

Send Date: Monday, April 27th, 2020

Email Subject: "Each Mind Matters: Express Yourself May Activation Kit"

Next week kicks off Mental Health Matters Month. We are excited to share this year's theme for the 2020 Mental Health Matters Month Activation Kit: "Each Mind Matters: Express Yourself." The online activation kit includes many activities that can be done virtually or from home!

The benefits of creative expression on our mental health and wellbeing have been widely documented. Art therapy (a clinical intervention where a person engages in a specifically designed artistic activity under the guidance of a trained art therapist) has been demonstrated to reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and trauma while improving mood, coping, quality of life, cognition, and self-esteem.

While using art to treat a mental health condition is best accomplished with the help of a professional therapist, anyone can benefit from incorporating creative self-expression into their wellness routine. Evidence shows that "artistic talent" or training in the arts simply isn't necessary to obtain the benefits of engaging in an artistic outlet -- it's not the outcome that matters, it's the process. Even activities as simple as doodling have been shown to activate the reward pathways in our brain, elevating mood and making us feel better.

With resources in English and Spanish, this year's activation kit focuses on how expressing ourselves in different ways can raise awareness about mental health, break down barriers between people, build our own wellness and strengthen our communities.

Download the bilingual Activation Kit here for materials that include:

- Mental Health Matters Month Posters (English & Spanish)
- Activity Tip Sheet with these new activities:
 - Sticky Note Wall with instructional poster
 - Coloring Pages
 - Chalk Art
 - Plant Care
- Activities to Create Online Communities of Support
- Mental Health Support Guides (English & Spanish)
- Message Card and Get-Well Card Animations
- Social Media Guide, including pre-written posts, images, Instagram story gifs, and Instagram stickers

Stay tuned every Monday in May for weekly emails:

- Week 1: Express Your Support
- Week 2: Express Your Well-being
- Week 3: Express Encouragement
- Week 4: Express Unity

Connect with Each Mind Matters online throughout the month! Tag @EachMindMatters and use the hashtags #EachMindMatters and #SanaMente.

Send Date: Monday, May 4th, 2020

Email Subject: "Each Mind Matters: Express Your Support"

[Half of us](#) will experience a mental health challenge over the course of our lives. Yet every day, millions of people continue to face stigma related to mental health because they or their loved ones are facing a challenge. According to RAND, [nearly 9 out of 10](#) Californians with a mental health challenge report having experienced discrimination.

The very real prospect of facing stigma and discrimination prevents many from reaching out for support. In fact, before people reach out for help it takes an average of [11 years](#) from the onset of symptoms of a mental health challenge. The goal of Each Mind Matters is to amplify the voices of all people who want to put an end to this stigma, creating a community where everyone feels safe reaching out for the support they deserve.

This week, tap your creativity to express your support for mental health awareness and speak out against stigma:

- Show your support and solidarity with Each Mind Matters, California's Mental Health Movement, by using the Social Media Guide and posting on your Facebook or Instagram page.
 - Get Social Media Images to post and share.
 - Use an Each Mind Matters Instagram Story Templates and Stickers.
- Print out and color in one of the Each Mind Matters Coloring Pages as a way to relax and involve kids in the movement. (Available in English and Spanish.)
- Set up the lime green ribbon Sticky Note Wall at home, in your window, or on the sidewalk as a fun and meaningful way to create awareness and share messages of support with your family or neighbors. (Instruction poster available in English and Spanish, and ribbon templates.)

Find all these materials more in Each Mind Matters' [May Activation Kit here](#).

Here's a bonus: expressing care and support towards others increases production of the hormone oxytocin (which is associated with feelings of attachment and love) and the neurotransmitter serotonin (which is involved in good sleep and feelings of happiness) and can even give some people more energy and feelings of happiness!

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Send Date: Monday, May 11th, 2020

Email Subject: "Each Mind Matters: Express Your Well-Being"

Making time to focus on your well-being isn't always easy. Self-care isn't about being selfish or getting a reward -- it is a critical part of maintaining our well-being.

As the concept of self-care has gained traction in popular culture, it is often presented as "treating yourself" or a way to blow off steam when life becomes too much. But real self-care is about building habits that support our health and well-being. As author Brianna Wiest says: "Self-care should not be something we resort to because we are so absolutely exhausted that we need some reprieve from our own relentless internal pressure. True self-care is not salt baths and chocolate cake, it is making the choice to build a life you don't need to regularly escape from."

