

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 *Back to Basics* 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 different Back to Basics webpages.

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.

Start a Facebook, Twitch, or Instagram fundraiser:

- Share why mental health matters to you or share your screening story.
- Share why catching symptoms of mental health conditions and taking action early is important.
- Incorporate mental health fast facts into your fundraiser. Get them at www.mhanational.org/mentalhealthfacts.
- Start an online fundraiser in honor of a loved one.

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: www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative
- 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
- 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

- Let them know that May is Mental Health Month.
- Share why mental health should be a priority in the workplace for supervisors. Visit www.mhanational.org/mind-workplace to access MHA's 2022 Mind the Workplace report, scheduled for release in mid-April.
- 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: <https://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 your friends or family who you have been wanting to start a conversation with - 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: <https://store.mhanational.org/>.
- Donate to MHA or one of its affiliates during May. Find your local affiliate by visiting <https://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 each policymaker 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 in 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 "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 in your messaging for the month at www.mhanational.org/may.
- 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 BUSINESSES CAN DO

- Use the the drop-in article from this year's toolkit and send a Mental Health Month themed email to your constituents.
- Put out a company blog in support of mental health in the workplace.
- Encourage employees to share wellness or self-care tips in newsletters or messaging channels.
- Link to mental health resources (like your company Employee Assistance Program) in your company newsletter.
- Host an online chat with community stakeholders, other organizations, local leaders, or industry support organizations.
- Connect with one of MHA's affiliates and bring a speaker to your workplace. Find your local affiliate by visiting <https://arc.mhanational.org/find-affiliate>.
- Lime green is the official awareness color for mental health; consider releasing a limited-edition mental health month themed product.
- Host a wellness webinar.
- 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.
- Post posters from MHA's *Back to Basics* toolkit in your office or business.
- Shop MHA's store and take a picture with your merch to share online <https://store.mhanational.org>.

- Donate a portion of your proceeds to MHA or one of its affiliates during May. Find your local affiliate by visiting <https://arc.mhanational.org/find-affiliate>.
- Use the sample posts from this toolkit, or share posts from MHA's social media accounts on your organization's social media networks: Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, etc. each day to raise awareness of May as Mental Health Month activities. Make sure to tag MHA's profile using the account information below so we can see it!

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HELP US LIGHT UP GREEN FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

MHA 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, 2022** (since May 1 is a Sunday 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 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.