

OUTREACH IDEAS

WHAT INDIVIDUALS CAN DO

Share information locally:

- Ask wellness-oriented businesses like your local gym, yoga studio, or health food store to display one of the posters from the toolkit.
- Reach out to your personal and professional contacts to encourage them to download the toolkit and share its resources with their customers and employees through newsletters and social media.
- Think about other groups in your community that could benefit from downloading the “May is Mental Health Month Toolkit” – doctors’ offices, libraries, schools, churches, synagogues, and other religious gathering places are a good start. You can be a tremendous help in getting this information to people who need it!
- Include mhanational.org/may in Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media posts so people can access the webpages that have been created for Mental Health Month and other mental health information.

Help spread the word about screening:

- Put MHA’s screening link in the bio of your Instagram profile. For example, say, “Check up on your mental health at the link below,” and link to mhascreening.org in the blank area where it says “link.”
- Take a screen at mhascreening.org and share that you “took a checkup from the neck up.” Encourage others to do the same!

Create a personal fundraiser:

During Mental Health Month, you can show your support for Mental Health America by creating a personal fundraiser in just a few simple steps. It’s a great way to share your story, create awareness, and raise money for Mental Health America’s important work. Visit mhanational.org/may for tips on getting started and create a fundraiser today to make a difference!

- Share why mental health matters to you or share your screening story.
- Incorporate mental health fast facts into your fundraiser. Get them at mhanational.org/mentalhealthfacts.
- If gaming is your thing, try starting a fundraiser on Twitch.

Call or email your elected officials and let them know why you think mental health should be a priority:

- Ask your governor or mayor to declare May as Mental Health Month. Use the sample proclamation in the toolkit.
- Get in touch with your U.S. senators. Find yours using the drop-down menu in the top left at senate.gov.
- Contact your U.S. representative. Find yours using the ZIP code search in the top right at house.gov.
- Check out MHA’s most recent “State of Mental Health in America” report, find out where your state ranks, and share it with your elected officials: mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america
- Share detailed data about suicidal thinking, depression, psychosis, and trauma across your state and county from mhanational.org/mhamapping/mha-state-county-data.

Get your employer involved:

- Not sure where to start? Visit mhanational.org/workplace for ideas and resources to share with your company.
- Ask company leadership to recognize and celebrate Mental Health Month in May.
- Share with leadership why mental health is important in the workplace [with this infographic](#).
- Contact your [local MHA affiliate](#) to host a speaker or training in your workplace.

Share your story:

- Post on social media about your own mental health journey.
- Write something for listservs you are a part of, alumni newsletters, blogs, student newspapers – your story really does matter! And people want to hear it!
- Contact your local TV station or student TV station and share your mental health story.

Reach out individually:

- Think about whom you interact with on a regular basis that would find this information useful for themselves or others.
- Think about friends or family with whom you have been wanting to discuss mental health – Mental Health Month is the perfect time to start the conversation.

Show your support:

- Shop MHA's online store to stock up on your mental health awareness swag: store.mhanational.org
- [Donate to MHA](#) or one of its affiliates during May. Find your local affiliate by visiting arc.mhanational.org/find-affiliate.

WHAT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO:

- Organize a community run or walk for mental health (these can also be done virtually). Reach out to your local media for assistance in promoting the event. Email your partners, family members and friends, donors, and local officials inviting them to participate.
- Host a mental health screening or other educational event at a local venue (e.g., town hall, firehouse, church, mall, or library). Have computers or tablets available for people to go to mhascreening.org. Make sure to have a printer so people can print their results. If an in-person event isn't possible, host a webinar or Facebook Live event.
- Team up with other local wellness organizations to host a community meet and greet.
- Plan a pop-up art or music event to raise awareness with community members and the media.
- Work with local businesses or municipalities to light up locations green, the official awareness color for mental health.
- Collaborate with local and state legislators to plan an advocacy event and encourage advocates, consumers, concerned citizens, and community and business leaders to discuss your community's mental health needs with policymakers.

Contact your local MHA affiliate to discuss ideas or collaborate here: arc.mhanational.org/find-affiliate

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO:

Host a Q&A with a mental health professional:

- Invite students to write anonymous questions about mental health conditions and how to take care of their mental health. Have the school counselor answer the questions and have teachers read answers to the class.
- Choose a topic and host an "Ask Me Anything"-style chat online for parents with a clinician or representative from your local department of behavioral health. Promote the event and invite participants to ask the expert any questions they have regarding mental health.

