

MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness

Tips for using this upcoming PBS program to raise awareness

An Opportunity

MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness can help you to advance conversations about mental illness in your community and help change attitudes, beliefs and policies affecting mental health care. The program – on public television and on DVD -- provides an opportunity to create a public education and advocacy campaign that can extend through spring 2010

- Build awareness of critical mental illness issues in your community by encouraging friends, family and colleagues to view the program on your public television station.
- Focus advocacy efforts by using it as the centerpiece for a screening event that can support or advance local, state and national priorities.

Timeframe

- TV program promotion
Each public television station will make its own programming decision regarding date/time for the program premiere starting in October, 2009. The air dates will not necessarily coincide with MIAW and may vary significantly from station to station. As station air date information is determined, it will be posted at www.mindsontheedge.org.
- Community Events
You can use the program DVD for screening events at any time beginning now .If you don't already have a DVD, you can request a free copy via the project website if you tell us about your event.
- Online at www.mindsontheedge.org
The program website for outreach is already up. It's a one-stop-shop for easy-to-use promotional tools and outreach tips to help you plan and execute your strategy for using *MINDS ON THE EDGE*. Keep checking back as additional promotional tools will be added to the "Project Toolkit" in the weeks ahead. The website will expand significantly with additional information about issues and interactive features on October 1, shortly before MIAW.

IDEAS for building community awareness around the premiere of MINDS ON THE EDGE on *your* public television station:

- Show the DVD at NAMI meetings and ask everyone to spread the word to family and friends
- Write an article about *MINDS ON THE EDGE* for your affiliate newsletter. Get help with language and images in the "Project Toolkit" at www.mindsontheedge.org
- Ask your church or other organizations to include it in their print or electronic newsletters with a link to the website where people can see preview clips and learn more.
- Have you checked out the *MINDS ON THE EDGE* YouTube Channel? Visit it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/FredFriendlySeminars>. Many NAMI members have told their stories on these videos and over 3,000 viewers checked out the YouTube Channel in just one month. Encourage chapter members to post a video if they are willing and able--and then have them tell their friends and family to visit the YouTube Channel.
- Encourage any members who are on Facebook to become a "fan" of *MINDS ON THE EDGE* and participate in the page's many lively conversations
- Encourage your members to host "house parties" a week or two before the television premiere in your area—inviting friends from church, work, the gym and other circles. Show

the DVD and talk about the issues. The downloadable Viewers Guide at www.mindsontheedge.org can help you lead a discussion. After the “house party”, encourage your guests to spread the word about the *MINDS ON THE EDGE* premiere by email, Facebook, and Twitter to their friends. Help build the buzz!

- Organize an e-blast to go out a few days before the premiere in your area. The “Project Toolkit” at www.mindsontheedge.org has an e-card that you can easily customize with a personal message and the local program premiere day/time.
- Do you Twitter? Follow the *MINDS ON THE EDGE* Twitter feed and retweet to your own followers when you see an item of interest.
- Encourage your members to comment on *MINDS ON THE EDGE* if they participate on any local, regional or national blogs. The more mentions the program gets, the faster word will spread.

Looking beyond the television broadcast, use the DVD to plan a screening event that ignites conversation about critical issues with key stakeholders and policymakers.

- What’s on your immediate wish list? Are you trying to jump start CIT training or get a mental health court in your area? What are your local priorities for services or policy change? *MINDS ON THE EDGE* connects the dots among many systemic issues, providing a “big picture” that can be a platform for in depth discussion of a specific issue.
- Add a screening on the agenda of a NAMI state-wide, county-wide, or local meeting to introduce *MINDS ON THE EDGE* to additional NAMI members who can order copies of the DVD online and use it to activate their local communities.
- Plan a public community screening in a library followed by a panel discussion addressing “what are the needs in our community?” Be sure to include consumers, family members and other key local stakeholders.
- Organize a legislative event at the municipal, county, or state level using a screening of the program as a lead in for an educational briefing on a particular issue.
- Engage medical professionals, lawyers, or law enforcement officers with a screening and discussion.
- What venue might be available that might have AV equipment for a screening?
Local Library - Town Hall - Public School Auditorium - Community College Campus - House of Worship - Community Center - Large Local Company HQ
- The “Project Toolkit” in the ABOUT section of www.mindsontheedge.org has a downloadable Viewer’s Guide, and templates for posters, and event program, and an event press release that can be customized for your event.

There is lots of food for thought here and you may come up with additional great ideas. But whatever you decide to do, please let us know!

We are building a national database of all the grassroots efforts by NAMI members and chapters that will help showcase both the desire and the need for change at the community level throughout the country – and we want your efforts to be included! **And please remember, we are here to help you!**

For questions, contact Ruth Friendly at rfriendly@fredfriendly.org