



live your life
*well*SM
FROM MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA

2010 MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

For more than 50 years, Mental Health America and their hundreds of affiliates from around the country have led the observance of May is Mental Health Month by reaching millions of people through the media, local events and screenings. This unified effort includes educational messages about mental illness and substance use conditions and the importance of mental health. The theme of the 2010 Mental Health Month observance is Live Your Life Well.

We are maintaining our focus on wellness with the continued promotion of the Live Your Life Well campaign launched in the spring of 2009. The website, www.LiveYourLifeWell.org, provides the public with in-depth information about 10 specific tools—supported by a strong body of research—which can be used to promote resilience during major life changes and/or times of stress. These tools are also effective in periods without changes or stress.

1. **Connect with Others.** People who feel they have meaningful relationships are happier and healthier—and may even live longer.

2. **Stay Positive.** People who regularly focus on the positive aspects of their lives are less upset by painful thoughts or memories.

3. **Get Physically Active.** Exercise relieves tense muscles, improves mood and sleep, and increases energy and strength.

4. **Help Others.** Those who consistently help other people tend to experience less depression and a greater peace of mind.

5. **Get Enough Rest.** People who don't get enough rest face a number of possible risks, including weight gain, decreased memory, impaired driving and heart problems.

6. **Create Joy and Satisfaction.** Fun activities create positive emotions that can boost one's ability to bounce back from stress.

7. **Eat Well.** Eating healthy food and regular meals can increase your energy, lower the risk of developing certain diseases and positively influence mood.

8. **Take Care of Your Spirit.** People who have strong spiritual lives may be healthier and live longer. Spirituality reduces stress and the negative impact of many diseases.

9. **Deal Better with Hard Times.** People who get support, problem-solve or focus on the positive aspects of their lives are likely to handle tough times better.

10. **Get Professional Help if You Need It.** If the problems in someone's life are stopping them from functioning well or feeling good, professional help can make a big difference.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for May is Mental Health Month and of the **Live Your Life Well**SM campaign are:

- **Increase awareness that mental health is integral to overall health and well-being**
- **Increase awareness that there are 10 evidence-based ways to preserve and strengthen your mental health**
- **Increase the percentage of people who believe that they can take action to maintain and protect their mental health**

Mental Health America is pleased to provide our affiliates with a comprehensive toolkit for May is Mental Health Month. The toolkit provides you with materials you need to spread awareness of the new **Live Your Life Well**SM initiative, as well as identifying your organization as the principal resource in your community.

Included in the kit are the following:

- Key Messages
- FAQs about **Live Your Life Well**SM
- Radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- Sample Press Release
- Media Pitch Letter
- Drop-in Article (short and long)
- Sample Mayoral Proclamation

If you have questions about Mental Health Month, please contact Candace Daniels, Manager of Public Education at (703) 838-7537 or cdaniels@mentalhealthamerica.net.

KEY MESSAGES

While life is often stressful, it is possible to maintain and protect our mental health. It is vital to our overall health and well-being.

- Every day, Americans are affected by the challenges, stresses and demands on their lives. Every day, they seek help in responding to them.
- Good mental health strengthens your ability to cope with stress and more serious challenges.

To help Americans handle these challenges, Mental Health America has developed an innovative campaign to provide people with the tools they need to deal during stressful times.

- At the heart of **Live Your Life Well**SM is the website, **www.LiveYourLifeWell.org**, dedicated to sharing information on specific tools each of us can use to buffer the effects of stress and cope better with the many challenges we face.
- This campaign puts supportive and informative content together in one place.
- All the information is free as a public service of Mental Health America.
- **Live Your Life Well**SM provides information on 10 tools people can use to promote resilience during times of stress.
- From relaxation techniques and journaling exercises to simple ways to get better sleep and improve eating habits, this site offers a wide range of resources to build resilience and well-being. **Live Your Life Well**SM also includes information on seeking the help of a mental health professional.
- The 10 **Live Your Life Well**SM tools provide Americans with small changes that over time, can make a real difference in helping us manage our challenges.

May is Mental Health Month.

For the past 50 years, the observance of this month has reached millions of Americans with important messages about mental health.

With a century of service to the nation, Mental Health America is the country's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives. We represent a growing movement of Americans who promote mental wellness for the health and well-being of the nation; every day and in times of crisis.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is Live Your Life WellSM?

