April 2026

Work2BeWell Monthly Newsletter

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April is a great reminder that positive change often begins close to home. Community service and advocacy are powerful ways to turn compassion into action. Whether it's volunteering your time, supporting a cause you care about, or speaking up about an issue affecting your school or community, these moments of action can make a meaningful difference. Service isn't always about big projects. It can be as simple as checking in on a friend, helping a neighbor, or organizing something small that brings people together.

At Work2BeWell, we believe young people have the ability to shape healthier, more supportive communities. Advocacy allows you to use your voice to bring awareness to mental health, reduce stigma, and encourage others to seek support when they need it. This month, we celebrate the ways students across the country are showing up for one another and creating spaces where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. When we come together with a shared purpose, even the smallest actions can ripple outward and inspire lasting change.

How Are You #Working2BeWell?

"Young people have the power to change the world.
We just have to believe that our voices matter."
— Malala Yousafzai
Youngest-Ever Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2014)

WORK2BEWELL | Providence

Young people often underestimate the power they hold to create change. As youth advocate Malala Yousafzai has demonstrated through her work, meaningful change often begins when young people recognize that their perspectives, experiences, and ideas deserve to be heard. Advocacy and community service are powerful ways to turn that belief into action. When students step forward to support causes they care about—whether it's promoting mental health awareness, organizing a volunteer project, or simply helping someone feel included—they strengthen the communities around them. Each voice and each act of service contributes to a culture where people feel supported, valued, and connected.

Mental Health Tip for April: Find Your People

Working alongside others who care about the same issues can strengthen your support system. Joining a club, advocacy group, or service project can help build friendships and remind you that you're not alone in the things you care about.

What You'll Need for April

Simple Actions: Using Work2BeWell One-Pagers for Impact

As schools continue to prioritize student well-being, simple activities can play a powerful role in building supportive communities. Many of the One-Pager resources from Work2BeWell provide quick, engaging ways for students and educators to promote connection, kindness, and mental health awareness within their schools.

Community awareness begins when students recognize that small actions, like creating a kind message, advocating for student resources, or just participating in a mindfulness activity, can make a meaningful difference in someone's day. When students take initiative to promote kindness, reduce stress, or stand up for others, they become advocates for both mental health and positive school culture.

Educators can easily incorporate these One-Pager activities into leadership classes, advisory periods, or student club meetings. They require minimal materials, are quick to implement, and encourage student leadership and collaboration. For teens, these activities provide opportunities to practice advocacy in everyday ways, by supporting peers, promoting well-being, and helping create communities where everyone feels seen, supported, and connected.

Take Action This April
In honor of this month's focus on community service and advocacy, challenge your class or club to try one Work2BeWell activity that promotes kindness, connection, or mental wellness. When students take the lead in supporting one another, they help create a school culture where everyone feels valued.

Click Here to Access:
W2BW's One Pagers and Shareables

Talk2BeWell Podcast: "Showing Up & Speaking Out: The Power of Student Advocacy"

Advocacy isn't just about big speeches or national movements — it starts with showing up. Check out our new podcast where Dr. Robin Henderson, Work2BeWell's Chief Clinical Officer and Chief Executive of Behavioral Health for Providence Oregon, talks with three of our National Student Advisory Council teens, Dominic from Georgia, Paige from Virginia, and Jake from California. In this episode, we explore how service, leadership, and student voice connect to mental health and meaningful change. With a special guest from the National Student Council/National Honor Society, we discuss how teens can advocate for causes they care about, what challenges come with leadership, and how small actions can create lasting impact in schools and communities.

Episode 169: Showing Up & Speaking Out: The Power of Student Advocacy

Interested in listening more? Here are some past T2BW episodes dealing with comparison and body image:

Ep 26: Protests + Equality
Ep 45: The Defensive Line: A New Partnership to Serve Young People of Color
Ep 54: Performative Activism
Ep 61: Mental Health in Low-Income Communities

Each T2BW episode opens the door to meaningful conversations amongst peers and amplifies teen voices and perspectives. Through open, honest conversations, we help students connect with one another and work towards breaking the stigma around mental health.

Want to easily find episodes to accompany lesson plans and activities? Check out this ready to go list of all the T2BW Episodes categorized by W2BW Curriculums! It's a great resource for Counseling Offices and Wellness Rooms!

From Our Grant Funding and Community Advocacy Intern

"Advocacy in Action: Equipping Students to Support One Another"

In the past decade, youth mental health has become a growing public health crisis—one that is both widespread and deeply personal. Youth is a time of intense change, where hormonal shifts, new social pressures, and exposure to complex life experiences can heighten emotional vulnerability (Suppiej et al., 2025). Today, 1 in 5 adolescents in the United States lives with a diagnosed mental or behavioral health condition, and nearly 40% of high school students report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Globally, suicide is now the third leading cause of death among individuals ages 15 to 29. These numbers are not just statistics, they represent real lives, real families, and real loss.

When I was in high school, I lost a classmate to suicide. In the weeks after, I replayed every interaction we had, wondering if there was something I could have said or done to help him feel seen or valued. At the time, I was part of the 80% of youth who are never taught how to recognize or respond to emotional distress, as only 20 states currently require K–12 mental health education (Pasternak, 2025).

