



# Activities & Ideas Guide

FOR ADVISORS AND MEMBERS



# Introduction

This guide is a collection of activities and ideas designed to support you and your work as a Squad. Inside, you'll find ways to promote mental health awareness, spread positivity, build community, and more. Some ideas are simple and lighthearted, while others are more time-intensive and require planning before execution.

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# An Important Note

TO ADVISORS AND MEMBERS

Dear Hope Squad Advisors & Members,

**First and foremost, thank you for showing up, speaking up, and bringing hope to your schools and communities.** Whether you're a student reaching out to a peer or an Advisor guiding and mentoring a Squad, your work makes a difference.



There are countless ways for a Hope Squad to operate, and countless opportunities to impact your school and community as you work to foster human connection, community, and hope.

No matter what type of activities your squad chooses to implement, know that every action you take makes a difference when it comes to destigmatizing mental health and promoting well-being. The work you are doing is important, and we are grateful for your dedication and commitment.

We love to see and share what our Squads are doing! Anytime you complete an activity, we hope you will take photos and share them with us! Our [Share Your Hope Form](#) allows you to easily tell us about an activity/event, a general testimonial, or even a personal story—and we want to hear them all!

Thank you for sharing hope with us!



# Theme Days

During Hope Week or at other times throughout the year, sponsoring themed or dress-up days is a simple way to promote unity and spread hope. If you're looking for themed days tied to mental health, check out the ideas below:

- Jersey Day: "Team up for Mental Health"**  
Everyone wears their favorite jersey or team apparel to signify that mental health isn't a 'solo sport'-we're stronger when we work together!
- Mismatch Day: "It's Okay to Feel Off"**  
Wear mismatched clothes to celebrate that not every day is perfect, and that's normal. Embrace imperfections and recognize those who have "off days."
- Pajama Day: "Rest is a Remedy"**  
Encourage students to wear pajamas or comfy clothes to emphasize the importance of sleep and self-care in managing our mental health.
- Neon/Bright Colors: "Shine a Light on Mental Health"**  
Wear bright colors to show that mental health matters and to demonstrate the importance of bringing visibility to a topic often kept in the dark.
- Twin Day: "No One is Alone"**  
Pair up with a friend and dress alike as a reminder that support systems matter, and we all deserve someone who has our backs.
- Tie-Dye: "Feel All the Feels"**  
Wear tie-dye to represent the spectrum of emotions; just like the colors swirl together, so can our feelings. Mental health means acknowledging everything we feel!
- Superhero Day: "Celebrate Your Inner Strength"**  
Dress as your favorite superhero to celebrate resilience, courage, and the power that lies inside each of us.
- Crazy Sock Day: "Stand Out & Speak Up"**  
Wear wild or mismatched socks to show that it's okay to be different.

- Monochrome Day: "Emotions Can be Consuming"**  
Wear one color from head to toe to represent that emotions can feel all-consuming--but like a one-day outfit, they don't last forever.
- Camo Day: "Even if you Can't See It, Mental Health is There."**  
Wear camouflage to bring awareness to those silently struggling with mental health.
- Career Day: "Your Future is Bright"**  
Dress as what you want to be when you grow up, reminding yourself of the exciting things in your future that are yet to come.
- Black & White Day: "Be a Light in the Darkness"**  
Wear only black & white to remind everyone that we can be the light for those who are going through a dark time.
- Fitness Attire: "Sweat the Stress Away"**  
Wearing workout clothes serves as a reminder of how exercise fuels both strong bodies and minds, supporting our mental health.
- Shade Out Suicide: "Shade out Stigma"**  
By wearing shades, we show that we're not afraid to talk about suicide and support those who are struggling.
- Anything But a Backpack: "Everyone Carries Something"**  
This day serves as a reminder that students may carry different, invisible emotional loads.
- Beach Day: "Soak Up the Sunshine"**  
Just like sunshine lifts your mood, so do healthy relationships, gratitude, and self-care.





**Raise Awareness**

Having regular conversations about mental health is a key factor in breaking the stigma. Consider the following ideas to help keep mental health as part of the conversation in your community:

- School Announcements**  
Share positive messages, mental health facts/statistics, and more via your school's daily announcements. If you have video announcements, consider recording videos, interviews, and more to share.
  
- Bulletin Boards**  
Use bulletin boards in prominent locations to spread awareness about things such as:
  - What Hope Squad is/does
  - Who your Hope Squad Members are/how they can be contacted
  - Mental health facts/myths
  - Mental health resources in your school and/or community
  - How to ask for help
  - Hope Squad themes
  - ...and more!
  