Live Your Life WellSM is a national public education campaign designed to help people better manage stress and/or major life changes by taking action to preserve and strengthen their mental health. **Live Your Life WellSM** offers 10 evidence-based tools that one can use to support optimal mental health. The 10 tools are based on a body of scientific evidence in behavioral and medical research. The heart of the campaign is the **Live Your Life WellSM** website (www.LiveYourLifeWell.org), which provides information on the tools and concrete, easy-to-understand actions that people can take. The campaign was developed by Mental Health America, the leading nonprofit in the nation dedicated to promoting mental health.

Who is Mental Health America?

Celebrating 100 years of mental health advocacy, Mental Health America is the country's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives. With our more than 300 affiliates nationwide, we represent a growing movement of Americans who promote mental wellness for the health and well-being of the nation—every day and in times of crisis. You can find out more about Mental Health America by visiting our website at www.mentalhealthamerica.net.

What is the scientific basis for the 10 tools featured on the website?

Mental Health America looked at a wide range of research in mental health, a field that has made enormous strides in recent years. There is now a better understanding of how our thoughts and actions can impact our mental health. The tools are based on information gathered from hundreds of research studies conducted at major universities or government agencies.

Do I have to use all 10 tools to see a difference in my life?

Read about the tools on the website. Start by working on one or two until the change becomes part of your daily life. Any positive change, no matter how small it may seem, can make a real difference. These tools represent reasonable actions, that if used consistently, can increase your comfort and your ability to reduce your level of stress and begin to build a more rewarding life.

How hard are the 10 tools to use?

When you're under a great deal of stress, it may feel overwhelming to make any change in your life, no matter how small. But the goal of **Live Your Life WellSM** is to give you doable, manageable activities that can really make a difference. You don't need to do all of them, or try many of them all at once. But small changes, over time, may make a real difference in helping you manage the challenges you're facing.

Is there a cost for Live Your Life WellSM?

No. **Live Your Life WellSM** is provided at no cost to the public as a service of Mental Health America, a nonprofit organization.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is the time commitment needed for Live Your Life WellSM?

Live Your Life WellSM does not require a significant time commitment. Log onto the website in your spare time, and begin to read some of the tools and suggestions we make. Try one or two that seem doable given your life circumstances. Mental Health America developed **Live Your Life WellSM** so that it would be helpful and relevant to everyone. The purpose is to help you learn new skills and make your own choices about activities to integrate into your life.

What about my confidentiality?

Your privacy is very important to us. You can visit the **Live Your Life WellSM** website and view all of its content without registering or providing any personal information. Our privacy policy is posted on the website and we take it very seriously. You may wish to sign up for our regular e-mail updates, but that is entirely optional.

Will the activities of Live Your Life WellSM prevent me from getting a mental illness, such as anxiety or depression?

Many mental illnesses, like other medical conditions, are caused by a combination of factors, including biology and one's environment. It's important to understand that mental illnesses are real and, in most cases, treatable and are never anyone's "fault." For some people, it may be possible to reduce the likelihood or severity of some mental illnesses, such as anxiety or depression, by engaging in activities that increase their ability to effectively deal with life's challenges. Finally, if you do think you have symptoms of a mental illness, it's important to seek professional help.

If I have a mental illness, will Live Your Life WellSM help me?

The activities of **Live Your Life WellSM** are no substitute for professional care if you have a mental illness. If you think you have symptoms of a mental illness, you should immediately talk to your doctor or a mental health professional for an accurate diagnosis and to find out about treatments that may be right for you. If you have been diagnosed with a mental illness, and are under the care of a professional, you may find the activities described in the **Live Your Life WellSM** website helpful and supportive during your recovery.

Is a computer required to get information about Your Life WellSM?

For now, the detailed information on the **Live Your Life WellSM** is only available online at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org. However, our 300 affiliates of Mental Health America, are wonderful sources of information on a variety of mental health topics. If you're unable to access a computer, you may call our toll-free phone line at 1-800-969-6642.

AUDIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCER SCRIPTS

ANNOUNCER V/O:

Life can be full of stress and worry. Whether it's economic woes, a tough job or family concerns, it's easy to become overwhelmed. With Mental Health America's Live Your Life Well campaign, there's a way to find help and support. The campaign is grounded in research that can make a real difference – activities you can do to protect and improve your health and your life. To find out to more, visit their website at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org. This message is brought to you as a public service of [Affiliate] and [this radio station].

ANNOUNCER V/O:

In these tough economic times, most of us are experiencing stress and worry. Mental Health America's Live Your Life Well Campaign can give you the information you need to better manage life's challenges. The Live Your Life Well Campaign consists of 10 easy-to-understand tools that can help you protect your health, your relationships and your well-being. Learn more by visiting www.LiveYourLifeWell.org. This message is brought to you as a public service of [Affiliate] and [this radio station].

