



S I G M A C H I - M H A D

MENTAL HEALTH ACTION DAY

Planning and Resources Guide



FOREWORD

Since 1855, the brothers of Sigma Chi have maintained themselves as leaders among men. In this spirit, Sigma Chi's Mental Health Action Day allows chapters to promote true brotherhood and positive outreach by bringing innovative resources to their surrounding community.

This guide outlines the value of hosting a Mental Health Action Day and offers best practices to keep in mind while distributing resources and promoting wellness-centered events.

Above all else, remember that the Ritual of our Fraternity should govern your actions and the planning of your Mental Health Action Day.

MISSION STATEMENT

Why does Sigma Chi have a Mental Health Action Day?

To provide support for our brothers, sweethearts and community members through the distribution of resources and by challenging the stigma surrounding mental health and wellness.

BACKGROUND & GENERAL INFORMATION

Sigma Chi dedicates Mental Health Action Day to all those who have lost a loved one to a mental health battle. Far too many brothers and loved ones have been impacted by the devastating effects of suicide. The Fraternity strives to ensure that this initiative provides our brothers, sweethearts, and community members with the necessary support to win their mental health battles.

Fall of 2023 marks the first annual Sigma Chi Mental Health Action Day ("MHAD"). MHAD represents a commitment to raise awareness of psychological wellness and support brothers in their own mental health journeys. Several chapters have already led similar events on their respective campuses before the official start of a Mental Health Action Day, and the genesis of this event reflects our Fraternity's dedication to delivering an internationally unified message regarding the topic.

Sigma Chi has consistently made a conscious effort to address the well-being of its members. One of the first of these initiatives was a partnership between the Fraternity and the Jed Foundation. In 2015, this relationship prompted the creation of Sigma Chi LifeLine, the first dedicated, Greek-letter resource center for brothers struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts. In 2018, the Strong Arms curriculum was launched and later received a Laurel Wreath Award from the North American Interfraternity Conference. SCLI has since integrated this curriculum into the P4B/Foundational Leadership tracks.

One of the most significant strides toward providing extensive mental health resources for brothers was the development of the ReachOut app. This app was launched at 2019's Krach Transformational Leaders Workshop and has been under continuous improvement since. The ReachOut app is innovative in its specificity of support, and offers military, sexual assault survivor, POC, and LGBTQ tailored resources. Each of these initiatives signifies another step towards providing appropriate support not just for members of the Fraternity, but anyone in need of resources.

As a continuation of this innovation, the Fraternity is hopeful that MHAD will provide the necessary resources to further the support available to brothers and community members. The creation of a Sigma Chi-specific mental health awareness day is in no way meant to detract from other global mental health months, days, or other celebrations. On the contrary, it is meant to heighten the impact of these days within brothers' immediate communities. As brothers of Sigma Chi, we are called to be our fellow brothers' keeper. Mental Health Action Day challenges members to extend this notion beyond brothers and to then become their community's keeper. Sigma Chi MHAD prompts chapters to create a personalized and specific impact on their campuses and brothers while providing resources to accomplish this. We wish for chapters to promote brotherhood, healthy campus collaborations, and a positive Greek image.

EVENT PLANNING

As your chapter goes about planning and executing the MHAD, we recommend that you designate a brother as the Mental Health Chairman and construct a committee to assist him. Because the International Fraternity and Wellness Committee do not currently have a preferred officer for this role, this is at your chapter's discretion - however, it is recommended that the Chairman have leadership experience within the chapter and that his work is supported by some sort of committee. The participation of incipient members is encouraged, but this committee should not be exclusively composed of pledges. As with any other community-facing event, it is recommended that you solicit input and support from university contacts, other Greek organizations, and community leaders as your chairman and committee get to work.

The "official" MHAD will take place each year on a date communicated to all chapters by the International Fraternity, typically in early autumn. However, if your chapter's schedule and programming make it so that you cannot participate on this date, you may elect to host your chapter's MHAD another day. Ideally, all chapters would be able to engage in the MHAD on the same day - however, we understand that this is very difficult, and chapters are encouraged to chart their own course for planning the MHAD if their situation requires it.

