



## **Mental Health Month 2018**

### **Event Marketing Tips and Ideas**

Mental Health Week ACT is coordinated by



**This document has been prepared by the Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT**

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### [Linking your event to Mental Health Week](#)

If you would like to hold your own event, go for it! There is no need to register with us, but if you want to tell us what you are planning we can help promote you. Just email [communications@mhccact.org.au](mailto:communications@mhccact.org.au) with your event details and we will get in touch.

## Tips on creating a marketing plan

First things first...when creating your event marketing and publicity campaign you need to work out the who, the what, the where, the when and the why.

### **Why and What**

Write up an event summary that identifies your main reason for creating your event or taking part in Mental Health Week and plan your campaign around it. Write a publicity and marketing plan in advance; When are you going to print your promotional flyers? Will you use a graphic designer? Will you use print ads? If so, when and where? How much do they cost? When do you need to release your media release? What should go in it? Which media outlets will be most interested in your event?

### **Who**

Your target audience is very important so take your time to work out who you think will be interested in your event. If it's everyone you'll have a lot more work to do than if you just focus on 18 - 30 year olds or the 50+ women.

Some suggestions on audience categories are below:

- Seniors Workforce (White or Blue Collar)
- Youth (teens)
- Young Adults Families & Parents
- Children Women
- Men Gender
- Multicultural Disability

### **When and Where**

Pick a date and time that not only suits the availability of staff but is suitable for your target audience. There is no point organising an event for parents of young families if the event is held late at night. The same goes for venues. Make sure the selected venue is easy to access via public transport or has parking available. On the day, it will also be important to make sure there are signs to point people towards the event. If you need volunteers to do this then make sure you include this in your event plan.

## Budgeting

Something which you need to get straight early on is how much you want to spend on promotions. Expect the unexpected and have some contingencies in your budget.

This is a conservative estimate for a promotional budget:

- Graphic design fees \$350
- Photographer fees \$500
- Phone, postage, internet \$150
- Photocopying \$100
- Printing \$500
- Distribution \$150
- Advertising \$1000
- Total \$2660

It is however possible to greatly reduce the above costs by doing things yourself or you may be able to work out in-kind or contra deals, sponsorship with someone who can assist you.

In-house budget:

- Graphic Design fee done in house (staff hours only)
- Photographer done in house (staff hours only)
- Phone, postage, internet \$150
- Photocopying \$100
- Printing done in house (staff hours only and a nominal resource cost)
- Distribution \$150
- Advertising Fee Potentially not needed
  - If replaced by social media and networks
- Total \$400

## Event marketing

### Your Marketing Goals

Think about why you are participating in Mental Health Week or creating this event (brainstorm some ideas) and then you'll be able to work out your marketing strategy. Some examples might be:

- Is there a need for your event? Who are you trying to reach? Who is the target audience?
- What is the focus or message? What are you trying to achieve.
- Do you want to meet other NGO's or organisations working in the same sector to learn/see what else is happening? Is this a networking opportunity?
- Do you want to lift your media profile? If so, then you need to have a short and to the point media release and some good publicity shots ready for the media.
- Do you want to be able to apply for more funding grants for future events? Then document every step of your event and marketing strategy for analysis.

## **Reaching an audience**

Where to next? You've worked out who you want to target, why you want to do it, and now you need to work on your marketing and media plan.

How do people find out about events? Web Site, Email Lists, Newspapers, Radio, they see a flier or poster, they work in the Sector or by word of mouth.

It would also be wonderful if event coordinators could find out how people learnt about the event and then share this information with MHCC ACT. This information could be attained by sending out a quick audience survey, or by chatting to the people that attend. It is very useful to know if:

- People learnt about the event through someone who is involved in the event:
- they are an individual who has lived experience with mental health issues or their families, friends or work colleagues have been affected:
- the person works in the sector:
- they heard about it through friends:
  - Word of mouth is still one of the most effective ways of advertising your event.

## **The importance of images/ pictures**

A good picture is worth its weight in gold with any promotional event. If you've use an image that stands out on your marketing material, you'll get people interested and coming along.

