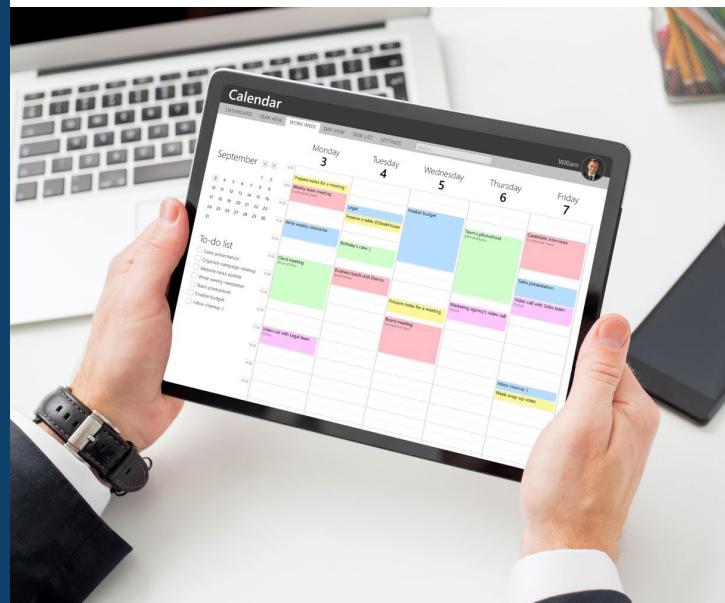




Create Your Own Mental Health Awareness Program



Recognizing Mental Health in the Workplace



In today's fast-paced work climate, understanding and addressing mental health has never been more vital. NYSIF is proud to provide your business with this roadmap to a successful Mental Health Awareness Program! This program can be 100% customizable and is easy to implement to make sure it's impactful for you and your employees.

- Activities are designed to educate employees and leaders about critical elements of mental wellness, while helping them manage stress, reduce stigma and encourage open dialogue.
- Our goal is to develop a comprehensive program for your complete internal team — if your company has multiple offices, they should all be included.
- NYSIF's own program featured a full 5-day schedule, including guest speakers, free breakfast/snacks, word collage activities and an interactive space for our employees to share mental health tips and thoughts.

Create Your Own Mental Health Awareness Program

Dedicating time to mental health shows employees that you care, and brings people together in support of a healthier, happier work environment. We can help you create a program that raises your team's awareness of important mental health topics and encourages deeper conversation.

Follow this simple guide for resources, ideas and tips for hosting your own Mental Health Awareness Program, including examples of what NYSIF implemented in our own program. Resources can be found at nysif.com/wellness.

Together, we'll cover:

1. **Planning Your Mental Health Awareness Program**
2. **Developing Your Content**
3. **Measuring Your Program**
4. **Keeping the Awareness Alive**




Planning Your Mental Health Awareness Program

Planning a Mental Health Awareness Program can seem daunting at first, but NYSIF is here to help you gather everything you need for a successful initiative.

- Core elements we'll discuss include:**
- Emails
 - Posters
 - Screen Savers and TV Monitors
 - Activities and Group Exercises
 - Guest Speakers



Emails



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

As we kick off NYSIF Mental Health Awareness Week, we recognize that in order to understand and address mental health, we have to discuss it. So we've scheduled some time with guest speakers who will lead discussions on a range of topics related to mental wellness.

- Circle of Health - eight dimensions of full health
- Making and managing meaningful connections in a remote world
- Retrain your brain to celebrate - exercise with tapping

Virtual sessions are scheduled at 9am and 1pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Complete this [Survey Monkey](#) form to register – and take part in our journey towards a healthier workplace! (There is no limit to the number of attendees, but we encourage you to choose and register as soon as possible to save the time on your calendar.)

Create daily emails with positive messages to send to all employees; informational resources (available from nysif.com); and an agenda of the day's planned activities, exercises or guest speakers. If scheduling speakers, be sure to give employees enough time to block off their calendars.

Pictured are examples from NYSIF's Mental Health Awareness Program:



**MONDAY
Mental Health Is
Part of Your Full
Health!**

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Welcome to NYSIF Mental Health Awareness Week! We're excited to once again offer this as a continued part of our overall State of Wellness program. Together, we hope to encourage healthy discussions and bring greater attention to the many aspects of mental well-being.

This week, you can look forward to:

- Three guest speakers covering a range of mental health topics
- A healthy social Snack Break in the office on Tuesday, May 23
- Our continued "NYSIF All Staff" Microsoft Teams channel
- Daily tips and resources - like the one attached

Today's speaker is discussing the "Circle of Health" and the eight dimensions of full health — physical, spiritual, social, intellectual, emotional, occupational, environmental and financial.

