



# **nami** **ON CAMPUS**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS

The **ACTIVITY GUIDE** supports **NAMI on Campus** High School Clubs to start activities on school campus.

# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
Acknowledgement.....	5
Benefits to Students and Teachers .....	6
List of Activities .....	7
September: Suicide Prevention .....	7
Activity #1: Suicide Prevention Plan- Green Ribbon Campaign (Credit to Each Mind Matters).....	8
Activity #2: Bring Send Silence Packing to Your Location.....	8
Activity #3: Positive Affirmations.....	9
October: Stigma .....	10
Activity #1: Ending the Silence .....	10
Activity #2: Stigma Scenarios and What to do? .....	11
Activity #3: Week-Long Language Awareness.....	13
November: How to Help a Friend.....	14
Activity #1: What is a Healthy Relationship? (Credit to: Chino High School).....	14
Activity #2: Watching a Film with Discussion After .....	15
Activity #3: Guest Speaker: Therapist or School Counselor.....	15
December: Families and Mental Health.....	16
Activity #1: Kindness Grams (Credit to: NOC Applied Technology Center High School).....	16
Activity #2: Family Mental Health Fair .....	17
Activity #3: Group Discussion about What Family Means and How They Give Support.....	17
January: Advocacy.....	19
Activity #1: What are the Roles of Advocacy? .....	19
Activity #2: Learn How to Share Your Story to Make a Difference.....	20
Activity #3: Practice Meeting with a Policy Maker.....	20

February: Mental Health Across Cultures.....22

    Activity #1: Watching a Film with Discussion After .....22

    Activity #2: Discussion about the Effects of Culture on Mental Illness .....23

March: Mental Health .....25

    Activity #1: Mental Health Quiz Game during Lunch Time (Credit to: The Preuss High School)..... 25

    Activity #2: Yoga Workshop (Credit to: Chino High School).....26

    Activity #3: Puppy Therapy (Credit to: Patrick Henry High School).....26

April: Careers in Mental Health.....28

    Activity #1: Speak and Listen Exercise .....28

    Activity #2: Guest Speaker.....28

    Activity #3: Mental Health Profession Panel .....29

May: Mental Illness .....31

    Activity #1: Invite a Guest Speaker to Talk about Their Experience with  
    Mental Illness (Credit to: San Dieguito Academy) .....31

    Activity #2: What are the Different Mental Illnesses, also Known as Mental Health Challenges?..... 32

    Activity #3: Guest Speaker—Mental Health Specialist .....33



# INTRODUCTION

## Welcome!

Take a moment and think about this: Nearly one out of every four high school students experience a mental illness during their high school years. Maybe you are one of those students who have a mental health condition; maybe you aren't. Either way, these statistics show that some of your classmates are.

As a NAMI on Campus (NOC) High School club, helping your peers feel accepted and safe is important to you in getting the help they need. As you are aware, NOC Clubs are designed to create a lasting and supportive environment on your campus, one that raises awareness that having a mental health condition is a lot like having a sports injury or diabetes.

In this guide, you'll find everything you need to get activities started in your school. There are nine different topics that will have various concepts to help your club easily implement an activity. If you need any help along the way, don't hesitate to reach out.

Best of luck!

Team NAMI

[namioncampus@nami.org](mailto:namioncampus@nami.org)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The NAMI On Campus High School (NCHS) program was developed in 2013 by NAMI California, with permission to pilot from NAMI National, to promote the voices of students within the high school environment and increase awareness, advocacy, and acceptance for students experiencing a mental health condition. The launch of this program was supported by the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63) grant. The high school program was envisioned by NAMI California's CEO Jessica Cruz and rolled out by their COO Steven Kite and the NAMI CA staff. Today they partner with both state and private organizations to move this mission forward. Its goal is to give high school students the education and tools at an early phase of their lives so that they are better equipped to recognize mental health conditions in themselves or others, to access the services they need sooner, and to reduce stigma on high school campuses. As of 2024 NAMI California and their affiliates support 150 NCHS clubs statewide and growing.

NAMI CA provides support through additional materials such as Student and Advisor Manuals, Activity guides, and Club Toolkits. NAMI CA holds NAMI on Campus High School Info Webinars as well as the 5-hour Trainings for all our new clubs and clubs with new leaders. In addition, the clubs are supported through our local NAMI Affiliates in partnership to provide Ending the Silence Presentations, resources, and attend and support local events.

We would like to thank the following people for their help and contribution to NCHS manuals and materials:

Sofia Amezcua  
Program Manager  
NAMI California

Patti Morton, RN, MSN  
School Nurse  
Folsom High School and Vista del Lago High School

Mary Struhs  
Coordinator, Learning Support Services  
Student and Family Support Centers  
Will C. Wood Middle School/Hiram Johnson High School

Alicia Rozum, MSW, PPSC  
Project Director, Mental Health  
California School Based Health Alliance

Judy Fischer  
Director of Categorical Programs  
Roseville Joint Union High School District

Jenny Mott  
NAMI Chino Valley  
Ending the Silence Coordinator

Nicole Williams

NAMI Sacramento  
Ending the Silence Coordinator

Rhonda Allen  
NAMI Stanislaus  
Ending the Silence Coordinator

Monica Nepomuceno  
Education Programs Consultant  
Mental Health Services Act Program  
California Department of Education (CDE)

Mike Lombardo  
Director of Interagency Facilitation  
Placer County Office of Education (PCOE)





# BENEFITS TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

By implementing one of these activities at your school, will be an educational experience for everyone. Below are just some of the benefits that the activities will bring to you, your teachers, and administrator:

## **Students Will Benefit By:**

- Expanding their awareness of mental health
- Learning about the various mental illnesses
- Learning how to run meetings, prepare agendas, promote campus activities and hold events
- Having a positive impact on their peers
- Reducing stigma on campus
- Knowing that they have helped make having a mental illness more acceptable in their school
- Gaining valuable experience in working with other people and adults

## **Teachers and School Administration Will Benefit By:**

- Gaining access to a network of volunteers and resources, on a national and local level, to help with projects, classroom presentations and education
- Bringing lived experience presentation opportunities to your school to help provide students with face-to-face personal contact with someone who is living well in their recovery from a mental health condition
- Networking with other teachers and administration who also have a focus on mental health in their schools and who have brought NOC to their schools
- Creating a safe, supportive school environment for students with mental illness or who have family or friends with mental illness
- Having more information on mental health resources available to students and staff

# LIST OF ACTIVITIES

Each topic will have 3 different concepts that help teach that particular topic for the month. The activities listed in each topic are recommendations that clubs can implement at their school throughout the year. There will be discussion prompts, activities and information on each topic.