Consider using a professional photographer or a creative and skilled friend. High quality images can also be useful for press enquiries. If you are really stuck, then consider purchasing a stock image from a company such as [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

## **The importance of design**

Once you have a beautiful and eye-catching image, don't just paste it into Word and add a bit of rainbow text with a border. If you are talented in design, then go for it; otherwise consider contacting a graphic designer for the job. If you will be producing a significant amount of print collateral, then a designer will be a worthwhile investment. You can also talk to the designer about payment as they might be willing to do their work pro bono if you include their logos on all printed materials or give them free tickets for their suppliers etc.

Don't try and fit too much in! People will be turned off if there is too much print to read and they can't find the information they want.

Remember also that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and what one person likes another may not. Don't feel too upset if what you have made if it is not everyone's cup of tea, it can be really hard trying to please everyone. The best you can do is take stock overall of what people think and use any constructive feedback received for next time.

## **The importance of engaging copy**

There are three golden rules to remember when writing copy for your event – be concise, be interesting and be understood.

**Be concise:** Isn't it terrible when you are reading a description of an event and you just can't work out what it is about? It's good practice to get the main idea of your event across in a few short sentences.

**Be interesting:** Don't just write a summary – you should have a hook that will grab people's interest and ensure that your event stands out on the page. Do you have an out of the ordinary venue? What have you done differently? If you were a member of the general public looking for an event to attend - why would you go to yours?

**Be understood:** You're trying to appeal to as many people as possible so avoid jargon or abbreviations you may turn people off. For example, not everyone understands the word client, consumer or SRF. Make sure that you will be understood and use inclusive language for everyone who might read your media materials.

## Spreading the news

### Street Distribution

Nothing beats distribution like one-on-one communication so consider whether it is appropriate for you to set up a small stall or letter drop your local area. Don't forget to also ask your colleagues if they will pass your event flyer around their networks to help get the word out. If you are setting up a stall in a shopping centre or on a street, remember that you may need prior approval. If you do have a stall, consider handing out some branded merchandise such as lollypops or bags filled with MHW Resources. If you are intending to use branded merchandise, remember to order your printed goods well in advance as most companies require a two month lead time.

If pounding the pavement isn't your thing you may want to contract a professional poster/ flyer distributor.

You can also hang your posters inside clubs, cafes and shops windows with the approval of the individual shop owners. Take the time to get permission or your poster will be removed from the wall/window or your flyers will be binned.

### Online Distribution

Can't tell your Twitter from your Facebook? Then maybe online distribution isn't for you. But if you are a Facebook addict or even have a web page then there are a few rules of thumb to help spread your event message online.

Something to remember is that people love the background story; the nuts and bolts. Take photos of your prep work, the art work for the exhibition, personal stories about the consumers involved, write about your trials and tribulations getting the event up and happening. Basically get some interest in your event before it happens. Sounds crazy but it works!

Update your website with all your details and imagery. It is very important to make sure the site is current as people turn to Google for information.

If you don't have a website then seriously consider setting one up. Many companies such as wordpress.com, blogger.com or wix.com offer easy to use templates at very affordable prices and sometimes there is no cost at all!

Get emailing! If you've been around for a while, chances are you have an email list. Now's the time to start talking to them. Either send an e-flyer of your event to your list, or design a proper html email using programs such Mailchimp.com. Think you don't have anyone to email? Consider how many people (friends, families and professional contacts) in email addresses book and email them a flyer. Ask them to pass it on and spread the word.

You can also consider establishing a Facebook event. Facebook users check their accounts regularly so creating an event is a good idea to get the dates out to people. If you've got a bit of cash to spare you could even look into their advertising packages.

Other common social media forums to consider are Twitter and YouTube but it is better to invest in a few select social media outlets rather than spread yourself too thinly across many.

### **Promotions and Cross Promotions**

If you are part of a bigger event such as Mental Health Week, register your event with MHCC ACT who can promote your event through the official Mental Health Week website. Remember to also email a copy of your flier and further details to the MHCC ACT for distribution. Brainstorm the various newsletter groups in your sector, such as CD Net and ask them to promote your event.

### **Print**

If you are planning on having free listings or pay for an advert in print it is always a good idea to investigate this early as some publications may have a long lead time. It's also good to have a bit of cash at your disposal as print advertising can eat up a bit of your budget!

