



Children's  
Mental Health  
Matters

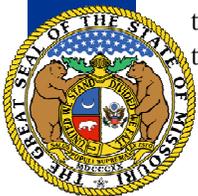


*CHILDREN'S MENTAL  
HEALTH WEEK:  
SCHOOL BASED TOOL-  
KIT*

*MISSOURI*

## BACKGROUND

- National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week is dedicated to increasing public awareness about the triumphs and challenges in children’s mental health and emphasizing the importance of family and youth involvement in the children’s mental health movement.
- The effort seeks to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health and that positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development from birth through childhood. Last year, the national theme focused on building resilience in young children dealing with trauma.
- Communities around the country participated by holding their own awareness day events, focusing either on the national theme, or adapting the theme to the populations they serve.
- All communities, statewide organizations and other interested organizations are encouraged to use the week of May 4-10, 2014 to promote positive mental health, well-being and social development for all children and youth.
- Join colleagues across the country in sending out the following messages:
  - Mental health is essential to overall health and well being.
  - Serious emotional and mental health disorders in children and youth are real and treatable.
  - Children and youth with mental health challenges and their families deserve access to services and supports that are family driven, youth guided and culturally appropriate.
  - Values of acceptance, dignity and social inclusion should be promoted throughout all communities for children, youth and families.
- Family and youth voice is a valued asset in determining appropriate services and interventions.



- Information about Missouri CMHW 2014 can be found at: [www.dmh.mo.gov/childsoffice](http://www.dmh.mo.gov/childsoffice)

## HISTORY & TIMELINE

- **In 1949**, The National Mental Health Association declared May as Mental Health Month. Although this nationally recognized observance began as Mental Health Week, with an increase in public interest and a broadening scope of issues, it grew into a month-long awareness campaign. There was no focus on Children’s Mental Health until the early 1990’s.
- **In 1950s-60's**. Through the next two decades, special emphasis was placed on educating the public around mental illness and inviting them to state hospitals and other locations to learn more.
- **In 1970s**. In the 1970s observances shifted to community based events as state hospital “patients” were moved to community settings.
- **In 1991**, a group of parents in *Missouri* decided that one of the most important projects they could undertake was to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding children’s mental health. A coalition of parents, professionals and other stakeholders was formed and created Children’s Mental Health and Behavior Disorder Week. This was changed to Children’s Mental Health Week in 1995. Over the next five years three more states, Kansas, Illinois and Ohio began their own celebration of Children’s Mental Health Week (CMHW).
- **In 1994**, the *MO Family Organization* took posters and copies of a tool kit for all states attending the FFCMH conference. The green ribbon was used in all CMHW materials. The National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health later joined the coalition and promoted the mission.



- In 1996, CMHW went nationwide.
- In 1998 & 1999, CMHW in the Congressional Record signed by *Missouri* Senator John Ashcroft.
- In 2004, the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health declared the first full week of May as Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week nationally. National Federation partners and all 120 Federation chapters and state organizations were invited and encouraged to participate in a week long celebration of advocacy and awareness efforts.
- In 2006, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services launched an annual national initiative called “National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day,” which occurs during Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week.
- In 2007, the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health launched the Annual Green Ribbon Campaign, one of the their most important awareness and education campaigns. The **green ribbon is a key symbol** in social marketing and awareness efforts.
- Today, the goal of this nationally recognized event is to increase public awareness and educate communities to expand the understanding of children’s mental health needs and their resulting impact on families.

## WHY GREEN?

- Back in the 1800’s the pale green color was used to brand the insane population.
- It was decided to continue using the color green in a bright hue, but with a completely different focus. Green signifies new life, new growth, and new beginnings.
- Display a **Green** Ribbon in a prominent place to show your support for Children’s Mental Health Week 2014.



