



## Online Documents for Download

[www.meeproductions.com/mentalhealth](http://www.meeproductions.com/mentalhealth)

### Executive Summary

Contains an overview of the report, which includes direct links to related sections of the full report and other toolkit components.

### Full Research Report

### Video Documentary

MEE's 45-minute DVD documentary summarizing participant comments.

### Downloads

Many of the Toolkit components are also available for downloading through MEE's basic Community Wellness Website, [www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness](http://www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness). You will need the free application Acrobat Reader to view and print these Portable Document Format (PDF) components. (Information on downloading and using Acrobat Reader is available on the site).

### Reference Documents

Reference documents include other information related to the topics addressed in the report. These include an issue of MEE's *UrbanTrends* newsletter (Vol. 16, No. 2) and an article on male mentoring (a potential solution for supporting protective factors) from Vol. 17, No. 1.

**For more information on the MEE Community Wellness Toolkit, contact [MHtoolkit@meeproductions.com](mailto:MHtoolkit@meeproductions.com) or call MEE toll-free at 1-877-MEE-PROD.**

### Keep Up-to-Date!

Sign up on MEE's dedicated Community Wellness Website ([www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness](http://www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness)) if you would like us to keep you informed regarding updates to the MEE Community Wellness Toolkit. Log on today and get on the mailing list for updates. We will not share your information with anyone.

You can order additional copies of the expanded MEE Community Wellness Toolkit; a video featuring the father of Black psychology, Dr. Joe White; and MEE's research report on teen dating violence through the "Products" page of MEE's Website, [www.meeproductions.com](http://www.meeproductions.com). Click on "MEE Products."

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## Moving Beyond Survival Mode: Promoting Mental Wellness and Resiliency as a Way to Cope with Urban Trauma

We have designed this Toolkit to be comprehensive and user-friendly. Our goal is to help local providers understand and be able to share important issues related to mental wellness in low-income African-American communities. The Toolkit can be used as both an educational guide and a set of reference documents. We have organized the Toolkit to help anyone working "on the front-lines" in low-income urban communities see how issues related to mental wellness are impacting a myriad of social and public health issues.

***The content and recommendations are not necessarily designed to be used "as-is" but rather provide an approach for a community to follow in developing its own strategies and tactics.***

—MEE Productions

We will provide mental health professionals, teachers and other educators, emergency room personnel, public health agencies and institutions, parents/caregivers, policymakers, the general public and others with the latest audience research, messaging strategies to overcome barriers to behavior change and case studies of culturally-relevant communications. With an insider's view of the worldview and day-to-day realities of urban, low-income residents, Toolkit users will be prepared to address barriers to change and develop communications strategies and tactics that will resonate and empower their audience.

The Toolkit is divided into several components on different topics and can be used to introduce the subject of mental wellness to newcomers and help seasoned practitioners modify their approaches for maximum cultural relevancy. Toolkit contents are based on key themes that emerged during MEE's analysis of our focus group research and interviews with some of the top experts in the field. The content and recommendations are not necessarily designed to be used "as-is" but rather provide an approach for a community to follow in developing its own strategies and tactics.

# How to Use this Toolkit

## Moving Beyond Survival Mode: Promoting Mental Wellness and Resiliency as a Way to Cope with Urban Trauma

Below is an overview of the various components of the Toolkit package. They reflect various ways to get low-income communities talking about an issue that currently carries a lot of stigma. This way, you can quickly look at information aligned closest to your individual interests and needs, along with your organization's audience, program and objectives.

### 2 Stress and Trauma in Daily Life

What are the major stressors that young adults are dealing with on a daily basis? This sheet organizes them by gender, since there were differences in the stressors identified by males and females. This sheet can be used in informally assessing how many stressors a young person may be dealing with in his or her life.

### 3 Something is Wrong: How to Recognize Signs of a Mental or Emotional Issue

Indicators of mental or emotional issues in adolescents and young adults. These are parent/provider-noticed signs of a potential mental or emotional issue.

### 4 Using Oral Communications to Counter Arguments Against Mental Health Services

Holding a One-on-One Dialogue About Mental Health Services. Focus group participants articulated many reasons why they have not and will not access local mental health resources. In order to begin to change perceptions and behavior, providers and others must be able to "counter" these arguments with culturally relevant counter arguments that reflect oral communications culture. (See document for more background.) Both the arguments and counter arguments on this sheet came from focus group participants. This document provides some of the "raw materials" you need to begin communicating with youth and young adults in your community about mental wellness; feel free to customize them based on specific incidents, needs and interests. Understanding the arguments will help you be prepared for an open and honest dialogue that will start the process of behavior change.

### 5 What Is Mental Wellness?

This document compares provider vs. community terminology for mental health and mental wellness, i.e., academic/professional definitions vs. the community's view.

### 6 Mobilizing Your Community for Better Mental Health: How to Work with CBOs

MEE's "how-to" on grassroots community mobilization is based on nearly two decades of expertise in engaging and motivating urban communities to take action. This guide will help ensure that your overall approach to community mobilization is right on target. Keep the enclosed tips in mind to help to make the process as smooth and successful as possible.

### 7 Let's Talk About Mental Wellness: How to Organize Community Events

This tip sheet provides important pointers on how to kick-start a community dialogue about mental wellness. It will help you gather the community in town hall meetings, community forums or small group sessions in order to begin a much-needed examination and discussion of mental wellness.

### 8 Using Creative Outlets to Talk About Tough Issues (Case Study of Youth Activity)

Interactions with police and the criminal justice system was an ongoing stressor, particularly for young males. This Case Study shows the process MEE used to leverage media popular with youth to get young people to articulate their feelings and begin to work through a particular stressor. Creativity is one of the protective factors that can prevent or reduce the effects of stress and trauma. The case study shows how music, spoken word and poetry can be tools for mental wellness.

### 9 What's Your Plan: A Goal-Oriented Activity to Support Thriving (vs. Merely Surviving)

A deteriorated social fabric means there are often too few role models in low-income communities. Adult mentors, whether older relatives, coaches or parents, can have a tremendous impact on a young mind. Being paired with a mentor who is "walking the walk" can help guide the younger generation past merely surviving challenging circumstances to thriving. This tool helps adults assist young people with developing a realistic "game plan" for future success.

### 10 Community Outreach Flyer Templates

These MEE-developed flyers use culturally-relevant core messages to begin raising awareness in the community of the need for mental wellness. One is targeted specifically to young African-American males; the other can be used with females and/or the broader community. Both contain an educational message, a call-to-action slogan and a blank box that organizations can customize for use to publicize local activities and programs promoting community wellness. Sample Resource Flyer and Outreach Flyer templates contained in the Toolkit are included for your customization. You may add your own logo and event information to the template or use it as a model to develop a piece containing information specific to your event, needs or interests. You can download electronic PDF and JPEG files of the templates at [www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness](http://www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness).

### 11 Resources for Mental Wellness

This flyer lists relevant local resources in Chicago related to mental health and wellness. These resources are an important first step in getting people the help they need.