## SEPTEMBER

### Topic: Suicide Prevention

#### What is Suicide Prevention?

We all have ways of coping with everyday life stuff- maybe you get together for Fro-Yo with friends after a long school week or watch a funny movie to get out of a funk. These are examples of positive coping skills.

There are also negative ways of coping. Negative coping skills are often dangerous and should always be taken seriously. For someone experiencing a mental health condition or being stigmatized for having a family member with a condition, they may turn to drugs, alcohol, self-injury or suicide to help cope with their pain.

Self-injury and suicide is not really a mental illness, but it can be a big sign that something is wrong. Self-injury is when someone causes harm to themselves on purpose without wanting to die. It often occurs together with a mental illness.

#### Learning Objective:

To educate and share information on self-injury and suicide to help individuals better understand some of the reasons and warning signs of these negative coping skills.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's social media pages
- Post to your own club's social media and share information from credited sources
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office





## Activity #1: Suicide Prevention Plan- Green Ribbon Campaign (Credit to Each Mind Matters)

Displaying the lime green ribbon in different places

like backpacks and clothing will get people to ask questions about what it means. During this campaign, you can print out templates of green ribbons that students can decorate, label with their name, and write out one thing they can do to support suicide prevention at your school.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Many printed templates of green ribbons, and you'll need some markers to decorate.

**Preparation:** Find ribbon template, order ribbons for people to wear on their clothes or put on their backpacks. You can contact your local affiliate to

receive the ribbons. You can also get a pack of 50 from the Each Mind Matters website for a price.

**Steps:**

### 01 Create Templates

Create ribbon templates and print out on lime green cardstock. Be sure to print out enough for many students to use.

### 02 Promote

Let people know about the campaign by putting up sample ribbons on a banner around school with information about your meeting. Write things like "Come join the suicide prevention pledge and spread awareness!" If you provide pizza or other snack this could encourage more people to show up to this activity.

### 03 Have the activity!

On the day of the club activity, have the food and craft materials ready for people to use. When you hand someone their ribbon and paper ribbon, explain to them to write their name on the ribbon and why it is important that they are participating in this movement. Have each person write on their ribbon one thing that they plan to do to help prevent suicide.

### 04 After the activity

After all the paper ribbons have been decorated, take all of them and put them up where the whole school can see them.

## Activity #2: Bring Send Silence Packing to Your Location

**Time:** 1-2 hours

**Materials:** Handouts about suicide prevention

**Steps:**

### 01 Get In Touch with your School

Before you contact Active Minds, talk to your school about its rules about bringing these kinds of programs to campus. Explain to them the importance of this program and the benefits it will have for your community. In order to fill out an application you will need a letter of support from counseling services (or other mental health serviced entity) and a budget indicating the levels and sources of funds already received, and plans for obtaining the remaining program budget.

### 02 Contact Active Minds

Go to [activeminds.org/programs/send-silence-packing/](http://activeminds.org/programs/send-silence-packing/) for more information about this program. There you will find the option to "Host a Display." There you can fill out an application to get put on their tour. However, according to their website, an application does not guarantee that they will give you a spot.

### 03 If you are accepted

If you are accepted into their tour inform your school and start planning what it is you will need for this event.

### 04 Contact your Local Affiliate

Contact your local affiliate and get them involved in the

For more than a decade, the Send Silence Packing® exhibit has traveled the country to end the silence that surrounds mental health and suicide and connect visitors with resources for support and action.  
-ActiveMinds.org

program. Ask them for little pamphlets about mental health and suicide prevention.



### 05 Promote!

After all the details (date, location, time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends about why they would want to attend.

### 06 The event

In the days and weeks that lead up to the event make sure to keep in contact with the organization so that everything goes smoothly. See if they need any accommodations or materials to assist them with the program.

### 07 Hosting the Event

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be presenting in or help them set up their equipment. As the members of the NOC Club, the club President should give a short welcome to the audience, tell the audience about the NOC Club, and then introduce the presenters. Have fliers for upcoming events or club information handy in case people want to learn more. When the program is over ask them if they need any help with putting all their equipment away.

## Activity #3: Positive Affirmations

This is a great way to make others feel like someone cares about them and that they are not alone.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Posters and other crafting materials to decorate

**Preparation:** Get together with other students and come up with positive things that you and others would want to hear. Things like “You are loved” and “You are worthy,” for example.

### Steps:

#### 01 Talk with your Advisor

Make a plan with your advisor and see where you are allowed to display your positive affirmation posters. There may be rules at your school for designated areas to display posters.

#### 02 Time

Decide on a date and time for you and your club to meet up and make all the posters.

#### 03 Make the Posters

Write down personal statements that you make up that you would like to see or research inspirational quotes. Keep everything positive and happy. When you all finish spend the remainder of the time hanging up your posters.

### Resources:

<https://www.activeminds.org/programs/send-silence-packing/>

- Active Minds website where you can more information about the “Send the Silence Packing” information where you can sign your school up to try to be on their tour.

<http://www.EachMindMatters.org>

- Each Mind Matters website is a great place to find resources on suicide prevention.

<https://www.SuicideisPreventable.org>

- Know the Signs website to get more information on symptoms to look out for and how to reach out.



## Topic: Stigma

### What is Stigma?

Stigma is a negative and degrading attitude towards others, usually based on lack of information and understanding. Ending stigma is a big part of the NOC clubs. Stigma is what happens when a person is treated differently because they have a mental illness or have a friend or a family member with a mental illness. Words like “crazy”, “lunatic”, “psycho” are all examples of stigma.

Stigma is a problem because it prevents young people from getting the help they need for a mental health condition, out of fear of being stigmatized. NOC clubs are helping to end this by having activities on campus that educate people about mental illness and show them that it’s not something that only happens to certain kinds of people.