We'll also be distributing some wellness gifts, and you'll see additional reminders and tips posted as you walk around! Also be sure to check out our Teams channel, where we'll be sharing tips and facts regarding mental health. We encourage your participation!

Enjoy the week – we appreciate your engagement, and hope what you learn here can make a difference for you, your family and our NYSIF community.

You still have time to [register](#) for this weeks speakers.

Monday: Resource of the Day



**THURSDAY
Language Matters**

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Welcome to Day Four!

Thank you to all who participated in yesterday's Teams chat regarding words and phrases that make you feel better or can help soothe anxiety. One of our goals this week is to start a conversation and remove barriers to dialogue.

Today, we take it one step further with a survey about words you find significant in a discussion of mental health in the workplace. We are asking you to choose the three words that most resonate with you on this topic. The top three responses will be used for a future giveaway for all staff.

[Take the survey!](#)

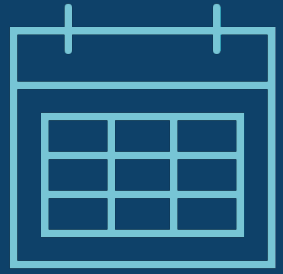
Did you miss Tuesday's speaker? [The speaker's](#) presentation received rave reviews! You can view the PowerPoint and the recording on the [Communications intranet page](#) (see the Mental Health Awareness Week tab).

Today's Resource of the Day discusses language around mental health - choosing neutral words helps eliminate the stigma and promotes understanding.

Emails/Itinerary

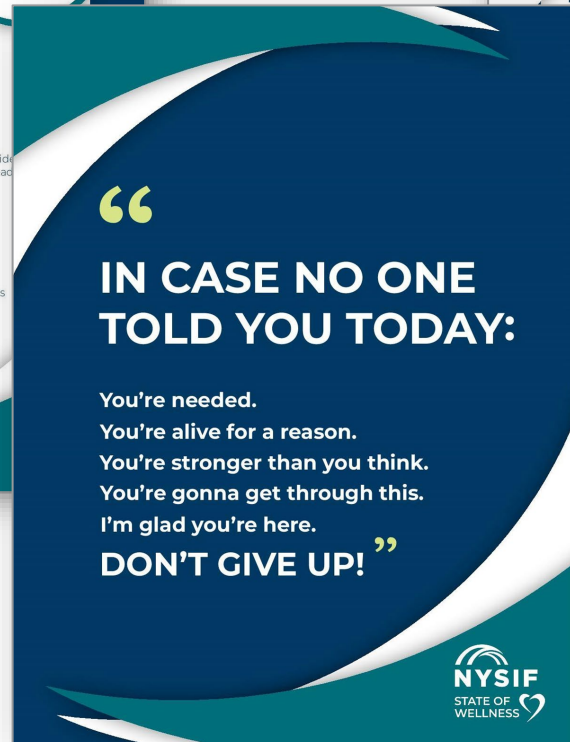
The example at right shows the schedule of topics, speakers, events and activities from NYSIF's Mental Health Awareness Program.

Each day (and email) can have its own topic of focus – such as beating burnout, the warning signs of mental illness, depression, anxiety, stress, self-care at work, meditation/mindfulness, suicide prevention or exercise/nutrition.



- Day 1** – Kickoff email from the CEO with a preview of the week's agenda and announcement of interactive intranet activities, such as a Teams or Slack chat. Company-wide discussions are a great way to engage employees.
- Day 2** – Speaker/Workshop #1: Provide multiple time slots if possible. The daily chat can incorporate the topic or activity.
- Day 3** – Employee social breakfast or healthy snacks, and fun and engaging employee interactive activities (crafts, icebreakers, team building exercises, etc.)
- Day 4** – Speaker/Workshop #2: Provide multiple time slots if possible. The daily chat can incorporate the topic or activity.
- Day 5** – Speaker/Workshop #3: Provide multiple time slots if possible. The daily chat can incorporate the topic or activity.