Once you have designated the chapter leadership responsible for executing the MHAD and determined your chapter's date, we encourage active marketing and publicization. During the weeks leading up to the MHAD, consider tabling, fliers/physical advertisements on campus, social media promotions, and other marketing strategies to raise awareness and involve your campus community. You will find that many non-Sig Greek and non-Greek organizations on your campus are similarly involved in expanding the conversation about mental health. Your chapter is encouraged to actively collaborate with other campus organizations who share the vision and mission of this initiative.

Another element of marketing the MHAD is related to your internal efforts as a chapter. As the MHAD approaches, allow brothers to share personal stories and perspectives if they wish to do so. Robust community participation is encouraged, but also ensure that you are relating the discussion of mental health and the programming of the MHAD to the issues that directly interest and impact your chapter members.

DISCLAIMERS

Sensitivity: If your chapter elects to publicize or otherwise share personal anecdotes from its members, ensure that the privacy of those members is protected as they desire. In addition, ensure that the chapter is adequately educated on the purpose of the MHAD. Mental health is a broad topic that encompasses delicate and serious issues such as suicide, depression, and self-harm. Given this reality, we know that this topic requires heightened sensitivity to ensure that Sigma Chi puts forth a positive message and impact. Any events your chapter hosts or participates in must align with the values and guidelines of the International Fraternity.

Financial: This event is in no way, shape, or form meant to serve as a replacement for Derby Days, nor is it meant to supplant Sigma Chi's efforts in supporting the Huntsman Cancer Foundation (HCF), our preferred philanthropic partner. The principal aim of the MHAD is to raise awareness and positively impact communities through service. If your chapter elects to fundraise for any non-HCF organization as a part of the MHAD, it is essential that you are forthright about the beneficiaries of your efforts and when/how proceeds will be distributed.

Alumni Involvement: As with any other all-chapter or community-facing event, the participation of Sigma Chi alumni represents a boon to this initiative. We encourage you to establish early, consistent communication with local alumni chapters and individual alumni who have been involved with your chapter in the past as you go about planning and marketing your MHAD. We anticipate that you will find that many of the issues being brought to the limelight have affected our alumni as well, and we anticipate and hope that they will eagerly support your efforts.

EVENT IDEAS AND PROGRAMMING

Before offering specific suggestions about programming for the MHAD, it is essential to remind yourselves that the foundation of every chapter is a strong, healthy brotherhood. We encourage your chapter to conduct regular brotherhood events, but especially in anticipation of this MHAD. Chapters are advised to plan a brotherhood event, whether it be bowling, a chapter dinner at the house, or any other event that works for your chapter, during which your members can bond with each other and break down the communication barriers that sometimes interfere with a robust, honest conversation about mental health. This will reinforce the ever-present support system within Sigma Chi that exists for all of its members. Whether this event occurs prior to the MHAD, after the MHAD, or on the day itself, every chapter is encouraged to renew its commitment to a strong brotherhood in association with our discussion of mental health.

INTERNATIONAL-FRATERNITY-LED EVENT:

Each year, on the designated Sigma Chi International Fraternity MHAD, a central event will be released. This will vary per year but will likely appear in the format of a mental health speaker in a "TED Talk"-style video.

The event will be organized by the Fraternity and distributed for viewing/use on the designated MHAD date. Chapters are encouraged to utilize the central HQ resource internally within their chapters

however they see fit, so long as it aligns with the mission and purpose of MHAD. Chapters are also encouraged to share and promote the resource on social media so the community may view it and benefit from it as well.

EACH AND EVERY DAY DOCUMENTARY: TBD

The link/information about how to view this documentary will be provided to you by the International Fraternity and Wellness Committee at a time closer to your MHAD. Included in our distributed materials will be a discussion guide from the JED Foundation, the mental health nonprofit responsible for this documentary’s production and distribution.

As you think of how to screen this documentary, we recommend calibrating your goals to the specific needs and nature of your chapter. If you wish for this to be more of a community outreach event, you might consider inviting other Greek houses/student groups from campus to watch the film with you. If you wish for it to be a more insular brotherhood event, you might consider arranging for a more private screening environment. In either case, it is the Wellness Committee’s recommendation that you not only watch the documentary but devote some time after its conclusion to a discussion of lessons learned, key takeaways, and everything in-between. It is our hope that this sort of activity will engender a more robust dialogue around the mental health issues we all confront and how to navigate them.

