

SEIZE THE AWKWARD

Content Creation Do's and Don'ts

DO'S

- Be thoughtful about how you use the word “awkward.” We don’t want to over imply that talking about mental health with a friend is awkward for everyone or should be. It might be in some cases but not necessarily in all cases.
 - In this campaign, ‘awkward’ refers to the initial discomfort or vulnerability that can arise when raising such personal topics – we acknowledge this reality, but we should always show that, despite any awkwardness, reaching out is the right thing to do. It’s important that we normalize mental health in the same way it would be normal to talk about physical health.
- We want to emphasize encouraging people to dive in and ask the question or start the conversation about what can be a difficult or delicate subject.
- Keep language straightforward and conversational. Avoid overly formal or technical language.
- Employ a light tone but (but don’t belittle or joke about the people who have mental health issues, and don’t joke about the act of reaching out).
- Use the phrase “mental health” when necessary. Part of the goal of this campaign is to destigmatize conversations around mental health (and the phrase “mental health” in particular).
- Refer to friends as “they” (rather than “he/she”) to avoid issues of gender and keep language informal and colloquial.
 - If sharing a personal story, do not use a friend’s name (unless given explicit permission)
- Be honest about the dangers of neglecting mental health problems.
- Ensure that content follows all [safe messaging guidelines](#)
- Creative should represent both male and female friendships (should be plutonic, not romantic).
- Must represent diverse audiences and experiences.

DON'TS

- Put up barriers that young people could use to avoid talking to their friends.
- Talk about suicide directly. The campaign is focused on mental health and tackles these issues farther upstream.
- Reference awkward moments where the relationships described aren’t clearly consensual.
- Use phrases like “it doesn’t matter what you do” because it could to some extent.
 - The emphasis should be on the fact that you know your friend best, so trust your instincts/guts. It’s better to bring it up than to say or do nothing at all. What’s important is that you take action to help your friend.



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness