

Event Planning Guide

Includes:

- Event Ideas
- Event Checklist
- Additional Tips & Tools
- Sample Invitation



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Event Ideas

Hosting an event is a powerful way to raise awareness and educate people about the subject of mental health and the stigma of mental health challenges. Below are three options for impactful events to hold during Mental Health Awareness Week.

Video Screening:

Each Mind Matters has many first-person video resources available. For example, “A New State of Mind: Ending the Stigma of Mental Illness” is a documentary that aired statewide in 2013. This hour-long documentary showcases more than 30 individuals with unique views on the stigma of mental health challenges in California. Host a screening and invite participants to discuss stigma and ways to reduce it throughout the year.

Speaker Series:

An effective way to encourage discussion about mental health challenges is to feature speakers with lived experience who can describe the impact that a mental health challenge has had on their lives. SpeakOurMinds.org is an online tool that links organizations with local mental health speakers. Utilize the website to find speakers that match your interest area who can speak at your event.

Lunchtime Movie Series:

Each Mind Matters supported the production of several short videos that are perfect to show during lunchtime each day. The different series include:

- **Each Mind Matters** – Stories of Hope, Resilience and Recovery – These two-to-six minute videos share the stories of diverse Californians whose lives have been affected by mental health challenges. View them at EachMindMatters.org/stories.
- **Walk In Our Shoes** – These animated stories are first-person accounts from young people about their struggles with mental health challenges. Go to WalkInOurShoes.org to view.
- **Directing Change Public Service Announcements** – These one minute PSAs were created entirely by youth throughout California and focus on stigma and discrimination reduction and suicide prevention. View and download at DirectingChange.org.



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Event Checklist

Planning an event does not have to be difficult or time-consuming. Use the questions below as a basic guideline for your Mental Health Awareness Week event.

Determine who you want to reach

- When is the audience most likely available?
- What type of event would they be interested in attending?
- What location would be convenient for them?
- What type of transportation do they use? Is the location near these options?
- Where do they get their information? Newsletter? Internet? Word-of-mouth?

Determine the type of event

- Do you want to hold a documentary screening?
- Is a lunchtime video series a good fit for your audience?
- Is there a mental health speaker available to attend?

Finalize logistics

- When will the event be held?
- Where will the event be held?
- Will snacks or a meal be provided?
- Is there access to a TV, DVD player, projector, screen or computer?

Send out invitations

- Who should be invited?
- Should invitations be sent by email or through fliers?
- Does a reminder need to be sent?

Measure your success and share it

- Consider taking a count of how many people attend. You can use a sign-in sheet or hand out lime green ribbons to people as they enter and count the number of ribbons distributed.
- Did you reach a new group of people with whom you haven't connected before? Make sure to document that and share that success!
- Ask attendees to offer a comment or quote about their experience. Ask permission (in a media release) to share their comments with others.
- Take photographs of participants and get a release to share their photos and comments in your reports or social media sites to inspire others.



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Event Resources and Additional Info

EachMindMatters.org – The online home of California’s Mental Health Movement. Find inspiring videos on our Stories page, list your event and sign up for our newsletter to find out what’s happening in your area and across the state!

SpeakOurMinds.org – Find a mental health speaker in your area. Download fliers, messages, myths and facts and other materials that may be helpful in bringing your event to life.

NAMICa.org – The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) likely has an affiliate in your area. This may be a good opportunity for partnership, or to find a speaker to share their story with your audience.

SuicidelsPreventable.org – Know the signs. Find the words. Reach out. This site is full of helpful information and links to resources related to suicide prevention.

WalkInOurShoes.org – A resource designed specifically for young people ages 9-13, this site includes videos and interactive activities to introduce mental health and stigma reduction in an easy-to-understand way.

DirectingChange.org – This site features hundreds of short suicide prevention and mental health films that can be downloaded at no cost. Additional information includes a comprehensive list of prevention programs and educational materials for schools and students on these topics, including educational films, Prezis, fact sheets and PowerPoint presentations.

DignityandRecoveryCenter.org – Use the Center Registry to find stigma reduction programs in your area. Check out the Tools for Change section for more resources on institutional, individual and social stigma, plus capacity-building tools and links to national leading organizations.

CalMHSA.org – The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs implemented by CalMHSA are funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63).

