

Finding My Voice

Parent & Caregiver Resources for Mental Wellness Patch Program for Cadettes

Mental health statistics show that young people are experiencing more mental health issues than ever before. Girl Scout research findings show that your Cadette is likely deeply concerned about the stress, anxiety, depression, and other issues that they and their peers are experiencing. They are most likely coping with the stress and uncertainty that come from school, relationships, social media, and the stigma behind mental health.

Mental health and stigma often go hand in hand, making some Cadettes feel like they can't talk about their concerns or experiences with friends and family. They may not share their personal struggles because they don't want to be seen as "weak" or a "burden." That's why Girl Scouts partnered with the HCA Healthcare Foundation and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to create this Mental Wellness Patch Program for Cadette Girl Scouts called "Finding My Voice."

Through this Mental Wellness Patch Program, which was generously funded by the HCA Healthcare Foundation, we give Cadettes an accepting, safe environment to participate in activities and learn about:

- Mental health stigma and how their voice matters
- Helping friends who may be in trouble
- Being mindful about social media
- Self-care and how to practice it



Through the Girl Scouts' mental wellness initiative, we provide our membership, staff, and volunteers with programs and training to better understand mental wellness. As a parent and caregiver, you are an essential part of this, which is why we've created this resource guide for you.

We want to help you support your Girl Scout with what they learn about mental wellness, and for anything they might need going forward.

This process begins by defining mental health and wellness for you:

- **Mental health** encompasses emotional and psychological health. It impacts how we think, feel, and act. Everyone has a state of mental health, just as everyone has physical health.
- **Mental wellness** refers to how we take care of our mental health, which includes how we cope with stress and engage with others.

Post-Mental Wellness Patch Program Tips:

- Read through the handouts, worksheets, or any other materials from the Mental Wellness Patch Program. Use them as a conversation starter to discuss the activities your Girl Scout did. Find out what was the most meaningful or surprising thing your Girl Scout learned.
- Practice using language that will break down mental health stigma. You can find more in “Your Language Matters” in the resources.
- As a family, explore self-care activities that will help your Cadette to navigate challenges and contribute to their positive mental health.
- Create time at home to discuss mental health by doing check-ins and offering an outlet to share things your Cadette is struggling with, including your own struggles.

Resources:

Here are some resources you might find helpful when learning about and supporting mental wellness for your Cadette Girl Scout:

- [Girl Scouts Mental Wellness and Inclusion Portal](#) (GSUSA)
- [Raising Awesome Girls: Help Her Be Happy and Healthy](#) (GSUSA)
- [Your Language Matters](#) (NAMI)
- [Kids, Teens and Young Adults](#) (NAMI)
- [NAMI Basics](#): A series of classes dedicated to parents/caregivers of a child who is showing symptoms of or who has been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

● Useful websites:

- [National Institute of Mental Health](https://www.nimh.nih.gov) (nimh.nih.gov)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](https://www.samhsa.gov) (samhsa.gov)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Children's Mental Health](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth) (cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth)

The contents of the Mental Wellness Patch Program for Cadettes: Finding My Voice is for informational purposes only. Girl Scouts of the USA (“GSUSA”) is not attempting to give medical advice. This information should not be relied on as a substitute for professional consultation with a qualified healthcare provider.

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