

7 STEPS TO BECOMING AN ADVOCATE

Learn the Basics

It's important to be familiar with the basics of mental health, the factors that can influence a person's mental health, and the different ways we talk about it.

Find Your Community

You don't have to start from scratch to make an impact. Many amazing organizations are working to improve mental health, and they need your support.

Understand Mental Health Advocacy

Mental health advocates work to educate other people, provide support, reduce stigma, and promote policies and resources that address the needs of individuals living with mental health conditions. They strive to create a more inclusive and supportive society for those affected by mental health struggles.

Set a Goal

What do you want to accomplish? How do you know you've achieved it? Set a goal for yourself. Here are a few examples:

- I will share my mental health story publicly and encourage others to do the same
- I will raise \$100 for a local mental health organization

Find Inspiration

Learn about what other mental health advocates are doing to make a change in their communities, and get some ideas for what you could do to help yours. Advocacy can take so many forms—from podcasts to apps to policy.

Find Your Role

Every role is important in creating better communities and systems. Let your unique strengths and interests guide you when you're looking for your place in the mental health movement. Think about the things you're good at (hint: Think about the things that other people come to you for help with).

Take Action

After exploring what's important to you and how you want to be part of the mental health movement, it's time to make connections and start doing what feels right for you. Some examples include:

- Volunteering with a mental health organization in your community
- Working for policy changes at your school or place of business
- Participating in an event that supports mental health such as a 5K, health fair, or MHA's Be Seen in Green fundraiser in May
- Signing up for advocacy alerts from MHA
- Contacting your elected officials
- Registering for the Mental Health America Conference in Washington, D.C.

Learn more and get free resources at mhanational.org/resources/become-advocate