



Toolkit

Celebrating International Youth Day

Do you want to commemorate International Youth Day, but are unsure how?

Then take a read through our IYD toolkit for some ideas to get you started!

International Youth Day

International Youth Day is commemorated on 12 August each year. UN DESA encourages all young people, youth structures, and civil society to celebrate and commemorate International Youth Day in a variety of ways. Many of you already have ideas or plans on what you want to do, but for those of you who aren't quite sure, take a read through some of the ideas below!

Join our campaign

You can help commemorate IYD with the simple click of a button! Join our online campaign running from 12 June- 12 August 2014. Use the [#MentalHealthMatters](#) to help spread the word and reduce stigma surrounding youth with mental health conditions.

Join our event page on Facebook to learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved. We'll be collecting submissions in the form of artwork, stories, and photos to be included in our celebrations on 12 August. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest to find out more! [#MentalHealthMatters](#) [#UN4Youth](#)



<http://www.twitter.com/UN4Youth>



<http://www.pinterest.com/UN4Youth>



<http://www.facebook.com/UN4Youth>



<http://www.instagram.com/UN4Youth>

Organize an Event or Activity

One visible and interactive way to commemorate International Youth Day is by organising an event or activity in your school or community. Whether its 5 or 500 people, you can help celebrate the Day. Work with your youth structure, school or with some friends and/or colleagues to brainstorm about the type of event you want. From a discussion, to performance, online to offline, the possibilities are endless. Below are some suggested activities for you to consider:

- ⊕ **Seminars, lectures and debates:** Initiate round table discussions among adults and young people to promote intergenerational understanding and partnerships on the issue of how to overcome stigma surrounding youth with mental health conditions.

- ✦ **Organize an exhibition:** Get permission to use a public space for an arts exhibit, which showcases the challenges of young people today. Try to involve young people in the domains of culture, arts and music, to raise awareness on youth with health conditions-related issues.
- ✦ **Concerts and festivals** (music, dance, art, poetry): Organize a concert to promote International Youth Day. Invite your local musicians and combine it with a panel discussion or invite a politician or policy maker to hold the key note speech.
- ✦ **Don't know how to start – then start small!** Book a room in your school, community centre or even organise a space in your own home. Come up with an idea for what you want to discuss or focus on during your event. Make some flyers, invite some speakers, and invite some friends/audience. That's an event.

Be an Advocate

Another great way of commemorating International Youth Day and of helping bring about positive change is to be an advocate on the issue. You can influence policy and decisions at all levels by drawing awareness to the importance of the issue. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ✦ **Advocate and Engage Media:** speak out and take action to influence positive change. Some questions you could ask: Why do we need to talk more about youth and mental health? Who is directly and indirectly affected? How is this relevant to your community? What can be done to reduce stigma surrounding youth with mental health conditions?
- ✦ **Lobby your Government** to hold a National Youth Day of Action and to celebrate International Youth Day on 12 August. How do you lobby your government? Start by writing a letter to your local parliamentarian, council, or congress person.
- ✦ **Call on your school, group, organization or faith community** to strengthen programs tailored for youth with mental health conditions.
- ✦ **Organize a public meeting or debate** to discuss the importance of reducing stigma surrounding youth with mental health conditions.
- ✦ **Organize a Google+ Hangout** to bring together young people and relevant stakeholders from all over the world to discuss stigma and discrimination that youth with mental health conditions often experience.
- ✦ **Write to your minister of youth** to inform him or her about the challenges young people experience and youth with mental health conditions face in their daily lives and to suggest solutions.

- ✦ **Youth media (radio, print, blog):** Contact popular local/national radio or TV stations to request a slot to have a discussion with distinguished individuals working on mental health issues.
- ✦ **Conduct a survey** to determine public concerns in relation to youth and mental health conditions.
- ✦ **Create an “info point”** about youth with mental health conditions in the centre of town/village, at high schools, or at university centres. All you need is a table, some leaflets, or online materials, or your own voice to provide information. Be sure to make sure it’s ok to set up something in the space first.
- ✦ **Start a letter writing campaign;** inform leaders of the importance of raising awareness about youth with mental health conditions

Spread the Word

Not everyone knows a young person who is experiencing a mental health condition, nor do they know why it’s such an important issue to discuss, raise awareness about and reduce stigma of. Events and campaigns can be great ways of increasing knowledge and awareness of the issue, but sometimes, just having a discussion or informal chat amongst your friends, peers and family can be a simple yet powerful way to have an impact.

- ✦ **Bring up the issue with your family and friends,** ask them what their thoughts are – get the conversation started and keep it going.
- ✦ **Share our online campaign** and materials with your friends on social media. Get them to pin pictures and stories to our Pinterest accounts and send us videos via Instagram or email.
- ✦ **Disseminate educational materials** including leaflets and email alerts.
- ✦ **Ask your school** if they’re willing to hold a discussion on the issue for International Youth Day.
- ✦ **Develop communication platforms** to create or strengthen networks. You can use various channels to get the word out and connect with people interested in the issue of Youth and Mental Health via social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, as well as your school or University newsletter and local paper.
- ✦ **Knowledge and information sharing;** utilize web-based tools to help increase awareness. There are lots of free and open source online sites and tools that allow you to create petitions, campaigns and surveys to help you in your work.

Let us know!

We want to know how you intend to celebrate International Youth Day! Send us an email to youth@un.org or reach out to us via Facebook and Twitter to let us know. We'll make sure to mark your events on our IYD World Map!

- ✚ **Map it:** Send in a description of your planned activities to youth@un.org and we will put it in our World Map of celebrations! Don't forget to tell us where the event will take place to pin it in our map.
- ✚ **Get published:** Send in your artwork, photos, illustrations and stories throughout our IYD campaign and be in with the chance to see your work published in our UN DESA Publication 'Social Inclusion of Youth with Mental Health Issues' on 12 August.