



12 TIPS FOR PLANNING A WELLNESS EVENT

Whether your organization is large or small, all employers have the opportunity to reduce stigma and educate employees about mental health, benefits, and available resources by hosting mental health events or activities. Here are 12 tips for planning your next mental health event.

1. START SMALL.

If your organization already hosts annual events for employees, choose an event that best aligns with wellness and incorporate mental health topics or activities, such as hosting a stress management session or encouraging employees to take a [mental health screening](#).

2. START WITH RESOURCES YOU ALREADY HAVE.

If your organization has a mental health employee resource group or task force, ask if they would be interested in brainstorming and planning the event.

3. THINK ABOUT THE THEME.

Choose a topic or theme for the event to help your organization decide what activities and partners should be included in the planning process. For example, your organization can host a “Stress Less” event with activities such as yoga and meditation and partners specializing in stress management or life-work balance.

4. THINK ABOUT TIMING.

Pick a date that aligns with mental health awareness months, for example [Mental Health Month](#) (May), Pride Month or Men’s Health Month (June), [BIPOC Mental Health Month](#) (July), or Suicide Prevention Month (September). To help spread the word about your event, MHA develops several toolkits per year to help promote mental health awareness and information available to the public at no cost.

5. PREPARE A BUDGET.

The amount of financial support an employer can dedicate to an event varies greatly across organizational size and industry. However, planning a realistic budget and getting creative with resources can lead to a successful event. Leverage existing partnerships with local health-related groups your organization collaborates or volunteers with by asking them to participate as vendors or resources for employees.

6. TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH.

Mental health is still stigmatized in professional settings, and employees may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the topic altogether. Introduce mental health slowly by incorporating wellness activities such as yoga, meditation, or Zumba into your event. Explain the connection between physical and mental health to participants and why it is important to treat health holistically.

7. GET INSPIRATION FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES.

Survey employees on their health interests and hobbies that help them manage their stress. Employees may even volunteer their time to host a simple exercise, healthy cooking demonstration, or knitting for beginners.

8. MARKET YOUR EVENT.

When promoting the event, keep your messaging and brand consistent. This event could be the activity employees look forward to attending every year.

9. OFFER SCREENING ON SITE.

An easy way to get your employees to start thinking about their mental health is to offer free, anonymous, and confidential [mental health screening](#) at your event. After answering 10 to 15 questions (depending on the mental health concern), employees will receive immediate results and access to the next steps.

10. PROMOTE YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) AND BENEFITS.

Have a representative from your EAP or HR table explain the services or benefits available to employees at the event.

11. FEED TWO BIRDS WITH ONE SCONE.

Use the event as an opportunity to host seminars or training on how to support a coworker, how to manage stress, or how emotional intelligence can help people managers.

12. ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO ATTEND OR VOLUNTEER AT EVENTS HOSTED BY A LOCAL MHA AFFILIATE.

Can’t host your own event? Look for one in your community. Also, [MHA’s Annual Conference](#) brings together affiliates, consumers, family members, and advocates from across the country to talk about important and emerging mental health issues each year.