Everything changed when I attended an OASC summer camp and participated in a Work2BeWell conference. There, I learned how to build an emotional toolkit and received Emotional CPR (Emotionally Connect, Partner, and Respond) training—skills that empowered me to recognize crisis and respond with empathy and confidence. What once felt like helplessness became purpose. Now, through my internship at W2BW, I work to ensure other students gain these life-saving tools. But funding cuts threaten this work.

Your support can change that. By donating, you help equip students with the skills to save lives, including their own. Help us ensure that more young people not only survive but also graduate, thrive, and feel truly seen.

Join us in ending the silence around mental health. Help us turn awareness into action. Every donation—no matter the amount—directly helps us empower more teens with clinically-vetted tools and community support. Contributions are tax-deductible and deeply appreciated. Help us build a future where every teen feels seen, heard, and supported. Donate today!

Yosalin Arenas (she/her/ella) is a candidate for her Master of Public Health with a focus in Health Promotion and Health Behavior. She earned her bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Science and Psychology from Oregon State University. Her passion for student initiative and advocacy dates back to high school, when she represented her peers as a student representative on the Oregon Board of Education. During COVID, Yosalin directed her advocacy toward students' mental health and well-being. As part of this journey, she served as a committee member on the Healthy Schools Reopening Committee. Her work with students has never stopped, as she is now also the Site Director at the Philomath Youth Activities Club. There, she fosters wellness and education for all her students, creating an open and safe environment for after-school care. Her passion for guiding and mentoring the next generation led her to her work with Work2BeWell. Yosalin #Works2BeWell by teaching others to use art as a form of meditation and relaxation.

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Partnership Update

Empowering Student Voices: Why Work2BeWell and NA4SA Make a Powerful Partnership

Supporting student well-being takes more than good intentions. It takes collaboration, leadership, and opportunities for young people to put their ideas into action. That's why the partnership between **Work2BeWell** and the **National Association for Student Activities (NA4SA)** is such a natural fit. Both organizations are committed to empowering students to lead with purpose, strengthen their school communities, and advocate for the well-being of their peers.

Work2BeWell focuses on equipping students and educators with tools and resources that support mental health awareness, resilience, and peer connection. **NA4SA** shares a similar mission by supporting educators who guide student leadership programs, activities programs, and student councils across the country. When these missions come together, they create powerful opportunities for students to turn compassion into action, whether through service projects, peer support initiatives, or advocacy efforts that make schools more supportive and inclusive places.

One of the ways **NA4SA** supports educators and student leaders is through their **annual Summer Workshop**, an immersive professional learning experience designed for activities directors, leadership teachers, and advisors who want to strengthen their student programs. This virtual workshop provides practical strategies for building impactful leadership programs, fostering positive school culture, and helping students develop the confidence to lead meaningful initiatives.

In addition to the summer workshop, **NA4SA** also offers a **free seminar series throughout the year** that provides educators with accessible professional development focused on student leadership, engagement, and school climate. These seminars give teachers and advisors new ideas they can bring directly back to their schools, ranging from strengthening student voice to creating service opportunities that build stronger communities.

Together, **Work2BeWell** and **NA4SA** support the idea that when students are given the right tools, mentorship, and opportunities, they can become powerful advocates for mental health and positive change. As this month's theme of **community service and advocacy** reminds us, young people have the ability to shape the environments around them. Through partnerships like this one, educators and students alike gain the resources and inspiration needed to create school communities where everyone feels seen, supported, and empowered to make a difference.

For more information about **NA4SA** and their opportunities, including their Annual Summer Workshop, their free seminar series, and more, please visit https://www.nawd.com/.

NA4SA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for STUDENT ACTIVITIES
ADVOCATES • ADVISORS • ADMINISTRATORS • ALLIES

PhotoSource: nawd.com

A Word from NSAC

W2BW's National Student Advisory Council

"Awareness in Action: How Community Connection Creates Change"

Community awareness is understanding the issues, needs, and challenges that affect the people around us. In many communities today, individuals are often focused on school, work, and their own responsibilities, which can cause them to overlook problems happening nearby. However, being aware of community issues is important because it helps people recognize when change is needed. When individuals pay attention to what is happening in their communities, they are more likely to support others and become involved in solving problems. Increasing community awareness can help create stronger, more connected communities where people work together to improve the lives of everyone.

Research shows that community engagement plays a major role in solving local problems and strengthening communities. According to the Pennsylvania State University Extension Center for Economic and Community Development, communities are more successful when citizens actively participate in discussions, planning, and decision-making that affect their lives. When involved in community projects or conversations, people develop a stronger sense of responsibility and commitment to making those efforts succeed. Community engagement also allows those with different backgrounds and perspectives to share ideas, which can lead to better and more effective solutions. By including local voices in decision-making, communities are able to create programs and changes that truly reflect the needs of the people who live there.