SUGGESTED CHAPTER EVENTS:

In the table below, you will find other event ideas offered by the International Fraternity and Wellness Committee to assist you as you design your chapter’s MHAD. These prospective events are ranked “Low,” “Medium,” or “High” as they relate to the three core areas of Community, Brotherhood, and Education. Note that this list is by no means exhaustive — your chapter is welcome to implement any desired event, so long as it aligns with the mission of the MHAD and complies with all International Fraternity guidelines.

EVENT	DESCRIPTION	CORE AREA RATINGS
Social media initiatives	Chapters will be given a link to a Google Drive with graphics, hashtags, and resources geared towards social media marketing. Consider using this and your own creativity to create social media bursts/blasts in which your community can participate.	Community - High Brotherhood - High Education - Variable (depending on content)
Documentary screenings	Chapters can reserve a classroom on campus or secure another venue for a screening of a documentary related to mental health. After the screening, they are encouraged to have a follow-up session involving discussion and reflection. This may be an insular event for the brotherhood or a campus-wide/community-wide event as the chapter sees fit. Chapters are also	Community – Variable (Depending on audience) Brotherhood - High Education - Very High

	<p>encouraged to select 4 or more different documentaries to cycle through each year, such that every graduating class can see a different documentary with each successive MHAD.</p>	
Banner contest	<p>Chapters can organize a banner-making contest between different campus groups. Banners should portray some sort of positive message and/or address a pertinent issue related to mental health. Ideally, they should be displayed on campus after the contest is over to promote awareness and participation in the MHAD. This need not be a banner - other ideas that could function within this framework include short videos and sidewalk art.</p>	<p>Community - High Brotherhood - Medium Education - Low</p>
Tabling or booth on campus	<p>There are many different activities or initiatives that could be conducted through this avenue, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Displaying QR codes for the Reach Out app and other mental health resources - Paper, pen, and two jars for students to write and/or take “words of encouragement” from other students - Opportunities for students to write letters or affirmations to themselves to be opened during times of duress - Bulletin board with “Wall of Well Wishes” or “Wall of Appreciation” with centrally displayed positive messages from students - Offering flowers or baked goods for students passing by on their way across campus <p>It is also important to mention that any of these initiatives could be conducted more internally, especially if your MHAD is on a weekend (tabling will be more effective on a weekday). You might also consider a more internal approach if your members do not feel comfortable with that level of vulnerability outside the brotherhood.</p>	<p>Community - High Brotherhood - Low Education - Medium</p>
Speaking event or workshop	<p>Chapters can utilize university and community partnerships to conduct a speaking event related to mental health or MHAD “Wellness Workshop.” We recommend reaching out to your university’s Student Affairs/Wellness Office or Counseling Center as a starting point. Alumni may also be an excellent resource for this initiative. Again, this can be a more internal event or something in which the broader campus community can participate.</p>	<p>Community - Variable (Depending on audience) Brotherhood - High Education - High</p>

Candlelight ceremony or	Chapters can communicate with the university to plan some sort of memorial ceremony for students and	Community - High
memorial service	loved ones who have been lost to suicide or their battles with mental health. This is another excellent opportunity to involve alumni, and the International Fraternity can place interested chapters in contact with undergraduates and alumni who have already implemented similar initiatives on their campuses.	Brotherhood - High Education - Low
Comfort baskets and donations	In partnership with a local mental health organization or charity, chapters can solicit material donations and assemble “wellness baskets” for individuals struggling with mental health. Example items include blankets, books, stuffed animals, puzzles, and cards/letters with messages of affirmation and encouragement.	Community - High Brotherhood - High Education - Low

SAMPLE MHAD AGENDAS

Chapter Participating on Selected Date

1. Participate in HQ programming (refer to “Central HQ Event” section above)
2. Documentary screening
3. Close with candlelight ceremony to commemorate brothers or community members lost to mental health struggles

Chapter Using Alternative Date

1. Promote pre-recorded HQ programming on social media (if hosting after designated official MHAD date)
2. Tabling on campus
3. Banner contest (have chapters participate throughout the week leading up to your selected MHAD date & announce winners day of)

*Although your chapter is by no means required to participate on the official Fraternity MHAD date, you are highly encouraged to promote the initiative and advertise for your own selected MHAD date on the day of the fraternity’s designated event.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

A critical aspect of planning your Mental Health Action Day Guide is understanding the resources available to you and your chapter. The Fraternity strongly encourages you to familiarize yourself with mental health and wellness information before you host your MHAD and reach out to the community, as it is key that we have the utmost sensitivity while addressing these topics.

