

**FREE**  
*your*  
**FEELS**™

# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

RESOURCE TOOLKIT



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**WOMEN'S  
HISTORY  
MONTH**

# INTRO



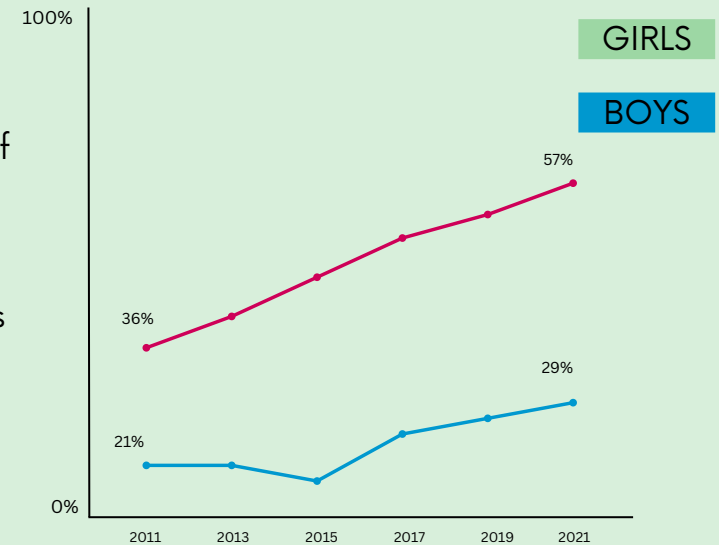
March is Women's History Month. Data from the CDC's "Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data and Summary Trends Report: 2011-2021", show that across almost all measures - substance use, experiences of violence, mental health, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors - **female students are doing worse than male students.** The rates at which female students are reporting such negative experiences reveal an alarming trend. It is clear now more than ever that teen girls need our support, encouragement, and listening ears – judgment-free.

In Georgia, the numbers are just as stark. Only 10% of female students in grades 6 – 12 reported never feeling stressed, which means nearly 90% of Georgia's female teen students are experiencing stress (compared to 75% of male teen students). Source: 2023 Georgia Student Health Survey (6th – 12th grade)

Trends in the percentage of high school students who experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness during the past year, United States, YRBS, 2011-2021

## 10-YEAR TREND DESCRIPTION BY SEX

The percentage of female and male students who experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness increased from 2011 to 2021.



FOR URGENT SUPPORT TEXT OR CALL 988, OR CALL OR DOWNLOAD GCAL: 1-800-715-4225



# FOR EVERYONE



Evidence is increasingly illustrating that young women and girls are facing record-high levels of negative mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, violence, and suicidality. However, research also shows that connectedness, quality friendships, and school belonging can protect kids from mental health concerns throughout their adolescence and into adulthood.

## ACTION

This article, titled "Analysis: There's a mental health crisis among teen girls. Here are some ways to support them" provides a great overview of how we got here and where we can go in our efforts to improve girls' well-being.



The screenshot shows a PBS News Hour article. At the top left is the "PBS NEWS HOUR" logo. The main image is a young woman with long blue hair sitting on a bed, looking down at her smartphone. Below the image, the article title reads "Analysis: There's a mental health crisis among teen girls. Here are some ways to support them". To the left of the title, it says "By - Elizabeth Englander, The Conversation" and "By - Meghan K. McCoy, The Conversation". To the right, there is a "Related" section with two links: "Teenage girls experiencing record high levels of sadness, violence and trauma, CDC says" by Stephanie Sy, Courtney Norris, and "Social media companies face legal scrutiny over deteriorating mental health among teens" by Christopher Booker, Mike Fritz. At the bottom left of the article preview is a "Leave your feedback" button. At the bottom right, a snippet of text reads "CDC data shows U.S. teen girls 'in crisis' with unprecedented rise in".

# FOR YOUTH



A sense of belonging – at home, at school, in your community – can go such a long way in helping protect against negative mental health outcomes and feelings of isolation, despair, and/or suicidality. In a peer group setting, you can talk to other teens about shared experiences, which can increase connectedness and mental well-being while also providing a safe and nurturing environment of mutual trust.

## ACTION

Advocate for peer-led mental wellness groups in your school! This flyer outlines how to get started with bringing a peer-to-peer group to your school or community. For more information, contact the Free Your Feels team at [freeyourfeels@gmail.com](mailto:freeyourfeels@gmail.com)



**FREE your FEELS**

### CREATING A FREE YOUR FEELS PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAM

- 1 Identify Adult Sponsor**
  - Determine who the adult sponsor(s) will be; this will likely be the adult mental health ambassador already trained in mental health or suicide prevention.
  - Commit to one school year with a FYF P2P Program.
  - Identify and secure space for meetings and determine meeting dates and times, this will likely be the safe zone already identified in your community.
- 2 Identify Youth Leaders**
  - Youth leadership is instrumental in getting a peer-to-peer program off the ground; your youth mental health ambassadors will most likely fill this role.
  - Interested students participating in the program must set and understand the boundaries of their role.
  - The students serve as not only resources for their peers but can also assist in designing FYF school awareness activities around trauma, mental health, and suicide prevention.
- 3 Implement Mental Health Supports**
  - Train youth leaders in Youth Mental Health First Aid
  - Train sponsors/student leaders on empathy, active listening, and basic social and emotional skills
  - Invite local mental health agencies to speak to the students. (Do a lot of role-playing.)
  - Establish a referral system for students, teachers, counselors, or walk-ins.
- 4 Begin Consistently Meeting**
  - Market your group's meeting date, time, location, and purpose.
  - Meet regularly. Don't be discouraged if it takes a few weeks to get the group off the ground.

**Remember: A P2P program is strengthened by deep support inside the community.**

**Voices** for Georgia's Children  
**VOX** ATL  
**Silence the Shame**  
**Ser Familia**

# FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



Last year, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on the effect of social media usage on teen mental health, specifically noting the harmful effects on body dissatisfaction and social comparison in adolescent girls. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends creating a personalized “Family Media Use Plan” so that parents and users can become more aware of media and how it can be used in a positive way for yourself and your family.

A screenshot of the American Academy of Pediatrics website showing the 'Create or Update Your Family Media Plan' page. The page has a green header with the AAP logo and the text 'DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN'. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with icons for Home, Tutorial, My Family (selected), Priorities, Media Balance, Communicating About Media, Kindness & Empathy, Digital Privacy & Safety, Screen Free Zones, Screen Free Times, Choosing Good Content, Using Media Together, and Review. The main content area has a form titled 'Enter your family name \*' with a text input field. Below that, there's a 'My Family' section with a '+ Add Another Family Member' button. There are two rows of input fields for 'Family Member's Name \*' and 'Age'. The age options are 0-24 months, 2-5 years, 6-12 years, 13-18 years, and Adult. Each row has a red 'x' icon to the right of the age selection.

## ACTION

Creating a Family Media Plan can help you and your children set media priorities that matter most to your family. Create your own plan [here](#)



# FOR EDUCATORS & PROFESSIONALS



As adults supporting youth, it's important to listen to first-person accounts from young people who are directly experiencing pressures and the risks these pressures pose to their mental health. For instance, the resource linked below includes a video in which teenage and young adult females describe the pressure to meet unrealistic beauty standards and its effect on their well-being.

## ACTION

"Student Mental Health Matters: A Toolkit for Educators" is a collection of video resources designed to equip educators, school staff, and school-based mental health professionals with critical tools needed to support the mental wellness of their students. Hear student perspectives which reveal the lived experience of elementary, middle, and high school students.







## QUESTIONS? CONTACT

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