



ZERO REASONS WHY

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Event Planning Guide

There are many different events that you can host to increase campaign awareness and generate conversation about mental health to reduce the stigma. Consider planning events like a mental health advocacy day, a March + Rally or activities during Mental Health Awareness Days, to unite the community around #ZeroReasonsWhy.

Mental Health Advocacy Day

Consider attending your state's Mental Health Advocacy Day at the state capitol. Individual appointments with legislators provide an opportunity to introduce the campaign, its pillars and mental health challenges of teens in the legislators' territories. It is a great way to expand the campaign's reach and advocate for policy change that would impact mental health initiatives and programs in their state.

March + Rally

A #ZeroReasonsWhy March + Rally is a great way to show support for the cause while building community support. The event provides an opportunity for students and community members to share why removing the stigma around mental health is important to them. Yard signs offer attendees a way to create their own mantra by finishing the sentence "There are #ZeroReasonsWhy ____" and holding it up during a march around campus or a park. Parents, community representatives and mental health professionals may also speak at the rally to help educate the public on the topic and the campaign. It can be a valuable tool for reducing the stigma around mental health, highlighting the campaign, increasing community support and distributing educational resources.

Campus Activities

There are many different times of the year you can plan activities to generate conversation about mental health and give people additional resources about the campaign and mental health resources. The list is extensive, but some example awareness days include:

- January: Mental Health Month
- May: Mental Health Month/Week
- September: National Suicide Prevention Month/Week; World Mental Health Day

Planning activities during an awareness day or week is a great place to begin.

- Kindness notes on post-it notes around the school
- Sharing mental health tips with student body
- Exercise and mindfulness activities
- Empathy building exercises
- Creative activities



In-school Activities

Find ways to incorporate mental wellness activities into the school day sponsored by **#ZeroReasonsWhy** or in partnership with another mental wellness group. If this concept is new to your school, consider planning something at least once a semester, increasing the frequency to quarterly if not monthly. Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

Affirmations

Groups can work together to create uplifting affirmation signs and posters to hang up around the school. Positive affirmations help shift thoughts from negative to positive each time students read the affirmation.

Coloring

Whether your mind is racing or you just need a break, coloring never fails. Offer necessary coloring materials and print out coloring sheets for students to take a break, relax their mind and check-in with their peers before they continue their busy day.

Displays of Gratitude

Dedicate a wall to serve as a gratitude display. As students walk into school, present them with the opportunity to anonymously write what they are grateful for on seasonally themed paper. Collect responses to display or have students tape them to the wall.

Exercise and Mindfulness

Both exercise and mindfulness are powerful tools when it comes to mental health. These practices can clear your head and channel positive chemical releases. Exercising with others by walking around the track is a great way integrate social interaction into your day. Practicing mindfulness can be as simple as some new breathing techniques. Count to four as you inhale and exhale to help calm your anxiety and relax both your body and mind.

Empathy Building

Share different exercises and videos to build empathy within the student body. Glasses of Empathy is a cheesy video, but an effective reminder that everyone is fighting their own battle and to be kind to one another. Allow students time to reflect on the video and prompt discussions about empathy and compassion in safe environments.

Kindness Notes

Leave post-it notes in a well-trodden area with encouraging notes, especially around finals week to remind students they are worthy, capable, loved and an important part of the community.

Mental Health Tips

Integrate daily/weekly mental health tips into the morning announcements. This is a great way to introduce new techniques into the student body and expand their tool boxes. You never know what one tip can do for someone.



Awareness Days

*Not a comprehensive list

When planning in-school activities or fundraising events, consider planning them around a day of awareness. A few mental wellness related days are noted below, but there are many more. Or if you want to plan a stress relief activity, you may think about having it correspond with Yoga Day or National Walking Day. Don't forget to let the campaign know about your plans so we can promote your work on social media.

JANUARY

Mental Wellness Month

FEBRUARY

International Boost Self-Esteem Month

Random Acts of Kindness Week/Day

National Make a Friend Day

MARCH

Zero Discrimination Day

APRIL

Stress Awareness Month

National Stress Awareness Day

MAY

Mental Health Month

National Mental Health Counseling Week

Mental Health Action Day

JUNE

LGBTQ Pride Month

JULY

Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

International Self Care Day

AUGUST

Friendship Day

SEPTEMBER

National Suicide Prevention Month/Week

Suicide Prevention Day

OCTOBER

National Depression Month

Mental Health Screening Month

Mental Illness Awareness Week

National Depression Screening Day

World Mental Health Day

National Coming Out Day

NOVEMBER

International Stress Awareness Week/Day

International Day for Tolerance

International Survivors of Suicide Day

DECEMBER

National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month

Please work as a group and enter your answers in the third column.

Identify dates for your Mental Wellness Week activities	Refer to the Awareness Days page in the Activation Toolkit for ideas.
Consider Partners	If there is an established mental health group at your school consider partnering with them. Is there a parent group that might want to participate (e.g. Fathers Club, or BV Well)?
Brainstorm Activities	Consider the Activities list and options reviewed today to determine what your activities you'd like to feature.
Speakers	Would you like to consider bringing in a speaker such as Johnson County Mental Health or a mental health professional? What planning is required to ensure their availability?
Promotion	How will you get teens to participate? Morning announcements? Posters? Advisory? Personal invitations, text messages or social media?
Purchase Supplies	List the supplies that will be needed to conduct the activities. Determine who will purchase them. Is there an opportunity to get reimbursed by the school? Is a fundraiser required?
Day of Responsibilities	Make a plan for who will set up each activity each day. Are the activities self-directed or are they group exercises? Do you need to practice?
What are the benefits?	It is great to highlight the benefits of each activity so people understand the differences. For example, how do the benefits of running differ from meditation?

TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

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TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

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5. _____



Meeting Facilitation Tips

As part of the campaign, you may be asked to lead a committee or plan an event. To help make the most of your time, consider these tips for holding an effective meeting:

Roles of Facilitators

Managing time, prompting meaningful discussion, ensuring everyone's voice is heard and encouraging participation are key aspects of an effective meeting facilitator and meeting.

Establish a Meeting/Event Purpose

What's the end goal of this meeting/event? Have an answer to this question before the meeting to ensure progress is made and people's time is used productively!

Plan an Agenda

No meeting or event is adequately prepared without an agenda. Create and share the agenda prior to the meeting/event to give attendees time to prepare thoughts and to ensure the facilitators are ready to lead.

Minutes

Minutes are taken during meetings, serving as a recap and record for all organization members. There is a variety of meeting minutes templates that include important items such as attendance, listing what was discussed and highlighting action items. Minutes provide structure, keep people on task and ensure all voices are heard. It is a great way to guarantee everyone is on the same page.

Action Items

In collaboration with a Meeting Agenda, decide on key action items each meeting with members. Make sure everyone knows what role they are playing and their responsibilities for an upcoming event or activity.

Accountability

Life is busy, and there's a lot of ways your time can be spent. Hold regular meetings with the expectation all members attend and actively participate. If members frequently miss meetings, hold them accountable and check in with them to make sure they are doing alright.

Meeting Facilitation Tips

Create Space for All Voices

There is a wide variety of personalities and not all of them enjoy jumping into conversation. Establish a secure space where all ideas are welcomed and heard and create space for those who may not be the first to share their ideas.

Work with Others

Partner with other mental health organizations/clubs to involve more of the student body! Plan meetings/activities for after school or on the weekend - a time when many people can attend and advertise in advance!

Read Your Audience

If attendees start to become restless, fidget or turn to their technology, it might be time for a stretch break, speed up the pace or wrap up the meeting/event. Disengaged people end up wasting time and negatively contribute to activities. Make sure all questions and the meeting/event's purpose is answered.

Online Meeting/Event Tips

The same tips carry from in person meetings and events, but there are a few additional tips that a key to an effective online success.

- **Choosing a Location**

Choose a quiet space where you are comfortable and avoid backlighting.

- **Online Etiquette**

Make sure everyone's microphones are muted if the group is over 5 people and give everyone an opportunity to speak. Cameras on, phones down - eliminate any possible distractions so you can lead and your audience listens.

Fundraising for SWAG

SWAG is a great way to mobilize your school and community. Wearing a #ZeroReasonsWhy t-shirt around town or in school lets people know you are a Mental Health Advocate. Consider these activities as ways to fundraise for t-shirts or other swag to pass out at your school. Here's an idea: pass out wristbands or other items to the opposing teams at sporting events.

Color Run

Plan a 5K around your school and surrounding neighborhood where participants wear white shirts. At different checkpoints within the course, have volunteers throw colored chalk at participants. Have participants pay an entry fee and create a space for donations.

Walk-a-thon

Have participants make teams with their friends where they pledge to walk 10,000 steps every day for a week, as an example. They will need sponsorships for their pledge where donations can be received in person, or Facebook/Instagram fundraisers. Prizes can be rewarded to the team that raises the most money or who reach the target goal.

Car Wash

Plan a car wash where members of the community pay to get their car cleaned. Tickets can be sold in advance and people can pay when they arrive. Make sure to advertise ahead of time and on the side of the road during the event.

Trivia Night

Have people sign up in teams of 4-6 people with a teacher and an established entry fee. Each team can select a group theme where they dress in costumes. Have a variety of themed questions to test students' knowledge, potentially including a mental health category to help educate students on ways to foster positive mental health.

Game Night

Students pay a small entry fee to enter into a space filled with a wide variety of games to play with friends. This is a great way to spend time with peers and unwind after a long day.

Pancake Breakfast

Set an entry fee for members of the community to attend a pancake breakfast. Chris Cakes is a great option to help with the event. Consider adding forms of entertainment for guests like speakers, dancing or a performance by the pep band.

Concession Night

Have volunteers from #ZRW work the concession stand at football and/or basketball games in exchange for a portion of that night's proceeds. Encourage customers to donate to the cause with an extra jar available.



SWAG Request Sample Letter

Local Business or Foundation

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City, State Zip

Date

To whom it may concern,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of the #ZeroReasonsWhy campaign to ask for help providing a t-shirt to each high school student in our district.

As you may know, suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24. For every one completed suicide there are an estimated 25 attempts, and four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs.

We believe that there are #ZeroReasonsWhy a teen should struggle alone. We hope that by removing the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide prevention, more teens will be more likely to ask for help and participate in programs offered at their school and community mental health centers.

Our hope for the t-shirts is for the larger student body to show their support for removing the stigma. By providing t-shirts to all, the logo will become easily recognizable in the community and help spread the message of the campaign. We would like to have these t-shirts available to recognize the upcoming event: (PICK ONE OR OTHERS)

- September 1 - National Suicide Prevention Month
- October 4 - 10 Mental Illness Awareness Week
- October 8 - National Depression Screening Day
- October 10 - World Mental Health Day
- November 13 - World Kindness Day
- November 16 - International Day for Tolerance

If you agree to fund this effort, we would engage the district print shop to fulfill the order and have the specs available that they would need.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely -

(One from each school in the district)

Name, School Name

Name, School Name

Name, School Name

Name, School Name

Name, School Name