



**Mental Health  
Initiatives**  
Rotary Action Group  
DISTRICT 5000 CHAPTER

## What is a Mental Health Moment?

These are mini action steps that Rotarians can take at a Rotary meeting and/or a function to intentionally communicate a message about mental health and wellness. Here are some examples:

- Take some time at a regular Rotary meeting to share a statistic, a fact, an experience, an inspiration about mental health awareness.
- Invite a speaker to discuss mental health and wellness related topics.
- Coordinate a service project that benefits individuals with mental health, substance abuse, homelessness, disabilities, etc.

Here are some examples of some messaging that you can share at a Rotary gathering to promote mental health and wellness and decrease stigma:

- ✚ One in four of us will have some kind of mental health condition in our lifetime. Mental health issues are not something that affects “other” people. Mental health and wellness are issues we all want and need to pay attention to.
- ✚ Depression and anxiety are on the rise, especially as we are in this stage of recovery from COVID. Every two days we lose someone to suicide in Hawaii. Please share the fact with everyone you know that the number 988 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week for help. This is a crisis line and answered by local people here in Hawaii.
- ✚ Mental health is health. It is important to focus on the mind, body, and soul. Sometime today, please take a moment just for yourself. All of us do a great job at helping others, that’s what we do in Rotary.
- ✚ Mindfulness is becoming recognized as a very effective tool for enhancing brain health. Using mindfulness can help with focusing on the present versus the past or future. How about using youtube.com and doing a few minutes of mindfulness together?
- ✚ Have we announced the global and local Rotary Action Groups for Mental Health? There is an international one: [www.ragonmentalhealth.org](http://www.ragonmentalhealth.org) and our District (statewide). Go to [www.D5000.org](http://www.D5000.org) and click on “What We Do,” scroll to Mental Health Initiatives.



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- ✚ Waiting Room Face Lifts! We are so good at making environments warm and welcoming so imagine if one is seeking mental health services and the environment is not warm, inviting, welcoming. How can we help create an image of hope? Engage group homes, homeless shelters, community mental health centers, Clubhouses, and agencies that serve individuals/families that are seeking mental health services. Assess what the needs are with them and design a community service project. A waiting room face lift is a great example!
- ✚ Two major organizations that promote mental health wellness, resources, and suicide prevention are the National Alliance for Mental Illness ([www.namihawaii.org](http://www.namihawaii.org)) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention ([www.afsp.org/hawaii](http://www.afsp.org/hawaii)) . Sign up as a Rotary Club Team, be sure to have Rotarians, friends, and family sign up as Individual Walkers on the Team. This ensures each person gains access to resource materials and links with these helpful organizations. They are fundraisers but that is not our focus, we are striving for the public awareness and education. By registering to be a Walker, it makes difficult subjects much easier to talk about and broadens the reach.
- ✚ Deep breathing has been shown to have a positive impact on mental health by relaxing both the body and the mind. Taking slow, deep breaths increases oxygen in our bloodstream and thus in our brain. Deep breathing signals the parasympathetic nervous system to activate and thus induce relaxation throughout the body. This can help reduce feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression. Let's all take 3 deep breaths together...
- ✚ Please make sure that you, your workplace, your friends, and your Ohana know about the 988 Crisis Line. This is also a suicide prevention hotline. This number is answered by locally trained professionals that are ready to help 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. They can dispatch a crisis mobile outreach team, if necessary, within a short amount of time.
- ✚ Mental Health America is a national organization with local affiliates ([www.mentalhealthhawaii.org](http://www.mentalhealthhawaii.org)) they offer trainings for community members regarding a wide range of mental health topics. Advertise these training opportunities for club members that want to learn more.
- ✚ Are there any mental health providers in your club? In addition to focusing on their vocation, invite them to be a speaker. Have them provide resources in the community, tips for wellbeing and staying healthy.



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- ✚ Let's take a moment to discuss communication. Hearing refers to the sounds that enter your ears; it's a physical process and happens automatically. Listening, however, requires more than that and it requires focus and a concentrated effort, both mental and sometimes physical as well. Listening means paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told, the use of the language and voice, and how the other person uses his or her body. It means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages. Our ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which we perceive and understand these messages. As we go about our day today, let's ask ourselves "Am I really listening or am I just hearing?"
- ✚ Today we are going to take a moment about how we check in with one another. Of course, it is always polite to ask one another "How are you?" As we keep mental wellness in mind, let's ask with more intention and care. So, basically, we are trying to find out how our fellow Rotarians are REALLY doing. So, let's ask ourselves:
  - Have I communicated that I REALLY want to know and have the time to listen?
  - Have I asked the question with intention and care?
  - Is there a fellow Rotarian that I need to check in with?
- ✚ Anxiety and depression is on the increase. Both have emotional and physical symptoms. Feelings can include feelings of apprehension or dread, feeling tense or jumpy, restlessness or irritability, and anticipating the worst. Treatment often includes medication, counseling, social support, education, and meditation options.
- ✚ Fast Facts provided by the National Alliance on Mental Illness for the USA.

[1 in 5](#) U.S. adults experience mental illness each year

[1 in 20](#) U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year

[1 in 6](#) U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year

[50%](#) of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

Suicide is the [2nd leading](#) cause of death among people aged 10-14

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