

Creating Positive Media Influences

In April 2002, President George W. Bush's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health initiated a comprehensive study to assess the mental health care system in the United States. The commission's efforts brought national media attention to the issue of mental health. In this activity, you will help design a media campaign in your community that will promote awareness of mental health issues.

“Our country must make a commitment: Americans with mental illness deserve our understanding, and they deserve excellent care.”



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ACTIVITY

Based on what you have learned, you and your class will design a positive media campaign that will accomplish the following: encourage people to seek help when faced with mental or emotional problems; convey empathy for people who suffer from mental or emotional problems; and teach the public that people with mental illnesses should be treated fairly.

Your teacher will divide the class into groups to create the following components of your media campaign:

a slogan, a direct mail marketing piece, a billboard, and a print ad for a newspaper or magazine.

EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS

In a class discussion, share your views on the potential impact of media portrayals of mentally ill people. What can television dramas and local news programs do to help educate the public about mental health issues?