#### Learning Objective:

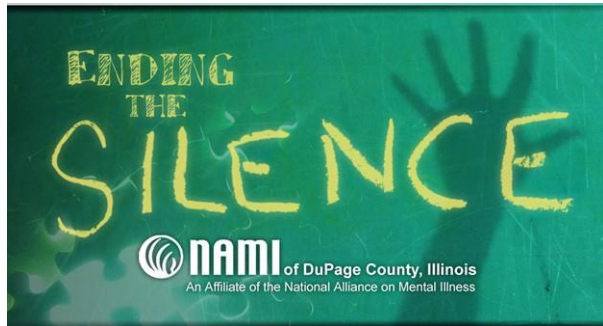
Reduce the stigma of mental illness in youth, resulting in more students seeking help for themselves or others when symptoms of a mental health condition arise

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's social media pages
- Post to your club's social media
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute “pitch” to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one

- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Activity #1: Ending the Silence



NAMI's program, Ending the Silence, is a great way to bring your school together for a presentation that will educate and fight back against stigma.

*Ending the Silence* is a 50-minute presentation for high school students that give students a chance to learn about mental illness directly from young adults who have personal experience with mental illness. Through the presentation, students learn symptoms and indicators of mental illness, and are given ideas about how to help themselves, friends, or family members who may be in need of support.

“  
Now I know I am not alone and that I should start talking instead of keeping it to myself.  
”

#### How the Program Works

The presentation is delivered by a trained two-person team, including an individual who relates to the students in the audience by sharing their own journey with a mental health condition.



Students are given a resource card with valuable phone numbers and websites for mental health agencies and youth support services along with a list of symptoms/warning signs of mental illness.

A primary goal of this program is to create a generation of students that are well-positioned to eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness through education and advocacy.

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Materials:** pamphlets on the presentation and other mental health resources

**Preparation:** Get in contact with your school and local affiliate

**Steps:**

### 01 Talk with your school

Find out the rules and policies for having a guest speaker come to your school? Make sure you get any approvals taken care of right away, which should be easy since they're helping you already!

### 02 Talk with your local Affiliate

Contact your local NAMI Affiliate to talk with them about your plans. Your local Affiliate may or may not have the ETS program; if they don't, they or the NAMI State Organization can help you find the next closest one that does.

### 03 Pick a date, location, and format

ETS works best in classroom-sized audiences (20-30 students) instead of a huge assembly. Because assemblies have so many students, they often don't feel comfortable enough to ask questions or talk with the presenters. You'll want to decide as a club how you want to host the ETS presentation. A few ideas are:

**Have an afterschool event that students have to RSVP to. Only accept the first 30 students that RSVP**

- Talk with your Health Science or Life Skills teachers about having an ETS presentation in one of their class periods

- If your school has "free" periods or study periods, see if you can get permission to have the ETS presentation during one of those periods

Once you have a few ideas for dates, check back with your local NAMI Affiliate. He or she will check with the ETS Coordinator to find out when their ETS presenters are available to present.

### 04 Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends about why they would want to attend.

### 05 Host the Presentation

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be presenting in or help them set up their equipment. As the members of the NOC Club, the club President should give a short welcome to the audience, tell the audience about the NOC Club, and then introduce the presenters. Have fliers for upcoming events or club information handy in case people want to learn more.

## Activity #2: Stigma Scenarios and What to do?

This activity will help you learn how to treat different situations in which you can identify when someone is being stigmatized, and what you can do to help.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** 20-30 Index cards with scenarios

**Preparation:** In preparation for the activity, make sure that you either print or hand write the following scenarios on index cards. We recommend making 2 sets of each scenario. Number of cards depends on the number of students you expect. Groups will be formed with 4 people per group.

**Scenario 1:** Your friend's mother doesn't want her to come to your house because your dad was recently diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

- What do you do?
- Do you say something to your friend? To her mother?
- Who do you lean on for support?
- How do you handle this?

**Scenario 2:** Someone on your social media page describes Demi Lovato as a “crazy lunatic” and is making fun of her recent relapse.

- Do you respond on social media?
- What do you say to this person?
- How do you handle this?

**Scenario 3:** While having dinner with your parents, they start talking about how you are starting counseling for anxiety about getting into colleges. They ask that you don’t tell anyone about this and to keep it a family secret.

- How does that make you feel?
- What do you say to your parents? Do you follow their wishes?
- How do you respond?

**Scenario 4:** As you start promoting your new NOC Club, several students at your school refer to it as the “crazy club”. Others are hesitant to join and get involved because they don’t want to be associated with mental illness.

- What does your club do?
- Do you change your message?
- How do you handle this?

**Scenario 5:** Your friends are brainstorming Halloween costume ideas. One friend wants to dress up in a straightjacket and be an “escaped patient from an insane asylum.”

- What do you say to your friend?
- Do you support this?
- What can you do to explain why this is stigmatizing?
- How do you handle this?

**Scenario 6:** Last year, you broke your leg playing soccer. You had lots of friends offer to help you get to class, carry your backpack, and sign your cast. Last month, you had several panic attacks. Your friends

have been trying to help by saying to “be strong”, “get over it”, and “we all have bad days”.

- How does this make you feel?
- What can you say to try to explain why this is stigmatizing?
- How do you handle this?

You will need 1 facilitator for the event and 1 helper to make sure to walk around for support and guidance.

### Start of Activity:

1. The main facilitator will welcome the students and explain to them the purpose of the activity. Read script below:
2. *“Hi Everyone! We are excited to have you all join us here today! My name is “[name of facilitator]” and this is “[names of helpers]”. The purpose of today’s activity is to understand the different manners mental health stigma arise in our daily life and how we can combat it. You will break into groups of 4-5 people and read over your scenario. You will have 15 minutes to develop your skit and how you will respond to the stigma scenario presented to you. We will be splitting each other into groups of 4. Let’s do a count off starting with 1.”*
3. After you are done having the teams set, have the helpers pass out one scenario card per team.
4. Remind that they will have 15 minutes to read their scenario.
5. Give them a 5-minute warning and advise them to start wrapping up their final touches.
6. After the 15 minutes, ask everyone to stop and look for volunteer to act out their skit.
7. When each group has gone up, enter the reflecting part.

### Reflect After Activity:

Pose the following question to the groups:

- How did you feel as you read the scenario and acted it out?
- How did your discussion go to break the stigma associated with the situation you had in front of you?

### Activity #3: Week-Long Language Awareness

Talk about how social media language can affect the way people think about themselves. “The pen is mightier than the sword” work in both positive and negative ways. Identifying words that promote stigma would be a great way to prevent someone from using language they didn’t know can be offensive to those with mental health experiences. Harmful words are the driving force behind stigma. The stigma created by certain words and phrases can impact how someone lives their life by making them feel that they are not “good enough” or that they are “less than” others.

