

OUTREACH IDEAS

WHAT YOU CAN DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Share information locally:

- Ask wellness-oriented businesses like your local gym, yoga studio, or health food store to put up one of the posters from this 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, 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 platform 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 site 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 website blank.
- Take a screen at mhascreening.org and share that you "took a check-up 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 www.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 senators: www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm
- Contact your representative. Find yours using the ZIP code search feature in the top right at www.house.gov.
- Check out MHA's most recent *State of Mental Health in America* report and find out where your state ranks and share with your elected officials: www.mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america
- Share detailed data about suicidal thinking, depression, psychosis, and trauma across your state and county from www.mhanational.org/mhamapping/mha-state-county-data.
- Check out MHA's series of reports on Communities in Need Across the U.S. during COVID-19:
 - Suicide: www.mhanational.org/research-reports/suicide-and-covid-19-communities-need-across-us
 - Severe Depression: www.mhanational.org/research-reports/severe-depression-and-covid-19-communities-need-across-us
 - Trauma: www.mhanational.org/research-reports/trauma-and-covid-19-communities-need-across-us
 - Psychosis: www.mhanational.org/research-reports/psychosis-and-covid-19-communities-need-across-us

Get your employer involved:

- Ask company leadership to recognize and celebrate Mental Health Month in May.
- Share why mental health should be a priority in the workplace with the infographic at www.mhanational.org/sites/default/files/workplace/toolkit/Prioritizing-Mental-Health-Workplace.pdf.
- Request support to host a mental health campaign during May with the sample letter at www.mhanational.org/sites/default/files/workplace/toolkit/Building-Case-WPMH.pdf.
- Suggest they share information in company-wide communications and put up the posters from this toolkit in breakrooms and other common spaces.
- Help bring a wellness or mental health speaker to your workplace by contacting your local MHA affiliate: arc.mhanational.org/find-affiliate.

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, students 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 who you interact with on a daily basis that would find this information useful for themselves or others.
- Think about friends or family who you have been wanting to talk to about 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 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 www.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.
- Plan an advocacy event. This could be a day at your state capitol or an email campaign. Invite advocates, consumers, concerned citizens, and community and business leaders to reach out to policymakers to discuss your community's mental health needs.
- Team up with other local mental health and wellness organizations to host a community meet-and-greet.

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR STUDENTS

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.

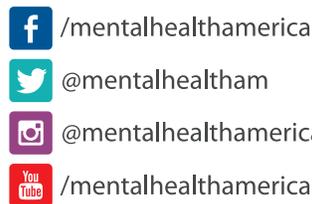
Share stories and information:

- 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 communications, student life, and social media.
- Direct people to MHA's Mental Health Month Toolkit, www.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.
- Access additional resources specifically designed for students, parents, and teachers at mhanational.org/back-school.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO

- Post one or both of the toolkit posters in your office or business.
- Use the drop-in article from this year's toolkit and send an email to your staff to raise awareness for mental health.
- Link to mental health resources, like an employee assistance program or telehealth services, in your company newsletter.
- Encourage workers to take an anonymous and confidential online mental health screening at www.mhascreening.org.
- Publish a blog describing how the company supports its workers' mental health.
- Encourage employees to share personal wellness or self-care tips in newsletters or messaging channels.
- Lime green is the official awareness color for mental health – ask workers to wear green on a predetermined date in May, or light up your office building green (see instructions below).

- Plan a wellness event using these tips at www.mhanational.org/sites/default/files/workplace/toolkit/12-Tips-Planning-Wellness-Event.pdf.
- Host an in-person mental health training, “lunch and learn,” or webinar.
- Connect with one of MHA’s affiliates and bring a speaker to your workplace. Find your local affiliate by visiting arc.mhanational.org/find-affiliate.
- Shop MHA’s Store, store.mhanational.org, for gifts that can be used to reward workers and spread awareness about mental health.
- Donate a portion of your proceeds to MHA or one of its affiliates during May. Find your local affiliate by visiting arc.mhanational.org/find-affiliate.
- Invite a wellness professional, like a clinician, to do a “social media takeover” and allow them to share information about workplace wellness or mental health within your industry and take questions on your social media for a whole day.
- Develop or improve workplace policies that uplift workers, ensure they are valued and heard, and improve an organization’s overall culture of well-being by downloading [MHA’s Workplace Mental Health Toolkit](#).
- 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 profile so we can see it!



HELP US LIGHT UP GREEN FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

Mental Health America would like to enlist 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, 2023** (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). It would be great if the building can light up for the first week of May or even the entire month. Email Jackie Zimmermann at zimmermann@mhanational.org to let her know your city/state, which building you’ve requested be green-lit, and if your request was approved.



THE L.L.BEAN FEEL-GOOD CHALLENGE

In recognition of Mental Health Month and the mental health benefits of time outside, L.L.Bean invites you to participate in its Feel-Good Challenge, where people across the country work together towards a combined goal of 500,000 hours outside during the month of May. L.L.Bean is donating \$25,000 to Mental Health America – and will donate \$50,000 if the challenge is met during May.

Since this is a combined challenge, you only need to spend the time that's right for you, whether that's hours or minutes. Even a small amount of time outside can make a big impact on one's mental well-being. Through your joint efforts, you'll raise awareness of the importance time outside has on mental health. Plus, you'll have a wonderful time outdoors doing the things you love – or maybe even trying something new.

Visit mhanational.org/llbean to learn how to participate and together we can raise awareness for mental health and the feel-good benefits of time spent outdoors.