- Social Media**  
High school squads could consider establishing social media accounts run by the Squad to allow for the sharing of mental health tips and more with the broader school community:
  - Clearly label that the accounts are not monitored by professionals and should NOT be used in times of crisis; consider sharing 988 and similar resources, and keeping this information pinned/easily accessible in case of crises.
  - Highlight your Hope Squad Members
  - Following the completion of Hope Squad lessons, share the takeaways with followers.
  - Advertise Hope Squad events.
  - Share self-care tips, stress-management ideas, coping mechanisms, and other helpful strategies.
  - Highlight mental health resources in your school and community
  - Share tips related to the healthy use of social media
  - ...and more!



## Raise Awareness

- Rep the Brand**  
If your Hope Squad has t-shirts, lanyards, or other items that help to identify themselves, encourage them to wear these proudly. Consider assigning one day a week all Members wear Hope Squad gear in order to be visible. If funding is available, providing t-shirts or Hope Squad merchandise to all teachers and administrators is a great way to show buy-in and promote the Hope Squad cause across the entire school. Visit [The Hope Shop!](#)
- Sponsor Assemblies**  
Bring in inspirational speakers, host a screening of a mental health documentary, or find another way to bring mental health messaging to your school community via an assembly.
- Poster Push**  
Have Hope Squad Members create posters relevant to mental well-being to hang in classrooms and around the school.
- Mayoral Proclamation**  
Get on the radar of your local government using [Hope Squad's templates](#).
- QR Codes**  
Squads have found success using QR codes around school that link to contact information, crisis numbers, and other mental health resources. Consider placing them in high-traffic areas such as common spaces, athletic lobbies, bathrooms, and more.
- Participate in Local Parades or Community Events**  
Create a float or walk with signs in the Homecoming Parade or other local celebrations. You could hand out information about Hope Squad, crisis hotlines, and other helpful resources!
- Host a Mental Health Fair or Hope Night**  
Coordinate with community mental health resources to host an event that highlights the various mental health-related resources available throughout your wider community.

- Art Installation**  
Collaborate with art teachers to create assignments related to mental health. Display these in the hallways as a way to provide visible reminders about the importance of paying attention to mental wellbeing and raising awareness of the invisible burdens peers may be facing.
- Event Booths**  
At sporting events, community festivals, and more, consider hosting a Hope Squad booth. Members can share information about Hope Squad, as well as mental health resources, community services, and more.
- Attend Orientations**  
Ensure Hope Squad has a presence at your school orientation meetings to help raise awareness and connect with students and families from the very beginning of the school year. Whether you have the opportunity to address the attendees or have a booth people can visit, making Hope Squad visible from the start will set your squad up for success.





# Raise Awareness

**Observe Awareness Days**  
In the United States, the following observances related to mental health and Hope Squad could be used by Squads for special events, activities, announcements, and more:

- **January**
  - Mental Wellness Month
  
- **February**
  - Psychology Month
  - National School Counseling Week (First full week of February)
  - Hope Squad's Hope Week (Week of Valentine's Day)
  - Hope Squad's Day of Hope (Thursday of Hope Week)
  - 17<sup>th</sup> - Random Act of Kindness Day
  
- **March**
  - National Social Worker Month
  - 1<sup>st</sup> - World Compliment Day
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> - World Teen Mental Wellness Day
  - 20<sup>th</sup> - International Day of Happiness
  
- **April**
  - National Stress Awareness Month
  - 7<sup>th</sup> - World Health Day
  - 16<sup>th</sup> - World Semicolon Day
  
- **May**
  - Mental Health Awareness Month
  - Teacher Appreciation Month
  - Children's Mental Health Week (First week of May)
  - 8<sup>th</sup> - National Children's Mental Health Day
  - 15<sup>th</sup> - Mental Health Action Day
  
- **June**
  - Men's Mental Health Month



## Raise Awareness

- **July**
  - Minority Mental Health Month
  - 24<sup>th</sup> - International Self-Care Day
- **August**
  - 15<sup>th</sup> - National Relaxation Day
- **September**
  - National Suicide Prevention Month
  - National Suicide Prevention Week (Week surrounding World Suicide Prevention Day)
  - 8<sup>th</sup> - National 988 Day
  - 10<sup>th</sup> - World Suicide Prevention Day
- **October**
  - National Bullying Prevention Month
  - 10<sup>th</sup> - World Mental Health Day
  - 19<sup>th</sup> - Global Peer Support Celebration Day
- **November**
  - 23<sup>rd</sup> - International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day



# Schoolwide Activities

Creating connections, encouraging positivity, and promoting habits that have a positive impact on mental well-being are key elements of a Hope Squad. Consider having your Squad offer some of the following activities for the student body to enjoy:

- De-stress Recess**  
Consider hosting 'recess' style activities during lunch time, advisory periods, or exam breaks as a way to encourage students to de-stress. Activities could include things such as:
  - Board Games
  - Card Games
  - Musical Chairs
  - Hula Hoop Contest
  - Just Dance!
  - Karaoke
  - Minute-to-Win-It Games
  - Field Day Games
  - Basketball 'Knock-Out' Competition
  - Provide chalk & bubbles for outdoor fun
  
- Hope Grams**  
Provide a table where students can write uplifting letters to their peers; Hope Squad Members will then deliver these letters to spread positivity throughout the school.
  
