

Highlights for Mental Health Awareness Month

# May 2026



Brought to you by:

**Hope Speaks Niagara Community Coalition**

*Ending Stigma. Building Hope. Saving Lives.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
				1	2	3
<i>Details on each event can be reviewed on the pages following the calendar</i>				Mental Health Awareness Month Begins!		
<b>4 National Firefighters Day / Correction Officer Week / Children's MH Awareness Week</b>  <b>1p-2p SPCNY Virtual Lunch &amp; Learn:</b> Organizational Leadership and Mental Wellness: How Culture, Psychological Safety, & Accountability Drive First Responder Readiness	5	<b>6 World Maternal Mental Health Day</b>  <b>6:30p-8p NAMI</b> Family Support Group (N. Tonawanda)	<b>7 Children's Mental Health Awareness Day</b>  <b>12p-1p SPCNY Virtual Lunch &amp; Learn:</b> Smart, Not Soft: The EQ (Emotional Intelligence) Shield in Corrections <b>12p - 1p MHANYS Virtual Lunch &amp; Learn:</b> Building Resilience: From the Front Line to the Front Office: A paramedic's Journey through mental wellness and leadership	8	9	10  WNY PRIDE 5K & LGBTQ+ Wellness Event  Happy Mother's Day
<b>11 National Police Week / National Prevention Week</b>  <b>2:30p-4p SAMHSA Webinar</b> Innovations in Faith Based Community Partnerships, & funding & financing prevention	12  <b>9a-3:30p MHANYS</b> virtual Adult Mental Health First Aid  <b>2p-3p SAMHSA Webinar</b> Celebrate the Possibilities of Prevention	13  <b>12p - 1p SPCNY Virtual Lunch &amp; Learn:</b> From Despair to Empowerment & Beyond	14  <b>1p-2p NDYFS</b> Family Peer Recovery Support Group "Better Together" (Niagara Falls) <b>7p-8:30p NAMI</b> Family Support Group (online Zoom)	15	16	17
<b>18 EMS Appreciation Week</b>	19  <b>11a-2p; 7p-10p</b> NC First Responder Hot Dog Lunch <b>12p - 1p SPCNY Virtual Lunch &amp; Learn:</b> Leaving the Job at the Door: A First Responder's Guide to Transitioning from Work to Home	20	21  <b>9a-3:30p MHANYS</b> virtual Adult Mental Health First Aid <b>10a-11a MHANYS</b> virtual Strength in Community: Community as Soul Medicine <b>6:30p-8p NAMI</b> Family Support Group (Lockport)	22  <b>12p-1p GOW CARES Alliance</b> Lunch & Learn virtual Kratom: What It Is, What It Does & Why It Matters	23	24
25	26	27  <b>7p-8p MHANYS</b> virtual Combatting Stigma: From High School to the Professional World	28  <b>5:30p-7p NDYFS</b> Family Peer Recovery Support Group "Better Together" (Lockport) <b>6p-8p Town Hall</b> at NT Intermediate School Hosted By Community Health Alliance of N. Tonawanda (CHANT)	29	30	31  PRIDE Flag Raising Across Niagara County

## Week 1

### **Monday, May 4, 2026 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm**

**SPCNY Virtual Lunch & Learn: Organizational Leadership and Mental Wellness: How Culture, Psychological Safety, and Accountability Drive First Responder Readiness**

Join us on National Firefighters Day to hear Raleigh Fire Department's Battalion Chief, Dena Ali, speak about leadership practices from all levels, directly impacting first responder wellness, stress regulation, and operational performance. The training will also examine how psychological safety, trust, and belonging contribute to resilient teams and improved decision-making in high-stakes environments. This session will also emphasize the role of leadership in building sustainable systems that support both organizational wellness and operational effectiveness.

