

Program Planning for Mental Health Awareness

Although every campus is unique in how they approach mental health awareness programming, there are several key components that will help to ensure programming success! Review the materials below to learn more about how to create an effective programming plan.

Calendar of Events

Developing mental health awareness programming requires that you take the calendar into consideration! There are specific times of year, such as orientation and exam weeks, when students may experience feelings of increased anxiety and stress. During these times, it is important that students are made aware of mental health support services that are available to them. In addition, your group may wish to create programs surrounding awareness days, weeks, and months.

Winter

- Programming focusing on holidays and mental health issues
- Stress reduction programs preceding midterms and finals
- Awareness Weeks
 - February 10–16, 2008
 - Sexual Responsibility Week
 - February 24–March 1, 2008
 - National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

Spring

- Stress reduction programming preceding finals and graduation
- Awareness Months
 - April
 - Alcohol Awareness Month
 - Counseling Awareness Month
 - Sexual Assault Awareness Month
 - April 10, 2008
 - National Alcohol Screening Day
 - May
 - National Mental Health Month
 - May 7, 2008
 - Anxiety Disorders Screening Day

Summer

- New student orientation
- Residence Life staff training

Fall

- First week of school
- Greek Life rush activities
- Awareness Months
 - September
 - National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month
 - October
 - National Depression Screening Month
- Awareness Weeks
 - September
 - National Suicide Prevention Week
 - October
 - National Mental Illness Awareness Week
 - October
 - National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week
- Awareness Days
 - October
 - World Mental Health Day
 - October
 - National Depression Screening Day®
 - November
 - Great American Smokeout

Getting Started

Awareness Events

A necessary goal of programming is to help raise students' awareness of mental health issues and available support services. One way to reach students is to set up awareness booths at orientation and other high traffic events. Awareness booth representatives can speak with interested individuals about the importance of mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and distribute giveaway items that promote available resources.

As previously described, the establishment of a Safe Zone/ Hope Zone is one way to help raise awareness and provide a support system for students in need of assistance. Be sure to educate those individuals displaying the Safe Zone/Hope Zone sign about reducing stigma, appropriate responses, emergency protocol, and available resources.

Your group may wish to develop programming that takes place during an established mental health awareness day, week, or month. By planning in advance, you may be able to access additional resources and creative programming ideas