You can do so by educating yourself through reading websites of mental health organizations, downloading the Sigma Chi Reach Out App, knowing your local resources as well as how to contact

them, and having hotline numbers saved and easily accessible. You may not need to actively use these resources at this moment, but you should prepare yourself in case that you find yourself or a loved one in need of them.

The Health, Safety, and Wellness committee has compiled a Google Drive folder of resources available to anyone who may need them. This Google Drive includes resources ranging from websites of various mental health organizations, Reach Out information, hotline numbers, and more. It also includes premade graphics your chapter can utilize while promoting and hosting its MHAD, email templates for contacting speakers in your area, and information on how to identify and contact campus & community resources.

The Google Drive will be updated annually and can be accessed directly at this link [Sigma Chi MHAD Resource Bank](#), or at sigmachi.org/mental-health-action-day-toolkit.

An additional resource available on an individual basis is BetterHelp. Sigma Chi International Fraternity is proud to announce our partnership with BetterHelp to provide our members with access to licensed, professional online therapy. BetterHelp is the world's largest online therapy platform that provides over 25,000 licensed therapists, four different ways to talk with a therapist and the ability to speak with a therapist whenever and wherever. Our partnership with BetterHelp is an extension of our commitment to ensuring the health and welfare of members.

When you sign up for BetterHelp, the first month of therapy is free, and then each month afterward is 15 percent off. Talking with a therapist through BetterHelp can:

- Help improve stress levels.
- Offer skills to build self-confidence as well as develop a roadmap for self-improvement.
- Provide an outlet for coping with trauma and grieving.
- Give communication strategies for talking with a significant other.






To take advantage of this benefit and other resources, please visit sigmachi.org/mental-health-action-day-toolkit.

SUGGESTED CHAPTER MARKETING PLAN

 **SPRING**

 **SUMMER**

 **FALL**

	TIMELINE	ACTION	GOAL
	Chapter Elections Period	Create and elect an MHAD Event Chair or assign duties to an existing officer (e.g., Social Chair, Diversity & Inclusion Chair, Events Chair, Annotator, Brotherhood, Social Media Chair).	To ensure a point of contact exists that can then delegate and complete tasks related to establishing the event.
	Province Workshops	Receive guidance and training from Grand Officers, staff, and alumni related to mental health and/or details of the event.	To generate province-based ideas and build up the hype for the event.
	March (Midterm Week)	Social Media Blast of Mental Health Resources available around the campus, local community, and beyond. Promote ReachOut app.	Provide awareness campus wide during high stress periods.
	Spring Semester	Form a mental health awareness committee (if desired).	To reduce the workload and allow the generation of ideas.
	April/May (Finals Week)	Social Media Blast of Mental Health Resources available around the campus, local community, and beyond. Promote ReachOut app.	Provide awareness campus wide during high stress periods.
	Summer	Choose chapter specific dates for MHAD events.	Ensure scope is established to deliver and plan a successful event.

Summer	Reach out to University Mental Health Resources to establish partnership for the event.	Secure speakers, sponsors, and support for the event.
Summer	Compile community specific resources and partnerships. Reach out to alumni for further support.	Secure speakers, sponsors, and support for the event.

August/September	Review and update chapter crisis plan.	Ensure the chapter is prepared to handle any crisis that may arise during the upcoming school year.
September	Train members on a chapter's crisis management plan.	Ensure all brothers are appropriately trained to handle potential crises that may arise.
September	Confirm reservations of event space (if desired).	Ensure everything is squared away to deliver a quality event.
First Sunday of October	Launch MHAD day/week.	
Midterms Week	Social Media Blast of Mental Health Resources available around the campus, local community, and beyond. Promote ReachOut app.	Provide awareness campus wide during high stress periods.
Finals Week	Social Media Blast of Mental Health Resources available around the campus, local community, and beyond. Promote ReachOut app.	Provide awareness campus wide during high stress periods.