There are many publications worth considering for press advertising, but much will depend on your target market. While expensive, you shouldn't discount the mass media, but it pays to think laterally about publications that may target your chosen audience (for example if you are reaching out to mature aged individuals then the Seniors Newspaper may be much better than the Canberra Weekly).

## Talking to the media

### **Media Releases**

Positive media coverage of your event can really boost people's awareness of the event as well as their attendance and a media release is the best way to reach journalists. Before you draft a media release and well in advance of your event, remember to nominate someone from your organisation to be the media spokesperson and handle media enquiries. The contact details for the spokesperson will need to be listed on your media release.

To write a short and snappy press release, first clearly identify the following aspects of your event.

1. What you are doing (eg. Holding a teenage forum on mental health).
2. Because (eg. To create awareness for families around mental health issues)
3. Why? (This bit you need to back up with statistics and information about what the above will create. Eg. Research has shown when families and teens talk together about mental health Issues it

creates change in 50% of the cases we see each year) *please note this is not an accurate statistic but an example.*

4. Why is your story more newsworthy than everyone else's? (Give them an interesting reason)

When writing your media release consider:

- Put the strongest part of the news story in your first couple of paragraphs. Don't let your release run over a page as most journalists will not bother to read it. Think carefully about your release. If it is boring then the journalist will not be interested and you will not get a response. Conversely, if it is too promotional and not factual enough, they will also run a mile.
- Writing for the media is completely different from writing for marketing. For example, don't use words like 'awesome,' 'fabulous' in the same way you would in marketing.
- Positive statements about your event must be attributed to someone (e.g. your spokesperson) in the form of a quote.
- Really think about what makes your event or issue unique, different and newsworthy, and make that the focus of your media release.
- Release Headline
  - Your headline should be clear and simple. Don't try to be too gimmicky or funny. You want to catch someone's attention because the headline is strong not because they don't understand the joke.
- Lead paragraph
  - Your lead paragraph must support the headline and contain the whole point of the story. This is where you answer the 'who, what, why, where and when' questions. The quality of the first paragraph can determine whether the news release is used. It must stand on its own and serve as a concise summary of what you are doing.
- Body
  - Write the release in present tense and as you would expect to see it in print. Many journalists aim to write their news for a twelve-year-old audience, so make sure your paragraphs are no longer than three lines wherever possible.

In thinking about these points you need to identify what makes your story newsworthy and why media should be interested in you more than the hundreds of other stories competing for the same media space.

Also, remember you don't write the news and you will not always be able to determine the focus of a story. The media will not necessarily adhere to what you see as the most important message of your story and may enhance or highlight an element of the story which you see as irrelevant.

Personal stories about someone involved in your event are very newsworthy, "I recovered from this because ....", "this changed my life because of ....." They want to find something that will grab people's thoughts, interest and feelings. They also want to tell stories that the general public can relate to.

So what is newsworthy? – Someone being the first person to complete something, or the oldest or the youngest or the first time that your event has happened in Australia can all be big draw cards.

Use your Media Contact List to contact media outlets but don't neglect your own contacts too – your own email list or a friend that happens to work at the ABC or run a community radio program. There

is a huge number of resources available online. For example check out: The Public Relations Institute of Australia: [pria.com.au](http://pria.com.au)

## **Media kits**

In order for the media to have enough information to publish a story about your event, you need to have at the very least a basic Media Kit, which should be sent out a few weeks prior to your event. If you wait until the week before you may miss out on planned media coverage. It is also important to remember that some media outlets have long lead times.

Ideally, your Media Kit should contain the following:

- Press release – one-page is preferable
- Background Sheet
- Biographies for interesting speakers, performers etc
- Photographs - JPEG images, one portrait, one landscape, 300dpi for print quality, with a file size no larger than 1MB so it can be emailed in a hurry.

Journalists will run a mile from stories they consider to be overtly promotional. They are looking for stories that are 'newsworthy'.

When planning or preparing any communication with the media (whether written or verbal) ask yourself the following questions:

- How does your story impact on other people?
- Why should they be interested?

By keeping these questions in mind you will be able stay more focused on what you are trying to achieve.

## **The power of a great photo**

The inclusion and placement of a story is hugely influenced by the pictorial editor of a publication.