**Register at:** [https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/q9kfgf\\_yRgy6xXe-TUIXMA?fbclid=IwY2xjawRlcNJleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETEzd0JJMnRpWFFQUIV3bEpkc3JOYwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHvuUlhNQpLDW3011WeUUVFbLBUJ2ZQyjnGHha1QbjLDVvk18HkM9TK97bVvLp\\_aem\\_cj80TaUQvD7sLsWa\\_SCMBA#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/q9kfgf_yRgy6xXe-TUIXMA?fbclid=IwY2xjawRlcNJleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETEzd0JJMnRpWFFQUIV3bEpkc3JOYwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHvuUlhNQpLDW3011WeUUVFbLBUJ2ZQyjnGHha1QbjLDVvk18HkM9TK97bVvLp_aem_cj80TaUQvD7sLsWa_SCMBA#/registration)

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### **Wednesday, May 6, 2026 6:30p-8:00 pm**

#### **NAMI Family Support Group in North Tonawanda, NY**

Register required at [online@namibuffalony.org](mailto:online@namibuffalony.org) or (716) 226-6264

[Namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar](http://Namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar)

### **Thursday, May 7, 2026 12:00 pm-1:00 pm**

#### **SPCNY Virtual Lunch & Learn: Smart, Not Soft: The EQ Shield in Corrections**

Help recognize Correction Officer Week by focusing on the mental readiness and professional resilience of corrections personnel. The course challenges the common misconception that emotional intelligence (EQ) is a soft skill. Instead, it reframes EQ as a tactical and teachable skillset that serves as psychological armor for corrections professionals.

#### **Register at**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/DNqX1DnfRv2B\\_DocY04GFQ?fbclid=IwY2xjawRlckhleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETEzd0JJMnRpWFFQUIV3bEpkc3JOYwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHpixzliB3sIOLkLEjZYBtPHhZ-VXgg7TyKIgB2k6jFACSTc6E9NRxgxYjjUf\\_aem\\_CpqOO\\_ETWc2OGhgG6X-33A#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/DNqX1DnfRv2B_DocY04GFQ?fbclid=IwY2xjawRlckhleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETEzd0JJMnRpWFFQUIV3bEpkc3JOYwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHpixzliB3sIOLkLEjZYBtPHhZ-VXgg7TyKIgB2k6jFACSTc6E9NRxgxYjjUf_aem_CpqOO_ETWc2OGhgG6X-33A#/registration)

### **Thursday, May 7, 2026 12:00 pm-1:00 pm**

#### **MHANYS - Building Resilience: From the Front Line to the Front Office: A paramedic's Journey through mental wellness and leadership.**

This job takes a toll, and I've felt that first hand. I made the decision to seek help and work on my own resilience, and it changed how I lead today. I'm focused on building a culture where mental health is taken seriously, where asking for help is expected, and where we are proactive, not reactive, in supporting our teammates.

**Register at** [https://mhanys.org/paramedics\\_journey/](https://mhanys.org/paramedics_journey/)

**Saturday, May 9, 2026 9:00 am - 4:00 pm**

**WNY PRIDE 5K & LGBTQ+ Wellness Event**

SUNY Niagara, 3111 Saunders Settlement Rd, Sanborn, NY

The 5K is an all-inclusive event, allowing for individuals of all ages, ability levels, and experiences to participate. Individuals can run or walk the event.

**Register at** [https://www.niagarapride.org/wnypride5k2026?mc\\_cid=61f3866e99&mc\\_eid=652e8bebff](https://www.niagarapride.org/wnypride5k2026?mc_cid=61f3866e99&mc_eid=652e8bebff)

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**Week 2**

**Monday, May 11, 2026 2:30 pm-4:00 pm**

SAMHSA Webinar Innovations in Faith Based Community Partnerships, & funding & financing prevention. National Prevention Week showcases the work of communities across the country to prevent substance use and promote well-being.

**Register at** [https://capconcorp.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_AA189zEkQce6ncoCf8kDtw#/registration](https://capconcorp.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AA189zEkQce6ncoCf8kDtw#/registration)

**Tuesday, May 12, 2026 9:00 am - 3:30 pm**

**MHANYS - Adult Mental Health First Aid**

The Adult MHFA course is appropriate for anyone who wants to learn how to help an individual who may be experiencing a mental health crisis or concern. Sometimes, the best first aid is you. Take the course, save a life, strengthen a community.

