



Affiliate Messaging Guide

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About This Guide

As a valued Mental Health America Affiliate, your communication efforts play an important role in representing the great work of your organization and Mental Health America as a national organization. The information in this guide exists to:

- **Support** communications about Mental Health America National.
- **Explain** best practices when utilizing the Mental Health America Affiliate logos.
- **Inspire** messaging to communicate about your organization's mission, vision, and priorities.

If you have questions about this guide, please contact Valerie Sterns at vssterns@mhanational.org.

Mental Health America National Key Messages

Our Name: Mental Health America

We are Mental Health America*. All public-facing communications developed by Mental Health America Affiliates regarding the national office of Mental Health America should include all three words spelled out. Please do not use the abbreviated “MHA” when referring to Mental Health America National.

For the purposes of this guide, to avoid confusion between the national organization and affiliates, we use Mental Health America National and Mental Health America Affiliates. **Do not use “Mental Health America National” in public-facing material, however.*

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission	Mental Health America advances the mental health and well-being of all people living in the U.S. through public education, research, advocacy and public policy, and direct service.
Vision	We envision a world in which all people and communities have equitable opportunities for mental health and well-being and are enabled to flourish and live with purpose and meaning.
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We value mental health as part of overall health.• We value self-determination – the right of all people to have access to the knowledge and resources they need to achieve their optimal mental health, wherever they are in a stage of well-being, condition, or recovery.• We value the responsibility to the public to ensure that all people have equitable access to the vital conditions for safety and well-being as well as a social foundation built for whole-person health.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We value the necessity of social inclusion and intentional diversity in achieving equity.• We value relationships built on respect, dignity, and compassion. |
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Who We Are

Mental Health America is the nation's leading national nonprofit dedicated to the promotion of mental health, well-being, and condition prevention. Our work is informed, designed, and led by the lived experience of those most affected.

Operating nationally and in communities across the country, Mental Health America advocates for closing the mental health equity gap, while increasing nationwide awareness and understanding through public education, direct services, tools, and research, making Mental Health America a national standard bearer in public mental health advocacy and community-based solutions. Our State of Mental Health in America report is among the most widely respected health reports in the nation.

Why We Exist

Mental Health America was founded in 1909 by Clifford Beers, a person living with a mental health condition who had to fight for understanding and acceptance.

Mental Health America exists to promote mental health and well-being and prevent mental illness and crisis – for all.

For more than 100 years, Mental Health America has led the fight for mental health and well-being. Today, we continue to fight for and center the needs of people with lived experience. We celebrate our progress and acknowledge the frontiers that lie ahead – including the outlook for young people who are navigating new challenges of maintaining good mental health and wellness in today's complex society.

With empathy and respect, we champion the promotion of mental health, resilience, and recovery; we advance prevention and early intervention; and we emphasize the social drivers of mental health – the vital conditions that everyone needs for safety and whole-person well-being.

What We Do

Mental Health America directs people to help, information, and action in the promotion of mental health and well-being.

- **We Help:** Our resources are among the most robust and widely referenced for people seeking help for their mental health, from how to navigate health care systems to working with providers and finding support in your local community.
- **We Inform:** Our constantly growing body of research and knowledge is a resource for people navigating mental health conditions, and our screening tools provide guiding information, resources, and tools to help you understand and improve your mental health.

- **We Inspire Action:** Following the path of our founder, we advocate for reform wherever there has been harm, injustice, or exclusion in the field of mental health. Using the strength of our national network and the work of the national office, we pursue continual progress in identifying and replicating efforts that close the mental health equity gap through policy and practice.

Through public education, research, advocacy and public policy, and workplace resources, we work to improve understanding and promote mental health development for all people at every stage of life.

Our Commitments

We are defined by four key commitments, which have been essential to our philosophy since our founding:

- We follow the lead of those with **lived experience** to improve the future of health and well-being.
- We invest in **prevention** to save lives today and save costs tomorrow.
- We ensure **equitable and affordable access** to mental health care.
- We advocate for all people to have [vital conditions](#) for safety and well-being.

Mental Health America Screening (MHA Screening)

[MHA Screening](#) is part of our national prevention and screening programs. These programs consist of tools that can be used by individuals, schools, payers, and employers for people to understand and make decisions about their own mental health. Our work supports individuals at the earliest stages of concern. In this stage, individuals are most vulnerable to poor outcomes, and intervention has the best chance of building resiliency and change.

Writing about Mental Health America Screening:

MHA Screening	May be used when referring to MHA Screening as one element of our broader national prevention and screening programs. Note: While Mental Health America is not using the “MHA” acronym in public-facing messages, “MHA Screening” is one instance where the acronym will continue to be widely used, referenced, and shared.
National prevention and screening program	Write out in public-facing documents when “MHA Screening” alone does not fully explain the function goals and impact <i>or</i> the document includes reference to other programs. e.g., a media overview of our programs, funder pitches, etc.
Take a mental health test	Use instead of “Take a screening.”
Screeners	Use to refer to people who take a mental health test.

MHA Screening Core Values:

- Meet people where they are.
- Focus on mental health, not mental illness.
- Provide a starting point for the mental health journey.

How MHA Screening Data is Used:

Users' voluntary data helps identify data-driven population health efforts toward prevention and early intervention of mental health conditions, promotion of mental well-being, and equitable allocation of mental health treatment and support.

A Note on MHA Screening Terminology:

MHA Screening will regularly use language and terms not approved or suggested within this Mental Health America organizational messaging guide. Intentional reference will be made to widely used terms by the public, i.e., “drunk” or “addict.” *The terminology used within MHA Screening is separate from what is accepted and used by Mental Health America as a national organization.*

About Our Strategic Focus: Next Gen Prevention

Over the next two years, we will continue to focus on Next Generation (Next Gen) Prevention: broadening prevention beyond primary means while improving mental health literacy. We seek radical collaborations to drive greater mental health equity and to disrupt systems where the greatest inequities persist.

