Psychiatric Association, www.psychiatry.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov

Mental Health Resources

San Diego County Resources:

- Rady Children's Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) Walk-in Clinic. Call: 858-966-5484. 4 p.m.-8 p.m., Mon-Fri. 4305 University Avenue, Suite 150, San Diego, CA 92105. Serves youth ages 5-21 struggling with concerns that pose an imminent risk to their safety, the safety of others, or significantly impair their daily lives.
- Rady Children's Hospital Emergency Room. Call: 858-966-8005. 3020 Children's Way, 1st Floor, San Diego, CA 92123.
- San Diego County Emergency Screening Unit. Call: 619-876-4502. 4309 3rd Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103.
- Available to children and adolescents for emergency psychiatric assistance.
- San Diego County Access and Crisis Line. Call: 888-724-7240. Crisis counseling or referrals, 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- Center for Community Solutions. Call: 888-385-4657.
- Crisis Action and Connection. Call: 619-591-5740.
- North County Crisis Intervention and Response Team. Mon-Fri from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Weekends from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Escondido, call: 760-233-0133 | Vista: 760-305-8225.
- 2-1-1 San Diego: Dial 2-1-1 from a mobile or 858-300-211 from any phone.
- Children's Primary Care Medical Group, www.cpcmg.net (Go to Health Hub to learn more)
- Children's Physicians Medical Group, www.cpmgsandiego.com
- San Diego County Department of Public Health, www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs.html
- Riverside County Department of Public Health, www.countyofriverside.org

Bullying Prevention & Parenting Resources

- Stop Bullying <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/media-and-children/center-of-excellence-on-social-media-and-youth-mental-health/>
- <https://www.naesp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Report-to-Parents-35-8.pdf>
- <https://www.naesp.org/resource/put-a-stop-to-bullying-in-your-school/>
- American Academy of Pediatrics, The 5 C's, https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/CoE_5Cs_Older_Teens_Final.pdf

- **Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego, Educational Resource Library**
- <https://www.rchsd.org/programs-services/behavioral-health/education/>

- **San Diego County Office of Education**
- Mental Health Supports- Resources and Information for Parents
- <https://www.sdcoe.net/students/health-well-being/mental-health-supports>
- Prioritizing mental health is important for students to be able to learn effectively; it's also a key component that helps staff teach and support learners every day. The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) has compiled resources and information for students, families, and schools that keep mental health supports top of mind.
- <https://www.sdcoe.net/students/school-climate/bullying-prevention>
- SDCOE Teen Guide to Mental Health and Wellness
- SDCOE Young Person's Guide to Wellness
- SDCOE Parent Resources

- **Parent Guidance**
- <https://parentguidance.org>

- **Mental Health America**
- General Parenting Mental Health Resources
- <https://mhanational.org/mental-health-resources-parents>