## TEN TIPS FOR ORGANIZING AN EFFECTIVE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- **Gather** a group of enthusiastic people to make your team. Include people who have shown dedication to the issue of children’s mental health, as well as people with lots of contacts and energy.
- **Schedule** regular meetings and set goals early.
- **Determine** what your message will be and to whom you will be sending the message; suggestion: everyone on your mailing list, local schools, county departments, community centers, hospitals, and pediatricians.
- **Brainstorm** your ideas - ask the “Magic Wand Question” (What would you like to see happening if you had a magic wand and no obstacles?) No ideas are bad ideas.
- **Prioritize** - as a group. Set goals and then discuss what steps (objectives) you need to take to accomplish those goals.
- **Become task-centered** - break down the objectives and decide if an individual can manage it or if a team approach is needed. Then, assign the tasks.
- **Create a timeline** and if you have e-mail abilities set up a distribution list to keep everyone updated on the progress.
- **Spread the word** – send a press release or call members of the media (TV and newspaper reporters and editors).
- **Support** each other by keeping in touch with participants. Encourage them to stay on target with the timeline. If someone is having trouble with a task, offer help.
- **Participate in your Children’s Mental Health Week activity**, and celebrate it at a follow up meeting. Discuss how things went and what to improve on next year. Do not forget to set the date for your next planning meeting to begin the process for next year. Each year it gets easier!



## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### *Structured Educational Activities:*

- Children's & Teens' Perspectives - class room discussions through drawings and stories.
- Workshops for parents and caregivers. Regional or local educational conferences.
- School-based Mental Health Fairs with depression and anxiety screenings.
- Special topic high school assembly with speaker.
- Video presentations with discussion, especially at the High School level.
- School announcements or facts by students.

### *Informational Activities:*

- Green ribbon awareness-word of mouth is key!
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs) played on school network.
- Write an Op-Ed or letter to the Editor for you local newspaper. Great for Journalism or English classes,
- Sponsor a Youth Mental Health First Aid training.

### *Artistic Expression/Recreational Activities with a Children's Mental Health Theme*

- Essay, art and poster contests for children & youth.
- Puppet shows emphasizing sensitivity to disabilities.
- Teen or group art murals.
- "Express Yourself Tees"- t-shirts created by children/teens in art classes, pre-school or after school.
- Open mike poetry session for teens and/or parents.
- Teen improvisational or theatre group show.
- Book reading contest - school library to display their collection of books on disabilities.
- Showcase the achievements of children & youth in the school system. Some activities to consider:
  - Creating a special literary magazine that allows children and youth with mental health needs to tell their stories through prose, poetry, or art.
  - Hosting a school-based art contest with a mental health theme and turning the artwork into a student planner for the next school year.



- Have students participate in the Youth YouTube Contest. For more information visit: [www.missourimhf.org](http://www.missourimhf.org).

## TIPS AND IDEAS—FUNDING YOUR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK ACTIVITIES

- Below you will find some ideas of ways to help raise money and/or get support to have a successful Children's Mental Health Week 2014 event.
- When you approach groups, businesses, etc in your community, you are raising awareness for Children's Mental Health just by having the conversation about why you would like them to support these activities.
- Keep a list of everyone who donates so you can send a thank you card. Use that list to show others in the community who supported your awareness activities.
- The timing is perfect (after March 17) to approach stores in your community to see if they would be willing to donate left over St. Patrick's Day decorations. Stores in your community that might have items to donate are Deals, Dollar Tree, Big Lots, Party supply stores etc.

**GREEN RIBBONS** are a cheap way start conversations and bring awareness to the community about Children's Mental Health. If funding is an issue, think about a local community resource. Do you have a Michael's, Hobby Lobby, craft/fabric store that you could ask to donate a few roles of green ribbon and pins?



- Get everyone involved! Ask children, youth, and school faculty/staff to help make green ribbons to distribute during CMHW 2014.
- Or pick a group in your school district that might want to take this on as a project? Student Council, Honor Society, A+ students or students in an after-school program.
- Give all donors a green ribbon with a small card explaining CMHW or some marker to get people asking questions.

**BE CREATIVE!**

- Traditional fundraisers work as well! Bake sales, donating a parking space, etc.
- Funds raised can also be used for an event and bring family members, youth and children together to celebrate CMHW. Watch the Department of Mental Health website for idea's on ways to celebrate with children and families!

[www.dmh.mo.gov/childsoffice](http://www.dmh.mo.gov/childsoffice)



## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Send all events (including flyers, advertising, etc.) for CMHW 2014 to Kristi Scoville at [Kristi.Scoville@dmh.mo.gov](mailto:Kristi.Scoville@dmh.mo.gov). We want to showcase Missouri's efforts to promote Children's Mental Health Week 2014!
- If you have specific questions about CMHW 2014, feel free to email Emily Koenig at [Emily.koenig@dmh.mo.gov](mailto:Emily.koenig@dmh.mo.gov)