**Time:** 5 Days

**Materials:** Posters, markers, other craft materials to decorate posters. Flyers with more information about stigma.

**Preparation:** Create posters and set up a booth to explain posters. Contact your local affiliate about flyers you would like to distribute.

#### Steps:

##### 01 Post

Put up posters around school identifying words that encourage stigma, with brief description of how it is harmful. One example: a banner with word “Crazy” crossed out, then writing “Stop saying crazy to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.” or making a larger poster with several words on that encourage stigma crossed out. This completely up to your artistic freedom.

##### 02 Keep the conversation going!

Set up booth in the morning, lunch, and after school with more posters describing stigma language and the affect it has on people with mental health experiences. One example of a banner you can have at your booth could be a larger poster with several words that encourage stigma crossed out. This is completely up to your artistic

#### Resources:

<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Mental-Health-Education//NAMI-Ending-the-Silence>

- This is the link to “Ending the Silence,” where you can get more information about the program and the benefits it could have on your school.

<https://nami.org/>

- A great resource to get more information on stigma and ways to educate others about it.

<https://www.brainxp.org>

- A great resource revolving around mental health for teens including resources and a teen toolbox.

freedom.





## Topic: How to Help a Friend

### How to Help a Friend?

It takes a lot to talk about one's mental health experience, and that should be acknowledged. If a friend talks to you about the struggles they are having due to their mental health, your duty is to be understanding and supportive. If you are starting to notice a change in your friend's behavior, don't be afraid to let them know. You also don't need to take this on all on your own. Ask your friend if they are okay with you talking to someone who may be able to help them in a way that you can't. Emotional boundaries should always be considered when supporting your friends so that you maintain your own mental health. Some good people to go to in this situation can be another friend, family, a teacher or counselor, coach, or a faith-based leader. If your friend doesn't want to open up to you, let them know it's okay and check in on them regularly. You can also become more informed on mental health conditions.

#### Learning Objective:

To better educate and inform students on how to support their friends who are living with mental illness.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's Facebook page
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club

- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Activity #1: What is a Healthy Relationship? *(Credit to: Chino High School)*

The goal of this is to open a conversation about healthy relationships and giving support

**Time:** 5-7 minutes for group time, and however much time the group needs to discuss their ideas.

**Materials:** Enough paper for groups to write their thoughts on, and pencils/pens

#### Steps:

#### 01 Break into groups

Break up into small groups of three and come up with what a healthy relationship should look like. Some examples of a good relationship: communication, respect, understanding.

#### 02 Write response

Give each group about 5-7 minutes to get their thoughts on paper.

#### 03 Discussion

Once everyone is finished each group can share what they came up with. Start with those who are ready to share by taking those you raise their hands to speak. After those who are more eager to speak, ask if anyone feels comfortable to share.

## Activity #2: Watching a Film with Discussion After

Watching a movie can help paint a better picture of what some people go through in their lives living with mental health challenges.

**Time:** Film length+ 15 to 20 minute discussion

**Materials:** Film (with permission) and some writing materials for those who would like to take notes to help with the later discussion.

**Preparation:** Get film approved by school, as some films that cover this topic tend to cover very adult discussions. Picking a film that based around high school would work best to relate to the characters. Create focus questions for discussion.

### Steps:

Watch film. After the film is over, either break up into small groups, or talk as a whole to discuss the focus questions.

## Activity #3: Guest Speaker: Therapist or School Counselor

Speak about how to support a friend who is showing signs of experiencing mental health

**Time:** 30-50 minutes (Dependent upon speaker)

**Preparation:** Make sure to plan a good amount of time before you would like to have this event in order to have everything go as smoothly as possible.

### Steps:

**01** Talk with your school if you decide to have someone from off campus

Discuss with your school what the rules are when it comes to bringing guest speakers on campus.

**02** Contact your school counselor if you decide to keep it within your school

Discuss what it is that you would like from them, be it a presentation, a Q&A, or anything that your classmates would benefit from them.

**03** Pick a date and location

Keep everyone on the same page to avoid any confusion or inconvenience.

**04** Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, and time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends.

**05** Host the Presentation!

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be presenting in or help them set up their equipment. Be sure to introduce the speaker and make them feel welcome at you school.

### Resources:

<https://seizetheawkward.org/>

- This is a great resource to hear from celebrities and social influencers on how to talk with others about mental health.

<https://nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/March-2016/Want-to-Know-How-to-Help-a-Friend>

- This is a direct link to our NAMI website where you can learn warning signs and how to start a conversation.

<https://campusmindworks.org/support-a-student/showing-support/>

- This is a link the Michigan State's page on how to show support.



## Topic: Families and Mental Health

### What are Families?

In its most basic terms, a family is a group of individuals who share a legal or genetic bond, but for many people, family means much more. A family can be people who genuinely love, trust, and care about and look out for each other with or without being related through blood. As a result, family members and caregivers often play a large role in helping and supporting people with a mental health condition. Having families involved in the process of their loved one's recovery increases the rate in which the individual finds wellness.

#### Learning Objective:

To educate students on how to get their families involved and educated on mental health.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's Facebook page
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Activity #1:

#### Kindness Grams *(Credit to: NOC Applied Technology Center High School)*

Hand out kindness grams with a flower and a handwritten note from a loved one.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Flowers, paper (or cards depending on your budget)

**Preparation:** Talk with advisor on ideas for small gifts people can send to their friends.

#### Steps:

#### 01 Decide on a time you would like to disperse the grams.

This could be done during lunch, or during a specified period, with permission from your advisor. It may be easier to do during class time so that you can better find the people receiving the grams.

#### 02 Get out the word

Once you have an idea of what you will have people send to their friends, make announcements and fliers to explain what it is you want to do. Talk to someone about getting it mentioned in the morning announcements.

#### 03 Receive the orders

Create an organized list of people to receive the gifts. Be sure to take down names and numbers of the sender in case something goes wrong.

#### 04 The day of grams

Double check your list of receivers and number of grams to make sure that no one is left out.

When handing out the grams be sure to be considerate of those who did not receive one so no one feels too



left out.



## Activity #2: Family Mental Health Fair

Bringing families to school could be a great way to encourage familial support. The Mental Health Fair will provide an opportunity for families to connect with teachers, administrators, and resources in the community.