Share stories and information:

- Ensure your students are aware of and know how to access available resources.
- Include mental health as part of the conversation in alumni newsletters, department-wide or student-life communications, and across social media.
- Direct people to MHA's Mental Health Month toolkit, mhanational.org/may in your messaging for the month.
- Host mental health monologues. Invite students to submit anonymous stories to be performed by student actors – or the individuals themselves – at an assembly or record them and share the video.
- Lime green is the official awareness color for mental health – coordinate a day, such as a spirit day or "paint the school green" day, to celebrate and honor mental health awareness.

WHAT BUSINESS LEADERS CAN DO:

- Announce your Mental Health Month plans to your staff with the email template in this toolkit to encourage workers to participate in the month's activities and learn about available supports.
- Share openly with your staff how you prioritize mental health in your personal and professional life.
- Encourage workers to take an anonymous and confidential online mental health screening at mhascreening.org. Posters and postcards are available to print [here](#) and post in common spaces.
- Educate workers about your organization's benefits and resources that support mental health using this [email template](#).
- Light up your work locations green, the official awareness color for mental health, and ask workers to wear green in May.
- Host a workplace wellness event for all staff. Here are [12 tips to start planning](#).
- Collaborate with your [local MHA affiliate](#) on awareness activities or a fundraising campaign.
- Shop MHA's Store, store.mhanational.org, for gifts to reward workers, spread mental health awareness, and support a good cause.
- Find new ways to uplift workers, ensure they are valued and heard, and improve your organization's culture by reviewing your organization's mental health practices. [Review best practices and policies here](#).
- Use the sample posts from this toolkit or share posts from MHA's social media accounts on your organization's social media networks (LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) each day to raise awareness of May is Mental Health Month activities. Make sure to tag MHA's account so we can see it!

MAY WEBINARS

Healing from within: somatic practices for your mind and body

To best care for your mental health, you need a variety of tools to help you cope. This session will explore one tool for healing – somatic practices. Somatic techniques are being used to help cultivate a body-mind connection, regulate emotions, and release stress, tension, and trauma. We will discuss how simple yet powerful exercises impact mental health and how you can explore this kind of healing.

Wired Differently: neurodivergence in the digital age

24/7 information and stimulation can be overwhelming and hard on mental health for anyone. For neurodivergent individuals, living in 2024 poses its challenges, benefits, and opportunities. During this webinar, you will hear from neurodivergent individuals about their experiences, how they have overcome challenges, found support for their mental health, and navigate a world of technology.

From algorithms to empathy: exploring AI's innovations and challenges

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the landscape for mental health providers and giving them insights to potentially enhance patient care. In this session, we will dive into how AI influences help-seeking behaviors, facilitates access to support and resources, and poses ethical considerations, risks, and complex challenges for mental health.

SIGN UP FOR MHA WEBINARS



MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA CONFERENCE

DISRUPT > REFORM > *Transform*

Attend the Mental Health America Conference and join peers, providers, government officials, media, and advocates to ignite a collective spark, share invaluable knowledge, and foster the next wave of advocacy for mental health.

At this year's conference, we will explore ways to DISRUPT systemic barriers, REFORM harmful practices that prevent progress, and TRANSFORM the current landscape, ensuring everyone has equitable opportunity for optimal mental health and well-being.

Nonprofit, young adult, and standard registration rates are available for in-person attendance, and virtual access is free with a suggested donation.

Sept. 19–21, 2024
Washington, D.C.

Register and learn more:
mhanational.org/conference

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH



HELP US LIGHT UP GREEN FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

MHA would like your help with a coordinated effort to reach out to buildings and landmarks across the country with a request to light up green for Mental Health Month. Our goal is to light up as many buildings as possible on the evening of May 1, 2024 (your local area building may want to light up on a different date or, if they already traditionally light up on a different date — that's fine too). If they are willing to light up green for longer than a day, the first week of May or even the entire month would be awesome!

Email Genevieve DeRose at gderose@mhanational.org to let her know your city/state, which building you've requested be green-lit, and if your request was approved.