



DEAR COLLEAGUES,

For more than 60 years, Mental Health America and its hundreds of affiliates 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 the importance of whole-person health and wellness.

For 2013 Mental Health America's toolkit uses the theme *Pathways to Wellness*, which is a call to action for Americans to identify strategies that work for themselves individually to attain better overall health status. This theme can be used in conjunction with information about programs and services available through local affiliates.

Key Messages

1. Wellness—it's essential to living a full and productive life. It's about keeping healthy as well as getting healthy.
2. Wellness involves a set of skills and strategies that prevent the onset or shorten the duration of illness and promote recovery and well-being. Wellness is more than just the absence of disease.
3. Wellness is more than an absence of disease. It involves complete general, mental and social well-being. And mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. The fact is our overall well-being is tied to the balance that exists between our emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health.
4. Whatever our situation, we are all at risk of stress given the demands of daily life and the challenges it brings—at home, at work and in life. Steps that build and maintain well-being and help us all achieve wellness involve a balanced diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, a sense of self-worth, development of coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends and community.
5. These steps should be complemented by taking stock of one's well-being through regular mental health checkups and screenings. Just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it's a good idea to take periodic reading of our emotional well-being.
6. Fully embracing the concept of wellness not only improves health in the mind, body and spirit, but also maximizes one's potential to lead a full and productive life. Using strategies that promote resiliency and strengthen mental health and prevent mental health and substance use conditions lead to improved general health and a healthier society: greater academic achievement by our children, a more productive economy, and families that stay together.

This toolkit includes:

Media materials

- Sample Press Release
- Drop-In Article
- Sample Mayoral Proclamation

Fact Sheets

- What is Wellness?
- Four Simple Steps
- Understanding the Social Determinants of Health
- Addressing the Social Determinants of Health

Marketing materials (graphics available for download at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/may/marketing)

- Poster
- Logo
- Facebook Cover Photos
- Square Button Graphic
- Vertical Banner Graphic
- Horizontal Banner Graphic

MHA Affiliates and other community health organizations are welcome to use these materials as they see fit to supplement their May is Mental Health Month programs or other programs during 2013.

We hope that you find this information helpful in your outreach efforts. If you have questions or concerns about the items in this toolkit, please contact Erica Ahmed at eahmed@mentalhealthamerica.net.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [DATE]

CONTACT: [NAME, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL]

May is Mental Health Month: Pathways to Wellness *Essential to Leading Full and Productive Lives*

Pathways to Wellness—this year’s theme for May is Mental Health Month—calls attention to strategies and approaches that help all Americans achieve wellness and good mental and overall health.

“Wellness is essential to living a full and productive life,” said [NAME, TITLE, AFFILIATE]. “We may have different ideas about what wellness means, but it involves a set of skills and strategies prevent the onset or shorten the duration of illness and promote recovery and well-being. It’s about keeping healthy as well as getting healthy.”

[NAME] said wellness is more than absence of disease.

“It involves complete general, mental and social well-being. And mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. The fact is our overall well-being is tied to the balance that exists between our emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health.”

[NAME] said everyone is at risk of stress given the demands it brings and the challenges at work and at home.

But there are steps that maintain well-being and help everyone achieve wellness. These involve a balanced diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, a sense of self-worth, development of coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends and the community.

[NAME] said these steps should be complemented by taking stock of one’s well-being through regular mental health checkups.

“Just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it’s a good idea to take periodic stock of our emotional well-being. One recent study said everyone should get their mental health checked as often as they get a physical, and many doctors routinely screen for mental health, which typically include a series of questions about lifestyle, eating and drinking habits and mental wellness. But a checkup doesn’t necessarily require a special trip to the doctor. There are also online screening tools you can use. While conditions like depression are common—roughly 1 in 5 Americans have a mental health condition—they are extremely treatable.”

“Fully embracing the concept of wellness not only improves health in the mind, body and spirit, but also maximizes one’s potential to lead a full and productive life,” [NAME] said.

“Using strategies that promote resiliency and strengthen mental health and prevent mental health and substance use conditions lead to improved general health and a healthier society: greater academic achievement by our children, a more productive economy, and families that stay together.

“It’s why pathways to wellness are so important and why we need to spread the word.”

May is Mental Health Month was started 64 years ago by [AFFILIATE’s] national organization, Mental Health America, to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of mental wellness for everyone.

[DESCRIPTION OF MHA AFFILIATE]

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DROP-IN ARTICLE

Pathways to Wellness: Leading Full and Productive Lives

Wellness—it's essential to living a full and productive life. We may have different ideas about what wellness means, but it involves a set of skills and strategies that prevent the onset or shorten the duration of illness and promote recovery and well-being. It's about keeping healthy as well as getting healthy.

Pathways to Wellness— this year's theme of May is Mental Health Month—calls attention to strategies and approaches that help all Americans achieve wellness and good mental and overall health.

Wellness is more than an absence of disease. It involves complete general, mental and social well-being. And mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. The fact is our overall well-being is tied to the balance that exists between our emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health.

Whatever our situation, we are all at risk of stress given the demands of daily life and the challenges it brings—at home, at work and in life. Steps that build and maintain well-being and help us all achieve wellness involve a balanced diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, a sense of self-worth, development of coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends and the community.

These steps should be complemented by taking stock of one's well-being through regular mental health checkups. Just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it's a good idea to take periodic reading of our emotional well-being. One recent study said everyone should get their mental health checked as often as they get a physical, and many doctors routinely screen for mental health, which typically include a series of questions about lifestyle, eating and drinking habits and mental wellness. But a checkup doesn't necessarily require a special trip to the doctor. There are also online screening tools you can use. While conditions like depression are common—roughly 1 in 5 Americans have a mental health condition—they are extremely treatable.

Fully embracing the concept of wellness not only improves health in the mind, body and spirit, but also maximizes one's potential to lead a full and productive life. Using strategies that promote resiliency and strengthen mental health and prevent mental health and substance use conditions lead to improved general health and a healthier society: greater academic achievement by our children, a more productive economy, and families that stay together.

This May is Mental Health Month, [\[AFFILIATE\]](#) is spreading the word about why pathways to wellness are so important at [\[COMMUNITY EVENTS\]](#). For more information visit [\[AFFILIATE WEBSITE\]](#).



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 2013 "Pathways to Wellness"

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, promotion and prevention are effective ways to reduce the burden of mental health conditions; and

WHEREAS, there is a strong body of research that supports user-friendly tools that all Americans can access 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, faith-based organization, health care provider, and citizen has a responsibility to promote mental wellness and support prevention efforts.

THEREFORE, I [\[NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL\]](#), do hereby proclaim May 2013 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.