- Positive Pins**  
Write positive messages or compliments on clothes pins and clip them onto others' backpacks or clothing, encouraging students to then pay it forward and spread positivity to others.
  
- Hope Chain**  
Invite students to write the name of someone or something that gives them hope on a strip of paper. Link them together and hang the chain in a common area of the school.

- Kindness Rocks!**  
Whether as a Squad or as a schoolwide activity, provide rocks and paints to decorate with positive messages. They can be sent home with students or placed around campus to spread messages of positivity throughout the year.
  
- New Student Welcomes**  
Coordinate with the Counseling Office to be part of the welcome process for new students enrolling in your school. Whether you host new student pizza parties/breakfasts, have Hope Squad Members give them a tour, or find another approach, Hope Squad Members can play an essential role in helping students feel welcome and connected to their new community.
  
- Hope Walk**  
Whether you host a community-wide 5K or a simple walk around the track, these events do a great job of bringing a community together around a specific cause.
  
- Mental Health Mile**  
Sponsor a lunchtime walking group on the track at your school, encouraging students to walk a mile and benefit from the positive impact exercise has on both physical and mental health.
  
- Therapy Dog Visits**  
Bring in therapy dogs to visit with students. This could be done around exams, if at a high school, or at any other convenient time.



- Stress Ball Making**

Provide supplies for students to make their stress balls using balloons and fillings such as rice, flour, or playdough. As students make their stress balls, Hope Squad Members can increase understanding of the importance of stress management and self-care in the broader school population.
- Guided Yoga or Meditation**

Exposing students to these practices can help reduce stress and teach them how to practice mindfulness, promoting emotional regulation and mental clarity.
- Hoops for Hope**

Use a basketball game to spread awareness about Hope Squad and mental health. Whether you arrange to speak at halftime of a school basketball game, organize a staff vs. students game, or host recess-style games like knock-out, free throw competitions, or others, combining Hope Squad's message with sports can be a great conversation starter
- Be the "I" in Kind**

Hang a poster with the letters "K \_\_ N D" in a prominent place in the school. Students are encouraged to take a photo standing in place of the I, encouraging them to reflect on their role in creating a kind, supportive school culture.
- Friendship Bracelet Making**

Provide supplies for students to make "friendship bracelets" with beads that spell out positive messages; alternatively, Hope Squad Members could create and distribute these types of bracelets to the student body.
- Unplug & Connect**

Emphasize the importance of face-to-face connection by offering a time for students to connect over activities like board games, ice-breakers, or conversation.



- Photo Challenge**  
Host a photo challenge for students to capture and share images that represent joy, positivity, and hope!
- Shred Your Stress**  
Encourage students to write down their stressors on paper and then shred them, whether by hand or with a paper shredder, as a visual representation of letting go of stress.
- Heart Attack**  
Write the name of each student in the school on hearts and post them around the building so everyone can find their name. This could be done in conjunction with Valentine's Day.
- Welcome Committee**  
Choose a day and greet students with smiles and positivity as they come into school. If you have the ability, you could even provide donuts, hot chocolate, or a special treat to start their day off on a positive note!
- Chalk the Walk**  
Chalk positive messages and drawings on the sidewalks leading into school.
- Hope Floats/Rooting for You**  
Offer Root Beer Floats to students as a special treat from Hope Squad! This can be a great way to help make your Squad Members visible so students know who to turn to in times of need.
- Positive Playlist**  
Create a playlist of songs about positivity or that put others in a good mood! Play it during class changes, at events, or any other time!



- Positive Post-Its**  
Have Squad Members write positive affirmations on post-it notes to be placed around the school; consider placing one on every locker.
- Random Acts of Kindness Day**  
Designate a day to encourage everyone to perform random acts of kindness throughout the school community. Or, join in on February 17, which is designated as the National Day for Random Acts of Kindness!
- Celebrate Successes**  
Find ways to regularly celebrate achievements in your community, both big and small. Especially seek out ways to acknowledge student successes that might be overlooked!
- Gratitude Tree**  
Building the habit of focusing on the positive supports mental health. Provide students with a "leaf" on which they can write down what they are thankful for; create a visual display that all can add to! Gratitude jars could also be used in smaller groups.
- Book Club**  
Have Hope Squad Members host a book club focused on topics related to mental well-being.
- Regulation Stations**  
Hope Squad Members can host an activity that teaches students how to develop self-regulation skills using this [activity guide](#).
- Change It Up Lunch**  
Host a special lunch period that encourages students to step outside of their comfort zones and connect with others. Hope Squad Members could be stationed at each table with conversation starters and icebreaker activities to encourage new connections.



