

Talking with Mental Health Care Providers Program in a Box



Purpose and Justification

Mental health is a critical aspect of overall well-being, yet many individuals face challenges in effectively communicating with mental health care providers. This program aims to empower individuals with the knowledge and confidence to have productive conversations with mental health professionals. By facilitating understanding and communication, the program seeks to improve health outcomes and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health care.

Remember, the goal of this program is to help people find the information they need by providing access to reliable, evidence-based resources. This program does not offer medical advice or provider recommendations.

Target Audience

Primary: Individuals seeking mental health care, including those currently in treatment or considering treatment.

Secondary: Family members, caregivers, and support networks of individuals with mental health concerns.

Program Objectives

- Educate participants on how to locate mental health care providers.
- Prepare participants on how to find information on effectively communicating with mental health care providers.
- Provide resources and tools to help individuals prepare for appointments.
- Foster a supportive community environment that reduces stigma and encourages open discussion about mental health.

Planning

Potential Partners

You do not have to go it alone when providing mental health programming. In fact, it's better to partner! Partnering to provide mental health programming amplifies the impact and reach of initiatives by combining the strengths, resources, and expertise of multiple organizations. Collaborative efforts not only broaden access to vital mental health resources but also foster a sense of community support, breaking down stigmas and ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive care and education tailored to their unique needs.

- **Local Libraries:** As hosts and community hubs, libraries can play a central role in organizing and promoting the event.
- **Mental Health Organizations:** Partnering with organizations like NAMI Iowa, local community mental health centers, and Your Life Iowa can provide expertise and resources.
- **Healthcare Providers:** Collaboration with local hospitals, clinics, and individual mental health professionals can offer participants firsthand insights.
- **Educational Institutions:** Schools, colleges, and universities can help reach younger audiences and provide venues.
- **Nonprofits and Community Groups:** Organizations focused on health, wellness, and community support can help with outreach and participation.
- **Faith-Based Organizations:** Churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions often provide mental health support within their communities.
- **Local Public Health Department:** Engaging with local public health departments can enhance the event's reach and effectiveness by integrating public health perspectives and resources.
- **National Alliance on Mental Health, Iowa** - find your local office. NAMI Iowa serves residents across the state with free mental health support, online groups, resources, and education.

Guest Speakers: Mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, public health professionals, etc. to provide expert advice and answer questions.



Program

Program: Presentation

This program aims to increase awareness of tools to help individuals find and talk with mental health care providers, raise awareness of mental health issues, and reduce the stigma around mental health.

Outline (This is just a suggestion; please feel free to adapt as it fits your needs). The Resource section includes all the resources needed to develop this presentation.

- Welcome, and Purpose (5 minutes)
- Introduce the program and its goal of empowering attendees with tools and information to navigate mental health care independently.
- Disclaimer (Optional): This presentation does not provide mental health advice. Always seek the advice of a licensed Mental Health Provider regarding any questions or concerns you have about your mental health.

Accessing Mental Health Care Providers (5 minutes)

- Share resources and strategies for locating mental health care providers, which are included below.
- Demonstrate how to use online tools like the National Alliance on Mental Illness's provider search and other relevant directories.

Communicating Effectively with Providers (10 minutes)

- Provide attendees with practical tools for effective communication, including templates for writing down symptoms and questions.
- Show examples from sources like Mental Health America and the National Institutes of Health, including questions to ask and how to express concerns clearly.

Preparing for Appointments (5 minutes)

- Introduce checklists and worksheets for appointment preparation, such as the "Checklist to Bring to Appointments" and "Talking with Your Doctor Worksheets."

Q&A and Discussion (5 minutes)

- Open the floor for questions and discussions about mental health resources and strategies.
- Share any related upcoming programming.

Handouts

- Distribute a handout with the links included here and any local resources.
- Provide contact information for local mental health support services

Organization

Event Planning:

- Timeline: Start planning at least 4 months in advance.
- Venue: Choose a venue with adequate space for the expected audience, accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Format: Decide whether the program will be in-person, virtual, or hybrid. Consider the needs and preferences of the target audience.
- Speakers: Invite mental health professionals or experienced speakers to lead discussions and workshops.
- Materials: Ensure all necessary materials are prepared in advance, including printouts, digital resources, and promotional items.

Promotion

Promotion is the key to increasing event attendance. Work with your partners to share information about your program. Some ways to promote your event:

- Social Media Campaign
- Newsletters
- Press Releases
- Word of Mouth
- Flyers
- Handouts

Day of the Event

1. Track attendance, anonymously
2. Don't forget time for Q&A, role-playing, or small group discussions to engage participants.
3. Feedback Collection: Distribute feedback forms – see evaluation section.

Post Event Follow-Up

- Resource Distribution: Post sources and links on your blog, website, and social media. This lets people who were not able to attend access them, and allows attendees who misplace their handouts to locate information later.
- Survey: Send out a post-event survey to assess participant satisfaction and gather ideas for future events.
- Thank You Notes: Acknowledge the contributions of partners, speakers, and volunteers.



Evaluation and Impact

- Attendance: Track the number of attendees
- Outcomes: Use a tool like [Project Outcome](#), which is free for public libraries, to track outcomes for the event using print or online surveys.
- Feedback: Use participant and partner feedback to refine future iterations of the program.

Resources

Online Resources

You can share the following online resources either through a live demonstration, a link on your website, or as part representation.

- [Ten Questions to Ask Your Psychotherapist](#) from the National Alliance on Mental Health
- [Questions to Ask a Provider](#) – Mental Health America
- [Tips for Talking With a Health Care Provider About Your Mental Health](#) – National Institutes of Health
- [How to Set Up an Appointment](#) - SAMHSA
- Questions to Ask a Provider from Mental Health America
 - [Provider Specific](#)
 - [Appointments](#)
 - [After-hours/Emergencies](#)
 - [Appointment Time](#)
 - [Therapy/Treatment](#)
 - [Medication](#)
 - [Talk to a Pharmacist](#)
- [Working with a Provider](#) from Mental Health America
 - [Checklist to Bring to Appointments](#)
 - [Choosing a Provider](#)
 - [Preparing for Appointments](#)
 - [Questions to Ask a Provider](#)
 - [Types of Providers](#)



Resources Continued

Printable Handouts and Resources for Attendees

The links below are to files that are designed to be printed out and shared. You can use them as handouts at events.

- [Tips for Talking With a Health Care Provider About Your Mental Health – National Institutes of Health](#)
- [Getting Answers to Your Mental Health Questions How to Talk with Mental Health Professionals, For Teens, from WE THINK TWICE wordmark and logo, and WTT are trademarks of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#)
- [Checklist to Bring to Appointments - Mental Health America](#)
- [Talking with your doctor Worksheets from the National Institute on Aging, Good for everyone](#)
 - [Recording your family health history](#)
 - [Questions to consider when choosing a new doctor](#)
 - [Life changes to discuss with your doctor](#)
 - [Prioritizing concerns to share with your doctor](#)

Access the full Mental Health Information Community Partnerships Toolkit
<https://www.nlm.gov/guides/mental-health-information-community-partnerships-toolkit>

