

## Mental Health Action Day

### Do's

**Encourage and empower your community to take #MentalHealthAction in whatever way feels right for them.**

That can mean taking time to connect with themselves, connecting with a friend or family member, practicing yoga, meditation or other self-calming activities, finding a support group or therapist. Or it can mean taking an action to support systemic change that improves mental health access and equity. There are many ways to encourage people to take mental health action and improve overall well-being.

**Highlight free and easily accessible resources.**

Remember that therapy, telehealth options and support groups are not easily accessible for everyone. Highlight actions that are free and open to all including setting aside time for self-calming activities, taking an action to expand equity and access to mental health services, or direct them to a Mental Health Action Day partner that provides free resources.

**Find local or community-specific and culturally competent partners to amplify.**

Partner with mental health organizations that can support your community with the most targeted and appropriate resources.

**Encourage people to share their stories.**

End the stigma and support the demystification of mental health action-taking by encouraging your audience to share their experience and what works for them through social media, text messages, and other communications that reach their community on Mental Health Action Day.

**Emphasize that mental health is a part of overall health.**

Remind people that, just as there are things they do to take care of their physical health, there are things they can do to take care of their mental health.

**Encourage your community to create space to listen.**

Use language that promotes meeting people where they are and that allows them to share their personal experience without interruption or judgement.

**Ask your audience to invite others to join them in taking action.**

Encourage them to share out Mental Health Action Day partner resources or if you don't already have one in mind, our upcoming resource hub: Mental Health Is Health.

**Use inclusive language** that promotes the importance of mental health and encourages a shared understanding of mental health.

## Don'ts

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### **Don't focus on specific mental health conditions.**

Focus instead on the full spectrum of mental health journeys and that everyone has mental health that they need to take care of.

### **Don't ask people to do anything that is uncomfortable for them.**

Don't ask your audience to share anything with friends, family, co-workers or online that they're not comfortable sharing.

### **Don't reinforce or overstate stigma.**

Watch out for narratives that overemphasize stigma, judgment, or mistreatment toward people with mental health challenges, which can prevent viewers from speaking up if they are struggling.

## Storytelling Tips

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### **Portray a range of experiences.**

Expand depictions of mental health to reflect the full continuum of experiences — from thriving to coping to struggling.

### **Diversify representation.**

Tell stories of diverse communities to help action-takers from all backgrounds feel seen and take action.

### **Spotlight effective support from friends and family members.**

Elevate stories of friends and family who are supportive — or eventually become supportive — to make taking action less scary.

### **Don't share potentially harmful details.**

Avoid unintentionally providing information or reinforcing misconceptions that could make someone engage in similar behaviors.

### **Don't define people by their conditions and avoid words like "suffering" or "victim."**

Instead emphasize people are "living with" conditions like depression and anxiety. The person may not be "suffering" all the time from a mental health condition.

### **Don't lean into stereotypes.**

Be mindful of stereotypes when depicting mental health storylines and aim for authenticity over tropes.

### **Depict effective, realistic action-taking.**

Show realistic portrayals of effective therapeutic treatments to help lessen fear and misconceptions and make viewers more likely to seek help.

### **Highlight the power of coping skills and self-care.**

Minimize depictions of self-care that make it seem like an indulgence or luxury only for those who can afford it.

### **Represent the complex causes of mental health challenges.**

Portray the range of factors that contribute to mental health challenges to better equip viewers to support themselves and the people they care about.