Posters

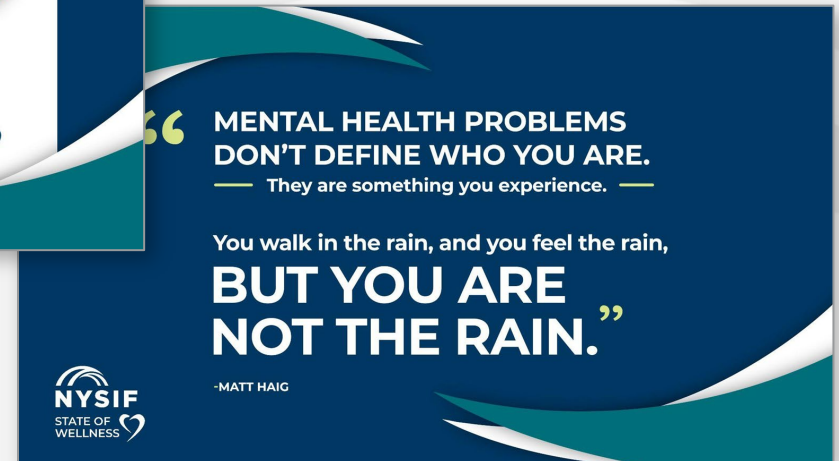
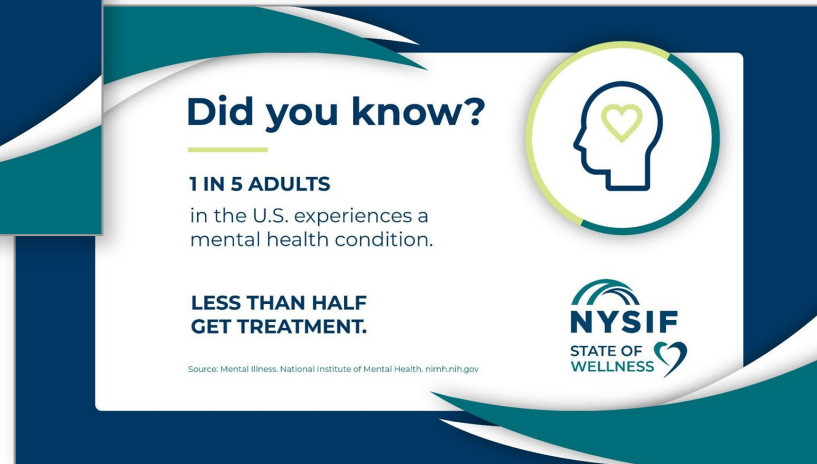


These posters are ready for you to download on the **nysif.com/wellness** site and use to offer tips and positive inspiration to your employees. Print in color and post them around the office/breakrooms where your employees walk or gather.

Screen Savers and TV Monitors

Download images with positive messages and tips to display on television monitors at your office or use as screen savers.

Examples from NYSIF's Mental Health Awareness Program are shown here.



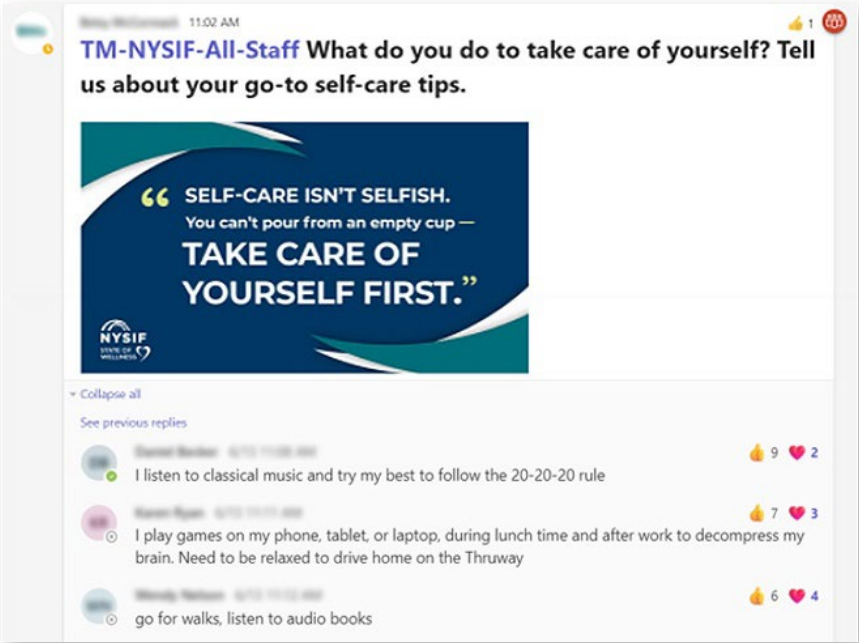
Activities and Group Exercises

Activities

Open up conversations and bring people together with activities such as social hours, yoga sessions, a volunteer day, a video from executives, a positive message wall, catered lunches, a snack bar, social gatherings like bowling or mini golf and internal posts sharing photos of teammates’ families or pets.

Group Exercises

Get your team together and thinking about ways to address mental health with exercises that can be done in-person or with the use of platforms like Slack, Microsoft Teams and others. The examples shown here offer some ideas.



This banner contains a collection of positive words and phrases that NYSIF employees submitted via Microsoft Teams.

Guest Speakers

Guest speaking sessions can be set up virtually or in-person, and you may want to take the size of your company into consideration in case discussions need to be broken up into multiple sessions. You can also use a platform like SurveyMonkey to poll your employee base to find the best availability.