- Class Competitions**

Organize friendly competitions that encourage teamwork and connection between classmates, helping to build bonds and promote community.
- Gratitude Graffiti**

Promote an attitude of gratitude by hanging large posters in common spaces labeled “Today, I am grateful for...” and encourage students to add their responses. Find more details [here](#).
- Practice Mindfulness with Coloring**

The calm, repetitive nature of coloring can promote a state of relaxation and mindfulness. Provide coloring pages to students, such as mandalas, mindfulness quotes, etc., and encourage them to experience the calm that coloring can bring as a form of self-care.
- Mardi Gras Beads**

Make colored Mardi-Gras style necklaces available to students, associating each color with a mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, loved one of someone with a mental illness, etc, to increase awareness, reduce stigma, and create a visible but non-verbal way for students to show solidarity, express their mental health journey, or support others. The colored beads serve as silent identifiers, conversation starters, and symbols of mental health advocacy within the school community.
- Connection Zones**

Designate certain hallways as different zones encouraged to create connections. For example, one hallway could be the “High 5 Hallway,” in another, students could be encouraged to say “Hello” in different languages (ciao, bonjour), etc. Be creative and encourage Squad Members to come up with other ideas for activities students can engage in to create connections during passing periods!



**Playground Games**  
Have Hope Squad Members coordinate traditional playground games for anyone to join in. Simple activities like four square, dodgeball, hopscotch, and more can create moments of connection!

**S.E.L.F.I.E. Week**  
Educate the school on the importance of self-care by hosting “Take Care of Your Selfie” Week-where each letter of SELFIE stands for a healthy self-care habit:

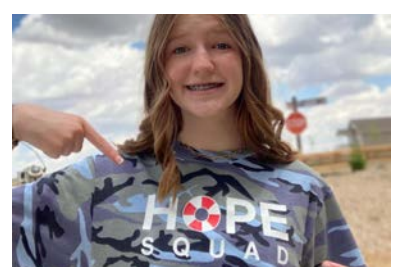
- S – Sleep
- E – Exercise
- L – Light (get outside in the sunshine)
- F – Fun (do something you enjoy)
- I – Interaction (spend time with others)
- E – Eating healthy

Educate students about each element, and challenge them to focus on one letter each day for a week (combining fun and interaction to fit within five days).

**Flash Mob**  
Organize a Flash Mob to perform an uplifting dance and increase Hope Squad’s visibility!

**Wrist Bands**  
Distribute wristbands with crisis hotline phone numbers or positive affirmations.

**Like Your Selfie**  
Create a collage or designated space in the building where students can take or post a selfie and share something they like about themselves.





# Squad-Specific Activities

Ensure Members have time to bond as a team and keep your Hope Squad engaged:

- Assign Members to Join Connect Calls**  
On the second Tuesday of each month from September to April at 6:00 p.m. ET, the Hope Squad National Council hosts Connect Calls on Zoom to allow Squad Members from all over to join together to share ideas and best practices. Advisors, consider assigning one squad member per month to attend and report back. The connect call link can be found in the Member portal and newsletter.
- Keep the Morale Up**  
While lesson content is essential, don't forget to ensure your Hope Squad is also having fun! Consider hosting game days, holiday parties, social events, and more to promote squad bonding and positivity.
- Plan a Squad Service Project**  
Give back to your community and strengthen your Squad's bond at the same time. You might sing carols at a nursing home, rake leaves for elderly neighbors, host a food drive, or volunteer in another meaningful way. Whatever you choose, service projects not only bring your Squad closer together—they also help make Hope Squad's presence felt in the community.
- Tune into the Virtual Conference hosted by National Council**  
Tune in to the annual National Conference where National Council Members produce educational content related to all things Hope Squad! Whether you host a watch party to view it in its entirety or use snippets at the start of each meeting, let the Council help educate your squad on essential topics related to mental well-being! Look for updates about the current year's conference in newsletters, or view past years' productions via [Hope Squad's YouTube](#).





**Connect With Us**



## Connect With Us

SHARE YOUR HOPE

### Follow Hope Squad on social media

Tag us, reshare our content, and keep up to date on the latest through our [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#) pages.

### [Share Your Hope](#) with us

We love highlighting what you're doing and providing inspiration to other Squads. Submit this form and you could be featured in our marketing and communications. Additionally, Advisor and Member submissions are entered into a raffle for a chance to win a \$20 Amazon gift card.

### How to find support

Any time Advisors need support, we encourage you to use the Advisor portal, email [Support@HopeSquad.com](mailto:Support@HopeSquad.com), or call us at (801) 342-3444. We are here to help!