**Time:** 2-3 hours

**Preparation:** Make sure to plan a good amount of time before you would like to have this event in order to have everything go as smoothly as possible. Create a plan and make a checklist for all the things you will need. Check back to your list in order to keep everything in motion.

**Steps:**

### 01 Talk with your school

Discuss with your school that you would like to bring organizations on campus to speak about mental health and the resources that are available.

### 02 Contact your local affiliate

Get in touch with organizations to set up booths and talk about what they do to support those with mental health experiences. They can also help link you to other organizations that could provide even more information regarding mental health.

### 03 Pick a date and location

This kind of activity would be easier if it could be held on a weekend when families typically have more free time.

### 04 Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, and time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends.

### 05 Host the Fair!

Be ready to help the organizations to the area they will be setting up in. Be sure to make them feel welcome at you school so that if the program goes smoothly you can keep in touch to have the fair again. Be sure to keep an organized area in front where you can explain what the fair is about and encourage families to be supportive and have open minds.

## Activity #3: Group Discussion about What Family Means and How They Give Support.

This is an opportunity to discuss what family means to each individual person. Addressed in the beginning, family doesn't have to be blood related. To many people, "family" looks very different. Some may be adopted, some disown their blood family due to circumstances and found a new one, a "chosen family" amongst their community. Opening up and talking about family is a great way to understand others and maybe understand one's self.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** An open mind

**Steps:**

### 01 Talk to your advisor

Speak with your advisor about securing a safe place where everyone can feel comfortable to talk.

### 02 Placement

When having the discussion it would be best that everyone is in a circle, that way everyone can feel involved in the conversation.

### 03 Trust

Before the start of the conversation, you should state "What is said in this space will be kept to the people in this room." This is to reassure everyone that this is a safe space to talk.

## Resources:

<http://www.NAMI.org>

- Here you can find many resources regarding family conversations and how to support your family's mental health.

<http://www.MentalHealthAmerica.net/family-friends>

- This is another organization that has a page on supporting family and friends.

<http://www.familybehavioralresources.com/>

- This is a link to many resources regarding family and mental health.

## Topic: Advocacy

### What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is one way we can make a difference and change lives of individuals living with a mental illness. It gives people a voice about issues that affect them and builds evidence on what needs to change and how that change can happen. Advocacy influence people with power to change how they think and act as well as raise consciousness about a particular issue. There are three types of advocacy: personal, local, and legislative advocacy.

#### Learning Objective:

To raise awareness and empower individuals to create systematic change by telling their stories and building relationships with decision-makers.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's Facebook page
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Activity #1: What are the Roles of Advocacy?

This is a small project for you and your club to put together. The goal of this project is to get a better understanding of the different positions of advocacy. You can make this as a PowerPoint, Prezi, or tri-fold presentation.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** A computer or tri-fold to give presentation

**Preparation:** Create a presentation for your club and others about the three levels of advocacy. You can research more information about advocacy on our NAMI website or continue further research on your own. In the following steps, we will provide you with some basic knowledge on the different positions.

#### Steps:

#### 01 Self Advocacy

Self-advocacy refers to someone's ability to communicate their interests, desires, needs and rights where the individual recognizes that people are experts by experience and involves them in speaking out for themselves. The overall goal is to ultimately support people to self-advocate.

#### 02 Local Advocacy

Create change that will impact your day-to-day life by building awareness locally to create support networks and teams of effective advocates. The overall goal is to engage with built-in stakeholder engagement process and building relationships with local decision-makers.

#### 03 Legislative Advocacy

Persuade a legislator to support or oppose a bill or policy as well as help shape a bill or policy development. It's also an opportunity to influence state and local budget development and mental health funding allocations. The overall goal is to bring awareness to unknown issues to legislators.

## Activity #2: Learn How to Share Your Story to Make a Difference

Legislators who make important decisions receive much of their information about mental illness the same way the general public does: through the media. While members of Congress also have staffers to study the issues, they rely on constituents for information. That means you. The best way to inform the legislators and give them an accurate picture of the reality of mental illness is to share with them the stories of those who have had personal experiences with mental illness.

**Time:** 1 hour +time to work on your story

**Materials:** Paper to practice drafting your stories.  
Envelopes if you plan to send letters.

**Preparation:** Write out your story before speaking with an official. Here are some tips on how to tell your story:

- **Keep it brief.** Your legislator is not your therapist. Focus on the important events that would move the legislators and leave a memorable mark on them.
- **Stick to the highlights.** Aim for a minute or two. It's like a movie trailer—just give them the parts that grab their attention and leave them wanting to know more. When they ask questions, you've caught their attention.
- **Emotions should move, not overwhelm.** Stories that evoke emotion are powerful, but if your story makes you cry, it may overwhelm others and they could shut down. Try to strike a balance between inspiration and realism.
- **Motivate with hope and recovery.** Frame your story in a positive way. Mention and emphasize your recovery and that there is hope. Draw a realistic picture of what can be done to help those who battle mental illness, if you haven't received the help that you needed, give them suggestions on what could help.
- **Make an "ask."** Don't be shy. Legislators expect requests from constituents. Let them know what would help others, then put them on the hook by

asking for their support. If they say "yes," you have a supporter. If they say "no," or won't commit, you know you'll need to follow up and build support.

**Steps:**

### 01 Contact your local affiliate

Speak with your local affiliate and see if you can partner with them to create your message to a city official. They can let you know the process for your county.

### 02 Prepare your story

Begin formally creating your story to advocate for mental health. Share your experiences with it and what has led you to advocate for mental health. When it comes to sharing your story with a legislator, do research on them to better cater to your audience. Knowing who they are will help you get your message across to them.

### 03 Practice sharing your story

Take some time to practice sharing your story. You can start with the mirror and speaking out loud to yourself until you feel comfortable to talk with a friend or family member. Then practice with your fellow club members and hear each other's stories and give feedback on how to improve.

### 04 Share your story

Contact legislation and see if you can make an appointment to share your story. This can be on a phone call, or you can all send letters with your stories.

## Activity #3: Practice Meeting with a Policy Maker

Practicing scenarios like this can make you more prepared to speak with policy makers.

**Time:** 1 hour

**Materials:** Name tags

**Preparation:** Make name tags for each part of the conversation: Lead, storyteller, policy maker. Feel free to create a script if you want the conversation to be more controlled.



