



Dear Awareness Day Supporters,

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day (Awareness Day) 2016 will take place on Thursday, May 5. The national theme for Awareness Day 2016 is *Finding Help. Finding Hope.*

The national event will take place on the evening of May 5 in Washington, DC. Experts including youth and family leaders, educators, law enforcement officials, and behavioral health professionals will participate in an interactive discussion to address how communities can work together to improve access to behavioral health services and supports. The event will be webcast live.

In response to feedback from local communities, we're delighted to make you aware of two exciting opportunities to connect with this year's national event.

1. Your community can be a part of the 2016 national conversation by hosting an Awareness Day Live! event to view the live webcast and interact with the on-stage discussion by sharing questions, ideas or insights via email, Twitter, or text. The national event moderator will share selected questions and comments from viewers around the country during the webcast.
2. If you are already in the process of planning your Awareness Day events, you may consider including *Awareness Day Live!* in addition to your existing plans for May 5 or hosting an event to view the national webcast on demand later in the month of May. An archived version of the national event webcast will be available for on-demand viewing following the live event.

Here are some tips on how to host *Awareness Day Live!* event in your community. Please complete and submit an Awareness Day 2016 [pledge form](#) to let us know of your plans. Thank you for your dedication!

Sincerely,

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Connect Your Community to the National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day 2016 National Event ***Awareness Day Live!***

Here are some tips on how to host an *Awareness Day Live!* event in your community.

Awareness Day Live! Planning Questions:

- **What is *Awareness Day Live!* all about?**

Awareness Day Live! is your community's opportunity to be a vital part of the Awareness Day national event. You can join the discussion about how communities around the country are connecting children, youth, and young adults with mental and substance use disorders, and their families with behavioral health services and supports. You will also learn about strategies for addressing barriers to behavioral health care access.

- **How will our *Awareness Day Live!* guests be able to engage with the discussion taking place on the national event stage in real time?**

People attending *Awareness Day Live!* around the country can email, tweet, or text questions and ideas. The national moderator will share simple instructions for interacting with the panel discussion during the live webcast. You may also have an informal discussion within your group about your community's unique challenges and opportunities related to improving behavioral health care access for children, youth, young adults, and their families.

- **When should we host *Awareness Day Live!***

In order to engage with the national event in real time, your *Awareness Day Live!* gathering would ideally take place on Thursday, May 5 at 7 p.m. EDT.

- **Who will we invite to attend?**

We encourage you to invite children, youth, young adults, and families who are not currently in services, are new to services, or who need more information about accessing services and supports. To reach youth and families not currently in services, you might want to invite some organizations you're not currently partnering with such as, local PTA chapters, YMCA/YWCA members, or Boys & Girls Club leaders. You may also consider inviting education, child welfare, primary care and law enforcement partners.

Awareness Day Live! Planning Checklist:

Planning Phase 1: About two months before *Awareness Day Live!*

Begin by establishing a planning committee for your *Awareness Day Live!* event. This committee should include social marketing staff, youth and family representatives, as well as community members who represent the types of panelists you may wish to recruit.

Planning Committee Tasks:

- Reserve a location for Thursday, May 5 at 7 p.m. EDT and begin thinking about logistics of the event (set-up, transportation, childcare, parking, equipment, accessibility, etc.).
- Recruit and secure sponsors, if necessary.
- Develop a budget and timeline.
- Determine the format size and agenda.
- Determine specific AV equipment needs (laptop, projector, projection screen or TV, speakers, technical support)
- Recruit an usher to collect audience-submitted questions.
- Finalize the names and addresses of individuals and organizations you would like to invite.
- Notify your potential audience of the event date (i.e., electronic or print save-the-date notice, news article, advertisement, etc.).
- Decide on evaluation methods to determine the effectiveness of your event.
- Set up a record-keeping process or event binder.

Planning Phase 2: Five to six weeks out

In phase 1, you figured out the big picture. In phase 2, focus on the details. Delegate tasks and responsibility among members of your planning committee.

Planning Committee Tasks:

- Follow up with sponsors, if necessary.
- Assess transportation and safety issues for the event.
- Arrange for a central office space during the event and begin composing a list of equipment needed.
- Double-check hardwire computer connection availability, as well as wireless connection and bandwidth
- Finalize any print materials except for the agenda and participant list, which should be printed the week before the event.
- Finalize the content and methods for your evaluation.
- Decide whether or not you will invite the media and develop a media contact list.
- Determine if and how you will promote the forum on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Distribute invitations via print, email, social media, etc., and encourage attendees to bring a laptop or mobile device so they can email or tweet questions and responses to the national event panelists or participate in Text, Talk Act.

Planning Phase 3: Two to three weeks out

As the event draws near, there will be several small tasks that will require attention, completion, or confirmation. Maintain strong communication with team members about tasks from phases 1 and 2 above to make sure that all plans are running smoothly and team members are informed.

Planning Committee Tasks:

- Finalize social media promotion plans leading up to and during the event.
- Make a list of materials to be taken to the location and begin packaging them or arranging for their delivery.
- Make staff assignments (including registration staff, note taker, audiovisual coordinator, social media point person, and greeter) and explain duties to all staff members.
- Finalize and print the agenda.
- Finalize evaluation materials and print, if applicable.
- Verify venue details (two weeks out), including set-up and equipment.
- Conduct a final site walk-through (one week out).

Event Day

The day of your community forum will be busy and exciting.

Planning Committee Tasks:

- Arrive early and check that the location is set up correctly and that audiovisual equipment is available as requested. Check all microphones, projectors, audio equipment (including speakers), and computer connections.
- Download Awareness Day 2016 Short Report as an Awareness Day Live! handout. *Note: The short report will identify major barriers to behavioral health care access and how systems of care can address these barriers.*
- Finalize the registration area. Organize staff members at registration approximately an hour before the start of the event.
- Make sure staff are in their assigned locations.
- Follow up with contacts if you are conducting media outreach.
- Have your social media point person ready to take photos and post about the forum.
- Hand out evaluation materials at the end of the event, if applicable.

Awareness Day Live! Follow-Up

Take time to celebrate your success and thank your partners! Conduct a wrap-up meeting with the planning committee to review positive outcomes and lessons learned for future event planning. Follow up with media contacts and monitor traditional, digital, and social media coverage.

Complete written summaries and evaluations, and review invoices and send payments for services. Sending thank you notes to committee members, volunteers, presenters, sponsors, staff members, and others is a great way to close out your event. Keep your event binder/records handy for future events.

Finally, please remember to complete the Awareness Day 2016 feedback form so we can share your great work on www.samhsa.gov/children.