Community awareness does more than just help solve social problems; it can also have a powerful impact on mental health. When people feel connected to their communities, they are less likely to feel isolated or alone, which are common factors that contribute to anxiety and depression. Supportive communities can provide safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable sharing their struggles and asking for help. For young people especially, knowing that there are people around them who care and are willing to listen can greatly improve their sense of belonging and emotional well-being. By increasing community awareness and encouraging people to support one another, communities can create environments where both social issues and mental health challenges are addressed together, leading to healthier and more resilient individuals.

For more information on this topic, please refer to the following research articles regarding community awareness and mental health:

- https://aese.psu.edu/research/centers/cecd/engagement-toolbox/engagement/why-community-engagement-matters
- https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12035253/

Aryan Khanna (he/him) is a sophomore at Rocky Hill High School in Connecticut and a proud member of the Work2BeWell Access Team. Passionate about both mental health advocacy and STEM, Aryan is deeply involved in his community through activities like robotics and Model United Nations. He hopes to pursue a future in bioengineering, combining his love for science with his drive to make a difference. Aryan Works2BeWell by listening to music, walking outside, painting, and baking.

Check out more information on applying for W2BW's National Student Advisory Council here!!

Testimonials

"A quote I have always loved is, 'In the end all will be okay, and if it's not okay, then it's not the end.' Over time, this mindset has become something I've learned to adopt as I've grown up in today's fast-paced and often overwhelming world. That perspective was strengthened even more by my experience with Work2BeWell.

I was first introduced to Work2BeWell during the summer before my freshman year of high school at the 2023 VISION Leadership Conference. At the time, I thought it was a really cool organization, but I didn't yet understand how important conversations about mental health truly were. Early in high school, I struggled to balance academics with extracurricular commitments and began experiencing heavy anxiety and imposter syndrome. I had a support system around me, but I still felt overwhelmed.

One day, after a long stretch of tests and responsibilities, I came home completely exhausted and broke down. While I was sitting there, I noticed a small postcard on the floor from a conference I had attended earlier that year. It was from Work2BeWell. The message simply reminded students to keep going and that taking breaks matters. It might sound small, but that one piece of paper genuinely shifted my perspective. In that moment, it reminded me that mental health deserves the same attention and care as any other part of my life.

"Since then, Work2BeWell has helped me become more aware of my emotions and the importance of protecting my mental wellbeing. It taught me that it's okay to slow down and that being passionate about what I commit to matters just as much as working hard.

Beyond personal growth, Work2BeWell has also helped me grow as a leader. As an Education Team member, I've had the opportunity to collaborate with students from across the country to create mental health awareness projects and curriculum that will reach thousands of students. Through this work, I've also felt empowered to advocate for change, reaching out to school administrators and even state-level legislators to push for stronger mental health support for students.

Most importantly, Work2BeWell has given me a second family. The people I've met through this organization are some of the most thoughtful, compassionate, and driven individuals I've ever worked with. Both student leaders and adult mentors are deeply committed to creating meaningful change in their communities, and being surrounded by that kind of dedication is incredibly inspiring.

Work2BeWell has truly changed my life. It has given me the tools to understand myself better, the confidence to advocate for others, and the opportunity to help create spaces where students feel supported. Because of that, I'm proud to be part of an organization that is not only encouraging mental health conversations but also empowering young people to lead that change."

Karthika Challagundla (She/Her) is a junior at Marvin Ridge High School in North Carolina and a member of the Work2BeWell Education Team. She is actively involved in her school and community through leadership, STEM outreach, and cultural advocacy. At school, Karthika participates in HOSA, FBLA, Student Council, Biology Club, and the Spanish Honor Society. She also volunteers weekly at her local library, tutoring young students in math, reading, and science. Karthika is passionate about public health, youth empowerment, and inclusive education. She co-leads a research initiative on iron deficiency anemia and its impact on cognitive health in children, and is the founder of STEMporium, a passion project designed to make STEM more accessible to students from all backgrounds. Karthika Works2BeWell by journaling, baking, creating digital designs, exploring new topics through research, and spending time with her family and friends.

Community Voices Matter

Strong communities are built when people feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and working together to create positive change. At Work2BeWell, we believe advocacy begins with listening and that every student and educator's voice plays an important role in shaping supportive, healthy environments.
If you've explored a Work2BeWell module, we invite you to share your experience with us.

The survey only takes a few minutes, but your voice contributes to something bigger. When students and educators speak up, they help create resources that truly reflect the needs of their communities. (Be sure to select the correct module title when responding.) Thank you for being part of a community that values advocacy, collaboration, and supporting one another.

WHERE TO FIND US THIS MONTH

Dates / Location	Event
April 1 Renton, WA	Renton SD Student Symposium
April 18 Portland, OR	Girl Scouts of Oregon Conference
April 20 Virtual - Zoom	Club Network Meet-Up
April 26-27 Seaside, OR	Oregon Association of Student Councils (OASC) Spring Conference

How are you using W2BW resources to make a difference in your school or community? Have they helped you start conversations, plan events, or bring people together around mental health? We'd love to hear how you're making an impact!

Share your story with us and be featured in an upcoming newsletter or on social media!

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