

## Suggested Mental Health Awareness Month Activities

The activities below are a good place to start. You can change them to make them work for your community. If you come up with a new idea, please feel free to tell us on the OKMHCA website:

### Workplace Activities:

- Hold depression and/or anxiety screening at major companies. Refer employees to state chapter members or other resources, if indicated.
- Teach a weekday, pro bono, stress reduction class at those same companies.
- Display AMHCA “Connection” on workplace bulletin boards.
- Offer workplace lectures on specific mental health topics at lunchtime.
- Develop an “Employee Mental Health Package” using ACA or AMHCA resources.
- Have the company send its employees an email that contains a positive thought, joke, puzzle, mental health fact, etc. from a list created by a volunteer. Ask the company to reference your organization, agency, etc. in the email.

### Community Activities:

- Hold depression and/or anxiety screenings at the mall and other public places.
- Teach pro bono stress reduction classes at hospitals, community centers, libraries, etc.
- Give posters that publicize Mental Health Awareness Month to businesses, medical offices, hospitals, schools, mental health facilities, etc., which they can

display.

- Develop art exhibitions that showcase art, photographs, sculptures, etc., from consumers of mental health services. This could be done in a variety of ways:

**A.** Many inpatient or day treatment facilities will exhibit their clients’ art with an accompanying lecture from a facility therapist or annotated notes on each work. The works are generally exhibited anonymously and are sometimes for sale.

**B.** Ask therapists to display their clients’ art, anonymously and with a release. This art is often annotated and could be for sale.

**C.** Sponsor an art contest for the month. The competition can include a variety of art mediums and be open to anyone. Your community’s theme for Mental Health Awareness Month could be the theme of the competition. Include a variety of categories and ages. Prizes may be offered and could include trophies or cash awards.

- Host a writing and poetry exhibition with a discussion facilitated by a therapist with the appropriate background.
- Hold a golf tournament for mental health, which a local business or pharmaceutical company could sponsor.
- Sponsor a creative writing contest for the best short story, article, and poetry related to the theme of Mental Health Awareness Month. Winning entries could either be published in your community newspaper, or another special publication. Cash awards or trophies could be given.
- Teach a free, introductory mood disorder

workshop for clients, and their families and friends.

- Hold a workshop on growing through grief and loss.
- Have volunteers perform a play that deals with mental health issues.
- Host a workshop on obsessive-compulsive disorder for clients and their families and friends.
- Organize a Mental Health Awareness Day or other Mental Health Awareness events.

### Schools—Elementary:

Assign a team of therapists to plan a “Mental Health Awareness Day,” working with the school counselor.

### Ideas for topics:

- Basic relaxation for children
- A puppet show on various topics related to mental health for kids
- Anger management
- Socialization skills
- Communication
- Identifying and talking about feelings
- Self-esteem
- Family issues
- Read a story in the classroom and discuss it with the class.
- Art project dealing with mental health
- Small group discussions on topics suggested by the school counselor

(Continued on page 5)

## Activities, Cont'd.

- Parenting classes on recognizing and treating substance abuse for the parents

### Schools-Secondary:

*Work with the school administration and counselors to offer classes in:*

- Basic relaxation skills
- Communicating with friends and family
- Anger management
- Decision-making skills
- Identity issues
- Family issues
- Art projects
- Small group discussions on topics that the school's administration and counselors suggest
- Recognizing and treating substance abuse
- Parenting teenagers for the parents

### Government and Community Agencies:

This month provides a great reason for all government and community groups that have an interest in mental health to convene. A meeting could be held to develop strategic planning, dialogue or network, or to share advances in the field of mental health. Your local mental health professionals



could spearhead the meeting and be joined by state agencies that

want to help. Invite state legislators and other members of the government's executive branch as special guests, particularly those that you are trying to educate about mental health issues and gain their support. Invite everybody to participate in Mental Health Awareness Month and a March for Mental Health.

### Media:

The media offers a rich variety of resources to publicize mental health services. Please plan to use the media liberally. You can interview therapists and clients (anonymously), contact local radio stations and ask them to highlight mental health in a "Wellness" segment and find an expert for them, or contact your local cable company and ask if you can do a Public Service Announcement.



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*Hold a panel discussion on mental health on your local radio station. Invite experts to be interviewed a have a call-in segment for listeners.*

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