

Checklist and Timeline for Planning Your Events

Planning an event can be stressful, but it can also be a lot of fun. Being prepared and organized is key to a successful National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day event. This checklist outlines some general planning steps from now until Awareness Day arrives.

Planning (Phase One)

- Determine the type, size, and atmosphere of the event.
- Select location and plan logistics (room setup, food, audiovisual equipment, accessibility to the physically challenged, etc.).
- Finalize the budget and timeline.
- Begin setting the agenda.
- Send out a "Save the Date" notice via mail, e-mail, or fax.
- Identify and invite speakers.
- Begin developing your materials.
- Determine what materials and services you will need from outside vendors. Do not forget food and beverages; room setup, including tables and chairs; signs and banners; decorations, including flowers; entertainment; and attendee giveaways.
- Research the names and addresses of individuals and organizations you would like to invite.
- Recruit and secure sponsors, if necessary.
- Set up your record-keeping process and create an event binder.
- Determine meal and food service needs.

Planning (Phase Two)

- Call potential speakers to seek confirmations.
- Touch base with sponsors to update them on your progress.
- Choose a caterer.
- Determine your catering selections.
- Provide your caterers with a head count by the deadline.
- Determine transportation access.
- Determine medical or mobility needs.
- Arrange for a central office space during the event.
- Finalize and print materials (except for the agenda and participant list, which should be printed the week before the event).
- Decide whether you will invite media.
- Distribute invitations.
- Determine audiovisual needs and make arrangements with the event venue.
- Other: _____

Development

Three Weeks Out

- If you are seeking media coverage, draft a media advisory.
- Contact speakers to discuss their presentations and see if they need additional information or support.
- Compile a list of media outlets that may be interested in covering your event.
- Other: _____

Two Weeks Out

- Send out your media advisory.
- Start calling reporters to interest them in the event.
- Make a list of materials to be taken to the location and begin packaging them.
- Make staff assignments (including registration staff, note taker, audiovisual coordinator, and speaker greeter) and explain duties to all staff members.
- Other: _____

One Week Out

- Finalize the agenda and have it printed.
- Verify details with venue, confirm audiovisual needs, and send venue your room layout and any special instructions.
- Conduct a site walk-through.
- Continue calling reporters to encourage attendance.
- Touch base with speakers to make sure that they have the correct date and location of the event, as well as the time they are expected to speak. Give speakers the name of a contact person who will greet them upon arrival.
- Assemble materials for distribution to participants; send them to the venue.
- Print name tags, if applicable.
- Draft a press release describing the event for release on Awareness Day.
- Other: _____

Implementation

The Day Before

- Make sure that all materials arrived at the venue.
- Pack an "emergency kit" with any miscellaneous materials you may need (tape, scissors, stapler, pens, pencils, paper, phone numbers of speakers, etc.).
- Other: _____

Awareness Day

- Arrive early and check that the location is set up correctly and that audiovisual materials are available as requested. Check all microphones, projectors, audio equipment, and computer connections.

- Check the registration area. Make sure name tags and supplies are plentiful. Plan to have staff members at registration approximately an hour before the start of the event.
- Make sure staff are in correct locations and that all areas are covered for the entire event.
- Allow time for run-throughs if requested by your speakers or needed by entertainers.
- Make sure that signs directing people to the event are posted.
- Distribute the news release.
- Other: _____

After the Event

- Take time to say "Thank you" and celebrate your success with your partners.
- Conduct wrap-up meeting with planning committee.
- Prepare written summary and evaluation of event.
- Complete event binders and records.
- Review invoices and send payment.
- Contact organizations that attended the event to discuss collaboration for next year's Awareness Day and other activities throughout the year.
- Send thank-you cards and notes of appreciation to committee members, volunteers, presenters, sponsors, staff members, and others involved with the event.
- Other: _____

Reference:

http://www.samhsa.gov/children/pnb_eventcheck.asp