A bright, energetic, strong, clear image is a powerful tool. If great stock shots of something associated with your event already exist, an arts editor may choose to use one of these, especially for a review. If there are no images currently available, set up an opportunity for the publication to come and take their own shots.

## **Dealing with journalists**

Journalists are under constant pressure to meet deadlines and are competing with their colleagues in the newsroom, and other journalists working for competing networks, for the story. Below are some tips for dealing with journalists:

1. Be available - They will need the interview, information and images, yesterday. The quicker you can provide what they need the more likelihood of your story getting a run.
2. Work with their timelines - Often you will need to set up photo opportunities in the morning to make the next day's paper. Events after 6pm are not useful for anyone other than social pictures – newspapers are on skeleton staff in the evenings and chances are they can't spare a photographer for your event.

3. Don't complain - Most media are working within impossible timelines and with increasingly fewer resources. They may not print exactly what you wanted, and occasionally they get their facts wrong but consider your long term media before complaining. It may be better to be gracious and offer them an opportunity for a new story with a different angle rather than asking for a correction to be published.

Once you've prepared your media kit and identified which media outlets you would like to target, it's now time to pitch your story.

### **Pitching a story**

Write an email directly to the identified journalist/editor/ producer with an arresting subject heading in the email (this might be the title of your release or a direct reference to a photo/vision opportunity) and attach your media release to the email. In the body of your email, be direct but a little bit friendly, briefly outlining the gist of the release/story opportunity. Offer to set up a photo/interview time with the journalist and the 'talent'/spokesperson of the story.

Attach a photo related to the event, if you have one available; to further demonstrate the potential visual strength of the story. If the image and story is strong enough, the pictorial editor may choose to use that photo (must be scanned at no less than 300dpi, 1MB) or may send a photographer to take another picture.

### **The follow up**

Call the next day to follow up your pitch. Refer to your email and ask if they are interested in the story and again if they would like you to set up an interview/photo opportunity.

If they say yes, ascertain some available times of the journalist/producer/presenter and then get in touch with the spokesperson (which may be you!) to arrange the media call. Once you have a time locked in, call the journalist/producer and confirm the time and place of the interview/picture.

Remember to ask if the journalist is happy to book the photographer or if you need to contact the pictorial department to line it up. Be sure you know what the photo opportunity is – colourful, larger-than life costumes are best. Never wear black for a press photo opportunity!

### **Radio Interviews**

If the media opportunity is a radio interview, confirm arrival time at the studio for the speaker – with plenty of time to spare before the on air/pre-record time. Alternatively, you may need to set up a pre-recorded or phone interview if the producer/presenter would like to run the story but does not have a live spot available. Once confirmed, put all of this information in an email to the journalist and call again on the morning of the media call to confirm that the interview/picture is still happening and that the time and place is still ok.

### **Keeping a Record**

If you do get some media coverage for your event, don't let it get thrown away like yesterday's newspaper! It is imperative that you keep track of the media coverage you receive. Clips can be used in reports, sponsorship proposals, grant applications and in media kits. Be sure to keep these filed and dated.

## Event checklist

Administration	
• Budget	
• Sponsor for the Event	
• Partners	
• Speakers/ MC – if required	
• Running Sheet	
• Staff, assistants or volunteers organized with roster sheet	
• Job List Sheets for each area created	
• Contacts Sheet created	
• Time Line Plan	
• Equipment sources (trestle tables, tents, chairs, other?)	
• Delivery Booked	
• Definition of event's purpose, goals and aims	
• Training sessions/ rehearsals needed before the event	

Production	
• Venue/Location booked	
• PA System	
• Sound equipment booked or already available	
• Production tool kit packed	
• Musician	
• Performer (s)	
• Stage manager	
• First Aider on site	
• Transport for special guests & speakers arranged	
• Parking	
• Signage for on site	

Media	
• Signage	
• Marketing/PR Plan	
• Media Release and Media Kit	
• Graphic Design/Photographs/Posters/Fliers	
• Web site updated	
• Posting of event online	
• Invitations sent	
• Advertising booked	
• Photographer or Video production organised for event	

Catering	
• Catering	
• Wine/Drink Sponsor?	
• Catering equipment booked or sourced	