



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov



Campaign For Mental Health Recovery FAQs

The Campaign

How serious a problem is mental illness in our country, particularly among young adults?

- Mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, are more widespread than most people realize.
- According to SAMHSA, in 2005 there were an estimated 24.6 million adults aged 18 or older who experienced serious mental health problems. Almost every family in America is affected by mental illnesses.
- Among young adults ages 18 to 25, the prevalence of serious mental health problems is high (18.6 % of 18 to 25-year-olds, vs. 11.3% of all adults 18+), yet this age group shows the lowest rate of help-seeking behaviors.

Why is the age group more susceptible to mental illness?

- Different factors are involved in why this group has such a high rate of mental illness, including that younger adults are less afraid to talk about these issues and more self reporting is occurring. Also, the onset of mental illnesses typically happens during young adulthood and time is needed to recover.

Why are you launching the Campaign for Mental Health Recovery?

- Research shows that many Americans are misinformed about mental illness and respond negatively when confronted with a friend's mental illness.

- One of the main reasons why people don't seek help is because of the stigma associated with mental illness. Therefore, the opportunity for recovery is more likely in a society of acceptance.
- Additionally, one of the most important factors in recovery is the understanding and acceptance of friends.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Ad Council launched the campaign to help improve awareness about mental illness, eliminate the stigma and encourage young adults throughout the country to support their friends who have mental health problems.

What do you hope to accomplish?

- The campaign aims to decrease the negative attitudes that surround mental illness and encourage young adults to support their friends who are living with mental health problems. Ultimately, in motivating friends to be supportive and helping to reduce the stigma, we can encourage more young adults who have mental illnesses to seek help.

Aside from the PSAs, what is SAMHSA doing to extend the reach of the new campaign?

- SAMHSA's Campaign for Mental Health Recovery has partnered with federal agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), State mental health agencies, leading researchers on stigma, and a broad coalition of stakeholders including organizations that represent provider organizations and consumer and family member groups.
- The Campaign also held a series of regional meetings to develop a grassroots network to support the Campaign and provide assistance with anti-stigma efforts to States and local communities.
- SAMHSA also recently released "*Developing a Stigma Reduction Initiative*," a resource guide that is based on the evaluation and lessons learned from the eight state Elimination of Barriers Initiative. The guide provides information on how to mount a statewide anti-stigma campaign, examples of outreach materials, reports on the best practices for stigma reduction, and lists important resources

for technical assistance. Copies of the guide can be obtained by calling SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Clearinghouse House at 1-800-789-2647.

Who is the campaign's target? And why?

- The campaign targets all young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who have friends living with mental illnesses.
- Research shows that young adults are more likely to know someone with a mental illness than the general population. Additionally, a recent study found that nearly one out of every five young adults reported having a mental illness (HealthStyles-October 2006).
- Furthermore, research shows that young adults with mental health conditions have a high potential to minimize future disability if social acceptance is broadened and they receive the right support.
- We chose to target young adults because they are the least likely to seek help from a mental illness and most likely to serve as a catalyst for the rest of the population in reducing the stigma.

The PSAs

Describe the campaign? What are you trying to communicate?

- Featuring a voiceover by actor Liev Schreiber, the television and radio spots illustrate how friendship is the key to recovery.
- The compelling and poignant PSAs show young adults the critical role they have in supporting friends with mental illnesses, and will help reduce stigma.

How many new PSAs are available and can you describe them generally?

- There are TV, radio, print, and outdoor PSAs available. A campaign brochure is also available.
- The PSAs discuss the importance of friendships and conclude with the line, “Mental illness. What a difference a friend makes.”

Are the PSAs available in Spanish? If not, do you have plans to develop Spanish-language work in the future?

- Spanish translations of the PSAs are available from psacentral.adcouncil.org or whatadifference.samhsa.gov.

Why did you decide to focus on friendship?

- We know that these PSAs are emotional and we’re confident that the message is on target to break through to the consumer.
- According to our research, our target audience places an extreme value in friendship and the essential support that it brings. As a result, the powerful creative highlights the value of true friendship and links it to the support and recovery from a mental health problem.
- The Ad Council conducted both quantitative and qualitative research to define the key messages and creative concepts of the campaign. Focus group testing showed that the PSAs motivated young adults and connected them to the issue in an emotional way that inspired them to want to be the good friend portrayed

in the advertising. (See “Research” section). The ads connected with young adults.

- We are confident that this research-based strategy will help to encourage young adults to help support their friend’s who they know are experiencing a mental health problem.
- After more than 60 years of public service advertising, the Ad Council has found that PSAs need to be compelling and research-based to get people emotionally engaged and to create behavioral and attitudinal change that is often deep-seated. The PSA has to break through the clutter of commercials so that it lives on the consumers’ mind long after the 30-second spot.
- This campaign is compelling and eye-catching and presents the important message using a strategy that is backed by solid research. There is also a very clear call-to-action.

Are there any fulfillment materials?