## Steps Part 1: Practice

### 01 Make a Connection

Introduce your character; your name, role, and greeting. Let the policy maker know that you appreciate them taking the time to meet with you. As well as the work you appreciate that they have done for the community. Policy maker can feel free to appreciate the organization as well. Bring up a bill or a problem that you would like to address.

### 02 Deliver your message

Talk about the issue and why it is an issue. Policy maker can respond with the difficulties in working on the issue. The lead explains why it is important to improve the issue or to address a bill. Then have the storyteller share their story that complements why the issue should be addressed. Policy maker can respond to lead and the storyteller's points. Then end this section with asking the policy maker if they will give their support.

### 03 Close on a positive note

Thank the policy maker for their time. Let them know that you will leave them with some more information about mental health and why this cause needs support.

## Steps Part 2: You're Ready to Talk with Someone

### 01 Contact your local affiliate

Speak with your local affiliate to see how to get in touch with your local city decision maker.

### 02 Talk to your school

Communicate with your school that you would like to speak with a local city decision maker about mental health and legislation. Explain how important it is for you to talk to city decision makers to see how to make a change in the community through legislation.

### 03 Contact a local city decision maker

Once you receive information, go forward and schedule an appointment at their most convenience. Speak with them about your club and whether going to see them or having them visit your school would be most beneficial.

### 04 Prepare questions and statements

Think about what you would like to hear from them. Being prepared would be the best way to get the most out of their time.

### 05 Meet with your local decision maker

Make them feel welcome and have someone introduce them to the other students. Start with giving them a brief explanation about who you all are and how you would like to make a change in mental health.

## Resources:

### Your Local NAMI Affiliate

- Contact your local NAMI Affiliate to get the most relevant information to your county.

### Your NAMI State Organization (NSO)

- Your NSO will have more information about state legislation and statewide advocacy.

<https://www.nami.org/Advocacy>

- The NAMI website has more information on advocating locally and more broadly across the nation.

## Topic: Mental Health Across Cultures

### What is Mental Health across Cultures?

Different countries and cultures view mental health and illness in different ways. In your school, you may have students that come from different perspectives than you do on how mental illness develops or can be treated. It's totally ok (in fact, it's great!) to have different viewpoints, as long as everyone feels respected. If your club wants to learn more about how a specific culture views mental health, ask students that are part of that culture. Explain to them that you want to learn about how they perceive mental illness so that the activities on campus can include what matters to their culture as well.

#### Learning Objective:

To educate students on how mental health is viewed differently in different cultures.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's Facebook page
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Activity #1:

#### Movie Night Quarterly *(Credit to: George Washington Carver High School)*

Watching a movie can be a great way to hear different mental health experiences, as well as see the different ways it is portrayed in cinema.

**Time:** 1-2 hours

**Materials:** a projector, screen, movie, some snacks

**Preparation:** Discuss the topic for the movie and which movie you and your classmates would like to watch.

#### Steps:

##### 01 Approval

Talk with your school or advisor about the movie you would like to watch and if it is appropriate to show in your club. If you really want to watch a particular film that has mature content, talk about the benefits of watching the movie and discuss the compromise of permission slips from parents.

##### 02 Schedule

Discuss with your club when you would all like to watch the movie and where.

##### 03 Tell your classmates!

Let the school know about the movie you are planning to watch so that others can share in the experience. This will be a good way to get others to learn about mental health in a different format.

##### 04 Enjoy the show!

Enjoy watching the movie with your classmates; and don't forget the snacks! Think about having a discussion afterwards about what you all thought of the movie and its relationship to mental health.

## Activity #2:

### Discussion about the Effects of Culture on Mental Illness.

This is a great opportunity to discuss different viewpoints and understand different cultures. February is African American History month; you can take this opportunity to talk about African American history and mental health. Or take this same conversation to other cultural heritage months such as May: Asian Pacific American Heritage & Jewish American Heritage Month, June: Pride Month, September: Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month, and November: Native American Heritage Month.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** handouts of resources regarding mental health and different cultural communities, and a ball for discussion.

**Preparation:** Discuss with your club this activity prior to the actual activity. This will give them enough time to develop their opinion and be able to research information if they need to. This is an open discussion on how each person has been influenced by their culture when it comes to mental health.

#### Steps:

#### 01 Contact your local affiliate

Work with your local affiliate to get information on the different cultures in regards to mental health. They can also provide resources to talk about during the discussion.

#### 02 Talk about the topic

Discuss the topic with your classmates. This can be a hard topic since there are a lot of biases that occur when talking about different cultures. It must be stressed to keep open minds to all the cultures represented and respect the beliefs of others. If there are disagreements explain your points of view and move on. It is important to remember that the topic is cultural effects on mental health.

#### 03 Before the discussion

Create some focus questions that can help drive the conversation. This can also be a good resource if the topic needs to change.

#### 04 Discussion Time!

Remind everyone that this is a safe place and to respect everyone's opinions and cultures. Set up chairs in a circle that way everyone can feel involved in the conversation. It might be a good idea to use a talking system to avoid others talking over someone when making their point. One suggestion could be a talking ball to toss around; only the one with the ball can speak.

#### Resources:

<https://emmresourcecenter.org/collections>

- This is a collection of different resources categorized by the target audience.

<http://www.NAMI.org>

- The NAMI website has many different resources on culture and mental health.

<https://www.uniteforsight.org/mental-health/module7>

- A great article on cultural perspectives on mental illness.

## Topic: Mental Health

### What is Mental Health?

Everyone has it! Mental health is how we each cope with everyday life. Some days, you might feel more confident or let things roll off your back more easily. On other days, maybe after you've gone through a breakup or have a big test to study for, your mental state may be more stressed, sad or anxious.

These are all completely normal things to feel, and normal ways to feel them. It's when the feelings get to be so overwhelming that they make living your normal, everyday life a challenge. When things like getting out of bed, going to school, spending time with friends and family, working at your job or doing your hobbies becomes something you just can't do—that's when your mental health is becoming a problem, and possibly a mental illness.

#### Learning Objective:

To educate youth and schools on mental illness so that they may promote facts rather than myths.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's social media page
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Activity #1: Mental Health Quiz Game during Lunch Time *(Credit to: The Preuss High School)*

Learning about mental health can be confusing with all the new terminology and discoveries. By quizzing information, people can learn and be better informed on truths and myths of mental health.

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

**Materials:** Mental Health Quiz Final Version (print as many copies needed for students), Pens, Prizes for winners (chocolates, etc.)

