



Getting Involved With *mpower*

There are lots of ways you can help "mpower" your generation and spread the word about the importance of mental health and getting help when you need it. Whatever your interests or time, **you CAN make a difference.**

Here are 10 easy ways you can help...

1. Spread the word. Print out some of the fact sheets on *mpower's* Website (www.mpoweryouth.org) and post them on a bulletin board at a coffee shop, library, music store... wherever people might see them. Pass them out at school events or leave a stack at a community center.

2. Each one, Teach one. Talk to your friends about mental health. Let them know you are there to listen. Share your feelings with them, too. If they have questions, help them find the answers. If they need help, take it seriously and help them find it.

3. Sign your band. If you're in a band, log on to www.mpoweryouth.org to sign on and show your support. Wear an *mpower* t-shirt when you play and let your audience know what *mpower* is and why you think it's important.

4. Share your story. If you have a story to tell about having a mental illness or helping a friend or family member cope with one, or if you've written a song or done some artwork, send it to us so we can let others know they are not alone.

5. Plan a concert. Have some connections in your local music scene, or know a few bands at school? How about planning a battle of the bands or a benefit concert? You could have a table with information, speakers talk about their experiences with mental illness, or just have the bands share some statistics and positive messages.

6. Start a group. Lots of students have started social clubs, campus groups and support groups at school or in their communities for their peers who have a mental illness or who just want to share their troubles with other people like them. You might be surprised how common mental health problems are, and how good it feels to know you're not alone.

7. Volunteer. There are lots of ways to support mental health in your community or school. Work a couple of hours a week for a teen hotline, help

out your local mental health association, or spend some time in a retirement home or children's hospital ward just talking and offering support.

8. Take care of yourself. Know the signs of mental health problems, and if you notice them in yourself or a friend or loved one, get help. And don't be afraid or ashamed about it. The more open people are about mental health, the more comfortable your peers will be seeking help when they need it.

9. Challenge stereotypes. When you see ads, TV shows, music videos, anything that perpetuates stereotypes of people with mental illness, let whoever is responsible know that it is unacceptable. You rarely see physical illnesses like cancer or heart disease as punch lines or marketing ploys.... people who are affected by mental illness deserve the same respect and sensitivity.

10. Fight discrimination. Sign on to our petition in support of health insurance equality or go a step further and tell your Congressperson to support mental health parity legislation.