- All of the new PSAs direct audiences to visit a new comprehensive website, www.whatadifference.samhsa.gov, to learn more about mental illness and what they can do to play a role in their friend’s recovery.
- The site is a comprehensive resource where visitors can learn about different mental illnesses, access mental health services by zip code and view vignettes of people dealing with mental illness that include an interactive tool to help determine what they might do in the situation.
- A new brochure was also created to extend the campaign’s messages to the target audience. The brochure will be distributed by stakeholders and can be downloaded from the website or ordered via SAMHSA’s National Mental Health Information Clearinghouse at 1-800-789-2647.

New HealthStyles Survey (October 2006)

Who commissioned the new HealthStyles survey?

- The survey data was licensed from Porter Novelli by SAMHSA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

What were the goals of the study?

- The objective of this data, which are only a portion of a larger health survey, was to determine public perceptions about individuals with mental illnesses.

Are people generally caring and sympathetic towards individuals with mental illness?

- Despite the fact that an overwhelming majority of Americans believe that people with mental illnesses are not to blame for their conditions (84%), only about one in four (26%) agree that people are generally caring and sympathetic toward individuals with mental illnesses.

Does the general public believe that those individuals with mental illness can lead normal lives?

- Only a little more than half (54%) of young adults who know someone with a mental illness believe that treatment can help individuals with mental illness lead normal lives.

What did the new survey find about how the public perceives recovery from mental illness?

- Only around one-quarter of young adults between the ages of 18 to 24 believe that a person with mental illness can eventually recover?

Can people with mental illness actually recover?

- People with mental illnesses can and do recover. There are more treatments, strategies and community support systems available than ever before, including medication, rehabilitation, psychotherapy, group therapy, self-help or a combination of these. Studies show that most people with mental illnesses do get better and many recover completely.

Do people believe that those who have mental illness can be successful at work?

- Only 42 percent of Americans believe that a person with mental illness can be as successful at work as others.
- In fact, studies by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) show that there are no differences in productivity when people with mental illnesses are compared to other employees.

Why aren't young adults seeking help?

- Stigma plays a big role. Stigma leads to discrimination, isolation, social distancing, and the lack of availability of services and supports.

How can friends support their friends/family living with mental illness?

- Research shows that friends are a key component to mental health recovery.
- The emotional and psychological aspects of mental illness make supportive friends and family even more important to a person's recovery.
- Friends can make a difference by offering reassurance, companionship and emotional strength.
- Friends can express an interest or concern for people with a mental illness by asking questions, listening to ideas and being responsive.
- Friends can help break down the stigma and encourage society to treat mental illness like any other healthcare condition.

Research

Did you consult with any experts in developing the campaign?

- In developing this campaign, we convened a Workgroup with members from state mental health departments, advocates, consumers, providers, and leading researchers in the field.

Why do you believe this campaign will succeed?

- This work, like all of our PSAs, is based in solid research provided by SAMHSA and tested by Grey Worldwide and the Ad Council. Young adults were motivated by the advertising.
- There was extensive market research conducted for this campaign (see the following question). The Ad Council conducted both quantitative and qualitative research to define the key messages and creative concepts.
- Focus group testing showed that the PSAs motivated people and connected them to the issue in an emotional way that inspired them to learn more about it and do something.
- We are confident that this research-based strategy will help inspire young adults throughout the country to visit the campaign website and learn more about how they can support their friends living with mental illnesses.
- We believe this campaign will succeed because it is based on research with both the expert community and our target audience. The PSAs were tested with focus groups, which revealed that our target audience finds them effective and motivating (see the following question).

How and with whom did you test the ads to determine their effectiveness?

- In an effort to gauge in advance how the public would respond to the PSAs, *communication check focus groups* were conducted in Baltimore and Nashville, with a diverse array of consumers. We exposed the participants to a range of work (in board format) and asked questions about comprehension, persuasion, tone, etc.

How did young adults react to the PSAs?

- When we tested the PSAs with our target audience, many young adults identified with the messages and expressed the desire to be the “good friend” portrayed in the advertising.
- Our target audience responded to the positive and empowering messages and was motivated to take action as the message aligned with their goal to be a good friend.
- Young adults found the ads to be realistic and optimistic.

How will you measure the success of the campaign?

- One of the important criteria for all Ad Council campaigns is that they produce measurable results.
- The Ad Council and SAMHSA will track the number visits to the website. We’ll also track the number of materials downloaded.
- To help evaluate the campaign’s effectiveness and impact, we are conducting an online tracking survey, measuring trends in awareness, ad recognition, and relevant attitudes and behaviors. One was conducted prior to the launch (pre-wave) and a post-wave study will be conducted following the launch to determine the awareness of the issue and the advertising and the effectiveness of the PSAs in causing an attitudinal and behavioral change.
- The Ad Council will also monitor the donated media the campaign receives to determine its success.
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) will also be conducting research with young adults to determine the efficacy of the spots and the information will be applied to future creative efforts.