ANNOUNCER V/O:

When you're feeling stressed – whether by hard times, or just daily life – it's easy to become overwhelmed. But there are things each of us can do to help us get through stressful times. The Live Your Life Well Campaign provides helpful information on dealing with life's ups and downs. Learn how you can protect and improve your health and your life by visiting their website at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org. This message is brought to you as a public service of [Affiliate] and [this radio station].

ANNOUNCER V/O:

Stress can take a toll on your health, your mood and your relationships. the Live Your Life Well Campaign wants to help you deal with the challenges most of us face every day. The campaign features 10 specific tools each of us can do to better handle challenges, protect our health, and strengthen our well-being. Learn more by visiting their website at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org. This message is brought to you as a public service of [Affiliate] and [this radio station].

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH AND EVERY MONTH: “Live Your Life Well” Mental Health America Encourages Americans to Use 10 Tested Tools to Help Meet, Respond to Daily Challenges

Every day, Americans are affected by the challenges, stresses and demands on their lives. And every day, they seek help in responding to them. The good news is that there are effective tools that are readily available and free for anyone to use to help improve their well-being.

May is Mental Health Month. Mental Health America is encouraging Americans to use these tools, which are the foundation for the **Live Your Life Well**SM campaign.

Live Your Life WellSM is a national public education campaign dedicated to helping people better cope with stress and enhance their well-being. Stress can take a huge toll on a person's health, mood, productivity and relationships. These evidence-based tools can help counterbalance these effects.

Mental Health America created **Live Your Life Well**SM to increase the number of people who take action to protect their mental health in the midst of ongoing stress, as well as in times of great personal challenge.

The heart of the program is the **Live Your Life Well**SM website – www.LiveYourLifeWell.org – that provides 10 research-based tools that can be easily integrated into your daily life.

“We all face challenges and stresses in our life, which sometimes cause depression and anxiety,” said [NAME and TITLE OF MHA EXECUTIVE]. “People tell us they often feel hopeless, but there are tools they can use to face difficult times with greater resilience.”

From relaxation techniques and journaling exercises to simple ways to get better sleep and improve eating habits, the website offers a wide range of resources to build resilience and well-being. **Live Your Life Well**SM also includes information on seeking the help of a mental health professional.

“The research is clear that mental health is essential for overall health and well-being,” said [NAME and TITLE OF MHA EXECUTIVE]. “This program puts supportive and informative content together in one place. There’s no other website or public education effort like it.”

More details on each of the 10 tools are available on our campaign website which is free to the public at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org. Additionally, people in [NAME of CITY or STATE] can contact Mental Health America of [CITY, COUNTY or STATE] for more information, to locate mental health resources, or to help find a mental health professional, by calling [PHONE NUMBER] or emailing [EMAIL].

*With a century of service to the nation, **Mental Health America** is the country's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives.*

[Brief description of local MHA affiliate]

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PITCH LETTER

Dear (Journalist),

Every day, Americans are affected by the challenges, stresses and demands on their lives. And every day, they seek help in responding to them. The good news is that there are effective tools that are readily available and free for anyone to use to help improve their well-being.

May is Mental Health Month. Mental Health America is encouraging Americans to use these tools, which are the foundation for the **Live Your Life Well**SM campaign.

Live Your Life WellSM is a national public education campaign dedicated to helping people better cope with stress and enhance their well-being. Stress can take a huge toll on a person's health, mood, productivity and relationships, but these evidence-based tools can help counterbalance these effects.

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The heart of the program is the **Live Your Life Well**SM website – www.LiveYourLifeWell.org – that provides 10 research-based tools that can be easily integrated into your daily life.

From relaxation techniques and journaling exercises to simple ways to get better sleep and improve eating habits, the website offers a wide range of resources to build resilience and well-being. **Live Your Life Well**SM also includes information on seeking the help of a mental health professional.

The research is clear that mental health is essential for overall health and well-being.

This campaign puts supportive and informative content together in one place.

There's no other website or public education effort like it.

All of the information on the **Live Your Life Well**SM website is offered free as a public service. In addition to the website, support is available locally, including assistance with finding a mental health professional if needed, through (affiliate name), an affiliate of Mental Health America based here in (area).

We hope that you will share information about the **Live Your Life Well**SM campaign and website with your (readers/audience). For more information, or to schedule an interview with a local mental health expert to talk about the campaign, please contact me at: (phone/email).

I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,
[Name]

DROP IN ARTICLE: short version

FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH AND EVERY MONTH: “Live Your Life Well”

Mental Health America Encourages Americans to Use 10 Tested Tools to Help Meet, Respond to Daily Challenges

Every day, Americans are affected by the challenges, stresses and demands on their lives. And every day, they seek help in responding to them. The good news is that there are effective tools that are readily available and free for anyone to use to help improve their well-being.