**Preparation:** Students will come up with the questions during an after-school meeting and/or during an officer meeting. Question ideas will include those that quiz other students on their general knowledge of mental health. After the questions have been developed, contact the administration for approval. After approval, prepare the one-page quiz and make as many copies as needed.

Before beginning, have 2-3 students as helpers to help those that have questions or need additional support. You also want to have a main facilitator who will be facilitating the quiz game.

#### Steps:

01

#### Start of Activity

- The main facilitator will welcome the students and explain to them the purpose of the activity. Read script below:
- "Hi Everyone! We are excited to have you all join us here today for the Mental Health Quiz Game! My name is "[name of facilitator]" and this is "[names of helpers]". The purpose of today's game is to get to learn more about mental health and to have some fun in the process.
- We will be splitting each other into groups of 4. Let's do a count off starting with 1."

- After you are done having the teams set, have the helpers pass out the quiz games and pens.
- Explain to everyone that they will have 15 minutes to answer the quiz as a team. When they are done, have a helper go to their table and review their questions. If the group has all the correct answers, then they are the 1<sup>st</sup> place winners. If there are mistakes, then have them review them again.
- After the 15 minutes, stop the game and bring everyone together. Announce the winners and the correct answers.

## 02 Reflect After Activity

Who can tell me one new thing they learned about mental health that they did not know before today's activity?

## Activity #2: Yoga Work Shop *(Credit to: Chino High School)*

Body and mind work together when trying to maintain good mental health. This can either be a workout found on YouTube, or a collection of stretches and poses that you all enjoy best. This is just meant to help relax the mind and body.

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

**Materials:** a quiet space, soft mats or flooring

**Preparation:** Find a quiet space where students can relax their mind and focus on the stretches and listening to their bodies.

**Steps:**

### 01 Location

Create a quiet, safe space for students. An easy space can be on the grass, in a basketball gym, or a big classroom.

### 02 Leader

Have one person guide the class; this can be a student or a teacher.

## 03 Stretches

Pick stretches that are at a beginner level and let students know that they should listen to their bodies and modify when necessary.

## Activity #3: Puppy Therapy *(Credit to: Patrick Henry High School)*

(Patrick Henry High School) during exam season—when exams are happening, this gives students a lot of stress and it takes a toll on both their physical and mental health. Relaxing while petting animals has been proven to help a lot with stress, anxiety, and depression.

**Time:** 1 hour

**Materials:** Hand sanitizer and sanitation wipes for after petting the dogs

**Preparation:** Make sure to plan a good amount of time before you would like to have this event in order to have everything go as smoothly as possible.

**Steps:**

### 01 Talk with your school

Discuss with your school what the rules are when it comes to bringing animals on campus.

### 02 Contact your local affiliate

When contacting your local affiliate ask about a pet therapy program in your area. If there is no program in your area, consider asking if a local shelter would be interested.

### 03 Pick a date and location

Schedule a good time to have the dogs come on campus that is both convenient for the program, or shelter, and the students.

### 04 Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, and time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the

school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends.

### Resources:

<http://www.MentalHealth.org>

- This website has many resources on you to improve your mental health and overall information on mental health.

<http://teenmentalhealth.org/>

- This is a resource aimed at teens to help educate about mental health.

<http://www.BrainXP.org>

- This is another great resource for teens and mental health. This includes a toolkit to better your mental health.

## Topic: Careers in Mental Health

### What are Careers in Mental Health?

Are you an empathetic listener, like helping others, and want to do gratifying, rewarding work? If so, you may want to pursue a career in the mental health field. Mental health is a growing discipline with numerous sub-fields such as counseling, psychology, psychiatry, social work and nursing. Some of these sub-fields focus primarily on biochemistry while others focus primarily on psycho-social issues. But all mental health practitioners support individuals in finding what recovery means to them.

#### Learning Objective:

To encourage students to think about careers in mental health.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's Facebook page
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Speak and Listen Exercise

Someone who is thinking about a career in mental health should understand that listening is a very important part of working with people. This exercise will encourage listening to everything someone has to say before you formulate your response.

**Time:** 10 to 15 minutes, not counting the discussion portion

#### Steps:

#### 01 Break into Partners

People break up into partners and one person speaks about anything (about their day, how they are currently feeling, etc.) for one to two minutes. During this time their partner just listens and tries to take in as much information as they can.

#### 02 Response

When the time limit is up, the partner who remained silent can respond to what their partner talked about and start a conversation for about three minutes.

#### 03 Switch

When the time is up, they can switch roles.

#### 04 Discussion

Once the second round is finished, the students can break out of groups and discuss what they got from this exercise.

### Activity #1:

## ACTIVITY GUIDE

## Activity #2: Guest Speaker

Hearing from someone directly can help people get a better picture of what they are learning. This allows people to ask questions and understand a career in mental health. This guest speaker can be a local mental health specialist or even your school counselor.

**Time:** 30-50 minutes (Dependent upon speaker)

**Preparation:** Make sure to plan a good amount of time before you would like to have this event in order to have everything go as smoothly as possible.

### Steps:

#### 01 Talk with your school

Discuss with your school what the rules are when it comes to bringing guest speakers on campus.

#### 02 Contact local professionals: counselors, psychologists, social workers, or nurses

Discuss what it is that you would like from them, be it a presentation, a Q&A, or anything that your school would benefit from them.

#### 03 Pick a date and location

Keep both the speaker and the school on the same page to avoid any confusion or inconvenience.

#### 04 Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, and time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends.

#### 05 Host the Presentation!

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be presenting in or help them set up their

## Activity #3: Mental Health Profession Panel

Having multiple professionals around at once can help people compare and contrast the different careers in mental health. This will also help someone see if the career they are interested in is really for them, or if there was something even more fit that they never considered.

**Time:** 1 hour

**Materials:** pamphlets about different professions (ask panelists)

**Preparation:** Do some research on the different types of careers in mental health such as: counselors, therapists, psychologists, etc.

equipment. Be sure to introduce the speaker and make them feel welcome at your school.



**Steps:**

**01 Talk to your school**

Discuss with your school what the rules are when it comes to bringing guest speakers on campus.

**02 Contact local mental health professionals**

Contact your local affiliate to see if they can help you get in contact with some local professionals. You don't have to stick to a specific area like doctors or counselors, you can even see if someone working for a nonprofit organization focused on mental health.