The list below offers some potential topics that can be covered by guest speakers:

- Mental Health Overview
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Suicide Prevention
- Stress and Anxiety in the Workplace
- Depression and How To Handle It
- Self-Care Tips
- Diet and Exercise
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Breathing Exercises

Developing Your Content

Start by organizing activities and speakers around the content that is most relevant to you and your employees. By staying up to date with current mental health topics, you can make sure you're covering as much essential information as possible. Explore the list of topics on the previous page for ideas that you can center your program around.



For additional ideas, visit the links below:

- NYS Office of Mental Health — <https://omh.ny.gov/>
- NYC Health — <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/>
- Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. — <https://mhanys.org/>
- Mental Health America — <https://mhanational.org/>
- Bring Change to Mind — <https://bringchange2mind.org/>
- National Institute of Mental Health — <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness — <https://nami.org/Home>

Developing Your Content

Additionally, you can consult your company's health insurance provider to see what is and isn't covered under your plan regarding mental health and make sure your employees are aware of it. Provide a handout with summaries of the benefits available under your health insurance plan and contact information for the plan's behavioral health unit. Below is a list of questions that may help you define mental health coverage:

- Does our health plan offer benefits and impose coverage limits for mental health conditions and substance use conditions that are equivalent to those for physical health conditions?
- What is the number or percentage of behavioral health providers that are in-network for our plan? How many are currently accepting new patients?
- Is there a user-friendly behavioral health directory that helps users find providers and access specific services?
- What types of inpatient and outpatient mental health services are covered by our plan? Are home-based or telehealth services covered?
- Does our plan include coverage for prescription mental health medications at a level that encourages their appropriate and regular use?
- Does our plan include a comprehensive wellness program that promotes mental health and stress management?

If an employee is injured or becomes ill as a direct result of their job, the employer's workers' compensation insurance pays for health care, as well as some wage replacement if the employee is unable to work.

In New York State, employees who suffer a mental health injury while working or as a result of an existing compensable physical injury may file a claim with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). Learn more about filing a workers' comp claim in New York by visiting the [WCB website](#).

For additional questions to ask your insurance provider, see <https://mhanational.org/what-questions-should-we-ask-our-benefits-broker-tpa-or-eap> or <https://askearn.org/page/pillar-4-ensure-access-to-treatment>.

Employee Reactions

Measuring the success of your mental health initiative lets you gauge employee reactions to events, giveaways, speakers and more. It also allows you to make tweaks that ensure the success of future programs.

Measuring can be done in multiple ways, and platforms like SurveyMonkey, Google Forms and Qualtrics make it easy to measure your company's responsiveness to various tactics.

Below are some example questions that NYSIF asked employees:



Team Member Comments

You can also reach out to employees for feedback via your intranet system. The quotes below are comments from NYSIF team members on Microsoft Teams.



“This week was so informative and engaging. I really appreciate all who helped put this together ... and all who decided to ‘let their hair down’ and divulge in their personal matters of heart and mind. It was enlightening ... and humbling. Thank you, all! :)”



“I love that it’s going to be NYSIF Mental Health Awareness Week next week. Mental health is so important. There is so much going on these days in the world. We all need to be there for one another and lift each other up. I say it all the time. Managing stress is very important.”



“I am overwhelmingly pleased that my job enriched our community with a Mental Health Awareness Week! This event has brought further awareness to the importance of being well mentally. We all have worked with someone who has been afflicted with this illness. The resources that were provided will assist everyone involved. Thank you for taking the time to bring awareness so that we all can achieve a better way to understand and communicate effectively.”



Keeping the Awareness Alive

It's important to remember that caring for mental health is an ongoing battle, and the discussion shouldn't end when your program does.

- Provide employees with resources and support they can use on a daily basis if needed, like the hotline wallet card shown at right.
- Offer giveaway items like hats, shirts, pens, mugs, magnets, water bottles, frisbees, bracelets, stress balls, sticky notes and mouse pads as a further reminder of positive mental health habits.



Keeping the Awareness Alive

Once your program has ended, review any comments you've received. You may be able to use that feedback to improve your next mental health initiative or assist employees who are looking for support – opening the door to finding the help they deserve.

Finally, remember to consult with your health insurance provider to see what is and isn't covered under your health insurance plan regarding mental health, and make sure your employees are aware of it.



"Beyond Mental Health Awareness Week itself, I suggest instituting mindfulness breaks throughout the workweek. Perhaps a short message or email reminding staff to do a breathing exercise or the like could be done periodically."



"This presentation should not be limited to one week. This should be ongoing from now on."



**THANK
YOU!**

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