May is Mental Health Month. Mental Health America is encouraging Americans to use these tools which are the foundation for the **Live Your Life WellSM** campaign.

Live Your Life WellSM (www.LiveYourLifeWell.org) provides 10 research-based tools that can be easily integrated into your everyday life. From relaxation techniques and journaling exercises to simple ways to get better sleep and improve eating habits, our website offers a wide range of resources to build resilience and well-being. **Live Your Life WellSM** also includes information on seeking the help of a mental health professional.

These tools do not require making drastic changes to your life or a significant time commitment. The website provides clear, easy-to-understand information on how to incorporate these simple changes into your life. All of the contents are free to the public.

To learn more about each of the 10 tools and how to incorporate them into your life to better manage stress, visit our **Live Your Life WellSM** website at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org or contact your local Mental Health America affiliate at: (LOCAL PHONE NUMBER).

DROP IN ARTICLE: long version

FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH AND EVERY MONTH: “Live Your Life Well”

Mental Health America Encourages Americans to Use 10 Tested Tools to Help Meet, Respond to Daily Challenges

Every day, Americans are affected by the challenges, stresses and demands on their lives. And every day, they seek help in responding to them. The good news is that there are effective tools that are readily available and free for anyone to use to help improve their well-being.

May is Mental Health Month. Mental Health America is encouraging Americans to use these tools which are the foundation for the **Live Your Life WellSM** campaign.

Our **Live Your Life WellSM** website (www.LiveYourLifeWell.org) provides 10 research-based tools that can be easily integrated into your everyday life.

- 1. Connect with Others.** Create new connections at work or in the community, and make efforts to strengthen your existing connections with family and friends.
- 2. Stay Positive.** Noticing and appreciating the positive aspects of your life offers a great mood boost.
- 3. Get Physically Active.** Exercise relieves your tense muscles, improves your mood and sleep, and increases your energy and strength.
- 4. Help Others.** Keep it simple for starters; hold a door open for someone or smile and say “Good Morning!”
- 5. Get Enough Sleep.** Make your bed a sleep haven; avoid tasks like paying bills and writing reports.
- 6. Create Joy and Satisfaction.** Read a humorous book, watch or listen to comedy, and try to laugh at some of the hassles in your life if you can.
- 7. Eat Well.** Eating healthy food and regular meals can increase your energy, lower the risk of developing certain diseases and positively influence your mood.
- 8. Take Care of Your Spirit.** It’s not all about religion; try meditating or getting in touch with your deeper self.
- 9. Deal Better with Hard Times.** Getting support, problem-solving or focusing on the positive aspects in your life can help you handle tough times better.
- 10. Get Professional Help if You Need It.** If the problems in your life are stopping you from functioning well or feeling good, professional help can make a big difference.

Good mental health keeps you productive, energetic, happy and hopeful – even in the face of stress. There are steps that you can take to make a real difference in your ability to handle challenges. The tools found on our **Live Your Life WellSM** website do not require making drastic changes to your life or a significant time commitment. The website provides clear, easy-to-understand information on how to incorporate these changes into your life. All of the contents are free to the public.

To learn more about each of the 10 tools and how to incorporate them into your life to better manage stress, visit our **Live Your Life Well**SM website at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org or contact your local Mental Health America affiliate at: (LOCAL PHONE NUMBER).

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Encourage your local public officials to go on the record in support of mental health. Below, please find a sample proclamation that designates May as Mental Health Month. An official signing of a proclamation is a perfect occasion for a news event, photo opportunity or other activity.

Mental Health Month 2010: *Live Your Life Well*SM

WHEREAS, mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, all Americans experience times of difficulty and stress in their lives; and

WHEREAS, prevention is an effective way to reduce the burden of mental health conditions; and

WHEREAS, there is a strong body of research that supports specific tools that all Americans can use to better handle challenges, and protect their health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, mental health conditions are real and prevalent in our nation; and

WHEREAS, with effective treatment, those individuals with mental health conditions can recover and lead full, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, each business, school, government agency, healthcare provider, organization and citizen shares the burden of mental health problems and has a responsibility to promote mental wellness and support prevention efforts.

THEREFORE, I [NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL], do hereby proclaim May 2010 as Mental Health Month in [STATE OR COMMUNITY]. As the [TITLE OF LOCAL OFFICIAL], I also call upon the citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses and schools in [STATE OR COMMUNITY] to recommit our community to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health, the steps our citizens can take to protect their mental health, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental health conditions.