**03 Pick a date and location**

Keep both the speakers and the school on the same page to avoid any confusion or inconvenience.

**04 Confirm details and Promote!**

After all the details (date, location, and time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends.



## 05 Host the Presentation!

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be speaking. Have people raise their hands to ask the panelists their questions.

### Resources:

<http://www.causeandcareer.org>

- This website is a Mental Health career exploration tool and features job listings for mental health careers.

<https://explorehealthcareers.org/field/mental-health/>

- This website gives a short description of the different types of mental health professions.

<https://www.publichealth.org/careers/mental-health/>

- A brief description of what goes into becoming mental health professional.

## Topic: Mental Illness

### What is Mental Illness?

A mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are a disorder of the brain.<sup>1</sup>

When someone is on the right side of the mental health spectrum, they are most likely experiencing some sort of mental illness. Their thinking, feeling, moods and ability to interact in their daily lives has been disrupted by what's going on.

Just like diabetes, heart disease, or sports injuries-**mental illnesses are treatable.**

#### Learning Objective:

To educate students on what mental illness is and how it effects people.

#### Advertisement:

- Word of Mouth
- Post to your school's Facebook page
- Hang fliers all around school
- Put fliers or posters in classrooms
- Ask the Science or Health Skills teachers if you can give a 2 minute "pitch" to their classes
- Put an article or an ad in the school paper
- If your school does daily announcements, ask to have an announcement made about the club
- Participate in your school's club or extracurricular fair, if there is one
- Give an announcement at an assembly
- Talk with the school guidance counselors
- Advertise in your school's health office

### Activity #1: Invite a Guest Speaker to Talk about Their Experience with Mental Illness

*(Credit to: San Dieguito Academy)*

Hearing someone's story in person makes the experience more understandable and real. This can also help others who are struggling and too afraid to speak up not feel alone.

**Time:** 30-50 minutes (Dependent upon speaker)

**Preparation:** Make sure to plan a good amount of time before you would like to have this event in order to have everything go as smoothly as possible.

#### Steps:

#### 01 Talk with your school if you decide to have someone from off campus

Discuss with your school what the rules are when it comes to bringing guest speakers on campus.

#### 02 Contact your local affiliate

Discuss that your school would like someone who is living with mental health challenges to come and talk about the experiences.

#### 03 Pick a date and location

Keep everyone on the same page to avoid any confusion or inconvenience.

#### 04 Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, and time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends.

I (Mental Illnesses)



## 05 Host the Presentation!

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be presenting in or help them set up their equipment. Be sure to introduce the speaker and make them feel welcome at your school.

### Activity #2: What are the Different Mental Illnesses, also Known as Mental Health Challenges?

This is a matching game to understand the different mental health challenges. This is **not a way to diagnose others**, this is a way to learn about different mental health challenges to explain to your peers, as to potentially see signs in others.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** A white board, dry erase markers, and printouts of the different mental health challenges with space under each for students to write on.

**Preparation:** Create a list of mental health challenges with room for students to fill out what they think it is. Print out enough for the students who will attend. Here is a list of some mental health challenges: ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder), Anxiety (Panic Disorder), Autism Spectrum Disorder, Bi-Polar Disorder, Depression, Eating Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Schizophrenia.

**Steps:**

## 01 Mental Health Challenges

Write on the white board the different mental health challenges; be sure to leave room to write the answers.

## 02 The Goal

Explain to the students what the goal of this exercise is: To understand the different types of mental health challenges as well as signs you can spot and support others. This is **not for diagnosing others**.

## 03 Answer

Give the students about 15 minutes to write their answers, or when most of the students have finished writing.

## 04 Answers

When you have everyone's attention, write all the actual symptoms under the mental health challenges. Here are some simple definitions that are easier to understand:

- ADHD — makes it hard to focus and sit still.
- Anxiety — gives panic attacks that make a person's heart race with a strong feeling of stress or fear.
- Autism Spectrum — makes it hard to talk about feelings, understand other people's actions, and to be social.
- Bi-Polar Disorder — changes the way people feel emotions. Someone with bi-polar disorder's emotions change very suddenly and quickly.
- Depression — makes the person very sad to the point of little motivation and can make the person physically sick.
- Eating Disorders —
  - Anorexia refers to weight loss that occurs from not eating.
  - Bulimia refers to eating large amounts of food over a short period of time followed by an attempt to get rid of the food.
- PTSD — makes a person feel scared even if they are safe and there is nothing to be afraid of due to the memory of a past frightening experience.
- Schizophrenia — makes it hard for people to know what is real and what is not real.

## 05 Discussion

Begin to discuss the answers and some challenges that someone with these mental illnesses may face. This would be a good opportunity to talk about ways you can support your peers who show signs of these mental health challenges. Again, this is **not to diagnose others**. Remember that this club is a safe place for people to share or refuse to share.

### Activity #3: Guest Speaker—Mental Health Specialist

Hearing from someone directly can help people get a better picture of what they are learning. This allows people to ask questions and better understand mental illness. This guest speaker can be a local mental health specialist or even your school counselor.

**Time:** 45-50 minutes, depending on the speaker.

**Preparation:** Make sure to plan a good amount of time before you would like to have this event in order to have everything go as smoothly as possible.

#### Steps:

##### 01 Talk with your school

Discuss with your school what the rules are when it comes to bringing guest speakers on campus.

##### 02 Contact your local affiliate

Contact your local NAMI Affiliate to talk with them about your plans to see if they can refer someone to your school.

##### 03 Pick a date and location

Keep both the speaker and the school on the same page to avoid any confusion or inconvenience.

##### 04 Confirm details and Promote!

After all the details (date, location, and time) are set, spread the word! See if you can get a shout-out over the announcement system, in homerooms, in the school paper or on the school Facebook page. Post fliers throughout your school and be sure to tell all your friends.

##### 05 Host the Presentation!

Be ready to help the presenters to the room they will be presenting in or help them set up their equipment. Be sure to introduce the speaker and make them feel welcome at your school.



## Resources:

### <https://nami.org/Learn-More>

- This is a link to the NAMI site where you can learn more about mental health challenges.

### <https://www.eachmindmatters.org/mental-health/mental-health-challenges/>

- This is a list of mental health challenges and a brief description about what they are and how they affect people.

### <https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/recognizing-warning-signs>

- This is link to signs you can pick up in family and what to do next.







# **nami** **ON CAMPUS**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS  
ON CAMPUS