Our [Next Gen Prevention strategic plan](#) incorporates new insights from the frontiers of science about whole-person health and healing. Our work will remain guided by the voices and wisdom of lived experience and the needs of the next generation through six horizon focus areas:

Focus Area	Strategic Approach
<p>1. Social Drivers of Mental Health: <i>Next Generation Equity</i></p>	<p>We advance the understanding that addressing the social drivers of mental health are vital conditions for overall well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We advocate for vital conditions of well-being. • We promote the acquisition of mental health protective factors (<i>factors that diminish our risk and promote our overall health</i>), mental fitness, and resilience. • We listen to youth voices to better understand a) the multiple and driving factors of youth distress, and b) the reforms and programs they envision to address the crisis.
<p>2. Next Gen Digital: <i>Next Generation Innovation</i></p>	<p>We ensure the next wave of digital supports and services center lived experience in solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We advance inclusive innovation by exploring forward-thinking concepts and new approaches. • We inspire collaboration by driving progress with existing and future partners. • We invest in exploration of digital behavioral health, social media, wearables, psychedelics, new formularies including first-to-market, new CBT and trauma-informed models, a new and equitable crisis continuum, MAT and psychedelic advances for SUD, private equity startups for mental health, and AI for mental health.

<p>3. Spirituality <i>Next Generation Resilience</i></p>	<p>We elevate the concepts of spirituality and consciousness in the public understanding of mental health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We explore our belief that the intersection of spirituality and mental health is underexplored and underutilized. • We research “neutral spirituality” and social connectedness as core to healing. • We reach our community through the Spirit in Mind Task Force, facilitated by Tyler Norris M.Div. M.ED.
<p>4. Screening 2.0 <i>Next Generation Prevention</i></p>	<p>We explore the development of national prevention and screening programs as tools that can be used by individuals, schools, payers, and/or employers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We reference science for continued advancement in knowledge and theory of mental health. • We reference social work for continued advancement in understanding, and our ability to address the social drivers of mental health. • We reference our own data from MHA Screening to point others to the elevated and rising risk for youth and young people.
<p>5. Collective Impact <i>Next Generation Sustainability</i></p>	<p>We enhance the capacity of our Affiliate Network and establish strategic partnerships to expand our national reach and impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We grow the Affiliate Network and on-the-ground collaborations with under-resourced communities. • We collaborate with advocates and organizations who represent marginalized and disenfranchised communities in service of removing barriers to mental health information and treatment. • We work closely with allies and peer organizations to advance common goals, like reducing the number of deaths in despair and promoting a strong mental health policy agenda.
<p>6. Substance Use <i>Next Generation Support</i></p>	<p>We more fully integrate substance use and mental health on a national level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work to integrate substance use and mental health through advocacy, research and public education. • We research to further understand what is available and effective for individual needs toward harm reduction from substance use. • We teach and promote mental health literacy nationwide through research, state and local advocacy, and public education.

Mental Health America National Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a brief, introductory piece of messaging you can use to begin a conversation with someone who is unfamiliar with Mental Health America. An elevator pitch is meant to briefly describe Mental Health America, why it exists, and what it does. With only 30 seconds, be selective and prioritize information based on your audience. As a conversation starter, an effective elevator pitch should prompt a listener to say, “Tell me more.”

General Elevator Pitch:

“Mental Health America is the nation’s leading national nonprofit dedicated to promoting mental health, well-being, and condition prevention. People with lived experience are at the heart of everything we do,

and we use education, direct community services, and research to work toward our goal of a world where everyone can flourish and live a purposeful life.”

Mental Health America National Affiliates

Mental Health America engages with 140+ affiliates across the U.S. and their community partners, government agencies, research partners, elected officials, corporate leaders and employers, funders, industry partners, and faith leaders to advance mental health wellness and promotion in all the spaces where people live, learn, work, play, and congregate.

Each Mental Health America Affiliate offers a unique blend of services and programs focused on meeting the needs of their community and/or states.

Statement of Affiliation With the Mental Health America National Office:

- **Long Form:** [Affiliate Organization Name] is one of over 140 Mental Health America Affiliates committed to bringing support and advocacy to communities nationwide. Formerly the National Mental Health Association, Mental Health America advocates for closing the mental health equity gap while increasing nationwide awareness and understanding through public education, direct services, tools, and research.

Learn more about [Mental Health America's National Affiliate Network](#).

- **Short Form:** [Affiliate Organization Name] is an affiliate of the National Mental Health America organization.

When Writing About Affiliates:

- **We capitalize** affiliates when using the broad term, “Mental Health America Affiliates,” as that is considered a formal title.
- **We do not capitalize** “affiliates” when referring to them as “our affiliates.”
- **When referencing specific affiliates:** Use the Mental Health America [affiliate search tool](#) to identify specific affiliate names. *Not all affiliates share the “Mental Health America” name.*

Mental Health America Affiliate Brand Guidelines

Visual brand: Refer to the Mental Health America brand guidelines at brand.mhanational.org, password: **mhabrand**, for more information on colors, fonts, and imagery.

Mental Health America National Inquiries

This guide can be referenced for most questions regarding Mental Health America National. In the event that your organization needs guidance for complex or sensitive topics regarding Mental Health America National, please contact media@mhanational.org

Website: www.mhanational.org

Facebook: [Mental Health America](#)

Instagram: [@mentalhealthamerica](#)

X – General (previously known as Twitter): [@MentalHealthAm](#)