



# Mental Health Acceptance

Because awareness **ISN'T ENOUGH.**

**In 2022, the National Children's Mental Health Week campaign was redefined to emphasize the need to move beyond awareness.**



Acceptance means recognizing that our mental health is **as important** as all other health issues.

It means acknowledging that we all have mental health needs that **require care**, just like brushing our teeth.

It means responding to mental health conditions with **treatment and support** like any other disease.

Acceptance would mean my child **feels safe** to say she is going to see her therapist, just as freely as she says she is going to the doctor or dentist.



It means a more **empathetic approach** towards children who struggle with mental health issues and recognizing it's not something they can turn on and off.

Acceptance means understanding that a mental health diagnosis is **not the end** - that coping skills and support are available.

It means understanding when someone has an emotional disability and is symptomatic, they need **support, not punishment.**

**We asked children, youth and families - "What does acceptance of mental health challenges mean to you?"**



Acceptance means my child **isn't embarrassed or afraid** to ask for help.

It means children with mental health challenges are accepted, supported, and **feel wanted and worthy.**

It means **being held** in the caring hands of everyone in the community.

It means being treated with the same **dignity and respect** as others.

It means being brought **into the fold** - into the group. It feels like protection.

It means my kids are happier and **feel understood.**

Acceptance means I am loved and cared for **as I am.**

It means having patience and making the effort to **try to understand** what someone is going through.

Acceptance means having the right to be unique - to express your feelings, thoughts, and opinions **without judgment.**

It means **feeling free** to discuss your challenges without feeling like others are judging or discrediting your experiences.

It means seeing **people first** - acknowledging their strengths, not just their challenges or diagnosis.



Acceptance means educators and community members would understand my child's behavior, and that is a reflection of trauma that she experienced - not her personality or our parenting skills.

Acceptance means respecting that I am the expert on my child and trusting that I know what's best for him/her.



**Acceptance means the world!**