Instead of being a single event we indulge in when we're already feeling burned out, real self-care is a thoughtful practice that builds well-being over time. For folks who like a more structured approach, or people who are experiencing mental health challenges or those living with chronic health conditions, a more comprehensive self-care planning approach may be helpful. In this case, you might want to try [Wellness Recovery Action Planning](#), developed by Dr. Mary Ellen Copeland.

Maintaining your wellbeing through regular self-care prevents burnout, reduces the negative effects of stress, and helps you refocus – and it doesn't have to cost a thing. This week, try one of these tips to build your self-care practice and express your wellbeing:

- Practice mindfulness. A good place to start is to consciously shift your awareness to the smallest moments of joy we experience. Research has found that small moments of positivity, the little things that make us happy throughout the day, can accumulate over time. Try taking a moment at the end or beginning of every day to reflect on a situation or small moment that brought you a little joy or engaged your senses.
- Start a garden. Mindfully tending plants or gardening outdoors can have a positive effect on mental well-being. Planting flowers can leave a beautiful visual reminder of that connection and message of hope. Tending plants and pulling weeds are great ways to get outside and support your mental and physical health.
- Try the Power of "No." Remember that self-care isn't always adding something to your life but subtracting something can be powerful too. Lessen your to-do list by letting go of an expectation of yourself or turn down an invitation that feels draining. Learning to say "no thanks" can be a powerful self-care tool.

Find these resources and more tips on self-care in the [Each Mind Matters May Activation Kit](#) and in these Each Mind Matters infographics: [Steps to Self-Care](#) and [Tips for Self-Care During COVID-19](#) (now available in [California's threshold languages](#)).

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Send Date: Monday, May 18th, 2020

Email Subject: "Each Mind Matters: Express Encouragement"

How do people and communities deal with difficult events and challenges like a serious illness, the death of a loved one, relationship problems, the loss of a job, and other traumatic events? How can we provide support to our loved ones when they are struggling?

Research shows that resiliency – or the ability to “bounce back” after difficult experiences – is not an innate trait, but rather a complex set of behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and strengthened. And one of the best ways to build resiliency is by fostering connections with the people around you – whether that’s people in your community or your friends and family. Strong, supportive relationships with close family, friends, and loved ones are a key element for a happier and healthier life.

This week, strengthen your community by expressing encouragement to those around you:

- Share one of the Each Mind Matters Affirmation Cards with a friend, family member, colleague, or even a stranger. You can download a printable version or share these via social media by visiting <https://emmsourcecenter.org/resources/message-cards>.
- Join the #ManySidesToMyStory Social Media challenge! This year throughout May, Each Mind Matters is teaming up with Disney star and mental health advocate, [Sofia Wylie](#), to encourage others to express the many sides of their story to raise awareness about mental health and support those who may be experiencing mental health challenges. Visit manysidestomystory.com to learn more and join the movement.
- Share the [Each Mind Matters Mental Health Support Guide](#).
- View and share stories of hope and recovery from the [Each Mind Matters Gallery](#).
- Print the new “Take One” poster (available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)) and post it outside your home, or maybe in your apartment building. It might just brighten someone’s day!

Find even more activities in Each Mind Matters’ [May Activation Kit here!](#)

Additional resource: Tips for talking with and helping children and youth cope after a disaster or traumatic event: A guide for parents, caregivers, and teachers. (2013). <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence/publications-resources>

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Send Date: Monday, May 25th, 2020

Email Subject: "Each Mind Matters: Express Unity"

"We don't heal in isolation, but in community." — S. Kelley Harrell

Creative self-expression can be a powerful tool to help us heal and maintain our mental wellness. It can also provide a meaningful way to build connections and express our support for those around us.

Being part of California's Mental Health Movement means joining thousands of organizations and millions of individuals working to advance mental health. Each Mind Matters was created to unite all of us who share a vision of improved mental health and equality.

This week, help put an end to stigma by expressing unity as part of the mental health movement:

- Create messages of encouragement and hope in front of your house with [Chalk Art](#). Snap a photo and share it on social media. Don't forget to use one of the lime-green ribbon Instagram stickers if you share it on your story!
- Take an active role in suicide prevention. Know the signs, find the words and learn how to reach out at www.suicideispreventable.org.
- View and share mental health PSAs created by youth across California to raise awareness about mental health at www.DirectingChangeCA.org.
- Learn how to raise your voice in support of mental health and to speak out against stigma. Share how you're part of the movement by taking a pledge to advance mental health in your own way: www.eachmindmatters.org/get-involved/speak-up/take-a-pledge/.

Find even more activities in Each Mind Matters' [May Activation Kit here!](#)

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