**Register at** [https://mhanys.org/mhfa\\_5-12-26/](https://mhanys.org/mhfa_5-12-26/)

There is 2 hours of pre-work required prior to the instructor led session. Must be a NYS resident.

**Wednesday, May 13, 2026 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**

**SPCNY Virtual Lunch & Learn: From Despair to Empowerment & Beyond**

In recognition of National Police Week, this session features NYPD Sergeant Aaron Lohman, who shares his powerful journey from severe obesity, depression, and suicidal ideation to sustained health, purpose, and service in the wellness space. Through candid storytelling, Aaron highlights the turning point that required him to take ownership of his well-being and commit to change one day at a time. Participants will gain practical insight into personal accountability, mindset shifts, and the importance of proactive self-care in maintaining operational effectiveness and overall quality of life.

**Register at**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/upBR\\_tbmTgqBXHnrZorw7Q?fbclid=IwY2xjawRlczJleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETEzdOJJMnRpWFFQUiV3bEpkc3JOYwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHpixzliB3sIOLkLEjZYBtPHhZ-VXgg7TyKIgB2k6jFACSTc6E9NRxgYjUf\\_aem\\_CpQOO\\_ETWc2OGhgG6X-33A#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/upBR_tbmTgqBXHnrZorw7Q?fbclid=IwY2xjawRlczJleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETEzdOJJMnRpWFFQUiV3bEpkc3JOYwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHpixzliB3sIOLkLEjZYBtPHhZ-VXgg7TyKIgB2k6jFACSTc6E9NRxgYjUf_aem_CpQOO_ETWc2OGhgG6X-33A#/registration)

**Wednesday, May 13, 2026 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**SAMHSA Webinar Celebrate the Possibilities of Prevention**

This joint webinar will feature real stories from leaders and community partners who are focused on preventing substance use and strengthen communities. The webinar will highlight storytelling from Communities Talk and “Talk. They Hear You.” organizations, offering real-world examples and practical guidance that communities nationwide can use to strengthen their own prevention activities.

**Register at** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_-geOTy1CRhmZLhBgFBPEug#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-geOTy1CRhmZLhBgFBPEug#/registration)

**Thursday, May 14, 2026 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm**

**New Directions Youth & Family Services (NDYFS) Family Peer Recovery Support Group “Better Together”**

Niagara Falls Public Library, 1425 Main St., Niagara Falls, NY 14305

All Niagara County caregivers raising a child with substance use disorder under the age of 21 are welcome to the group. Each meeting will either include training related to substance use, a guest speaker, or other educational information along with time for open discussion. Refreshments will be available. Childcare will be provided for those who register.

**Register by calling or texting 716-334-3358**

**Thursday, May 14, 2026 7:00 pm-8:30 pm**

**NAMI Family Support Group virtually on Zoom**

Registration required at [online@namibuffalony.org](mailto:online@namibuffalony.org) or (716) 226-6264

[Namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar](http://Namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar)

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**Week 3**

**Tuesday, May 19, 2026: 11:00 am - 2:00 pm; 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm**

Niagara County Volunteer and Career First Responders Hot Dog Lunch

Public Safety Training Facility, 5574 Niagara Street Ext., Lockport, NY

Enjoy food, camaraderie, and appreciation for your dedicated service!

Hosted by Emergency Services Director Jonathan Schultz, Sheriff Michael Filicetti, and the Niagara County Legislature

**Tuesday, May 19, 2026: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**

**SPCNY Virtual Lunch & Learn: Leaving the Job at the Door: A First Responder’s Guide to Transitioning from Work to Home**

The moment you walk through the front door doesn’t automatically signal the end of your shift — not for your nervous system, your partner, or your family. This one-hour session explores the psychological and physiological barriers that prevent first responders from effectively transitioning out of “provider mode” and into the home environment.

**Register at**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9122772588?pwd=Zm5lbnRlc8JleHRuA2FlbQlzMABicmlkETZkd0JJMnRpWFFQUlV3bEpkc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQOMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHl2cme9ggQJVRhSSDAe5MalabL7oGsbu2tHZaBeldiSvYwvB53rL\\_U9YFvos\\_aem\\_01J27fZVMCICrVzT5Y8RJQ#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9122772588?pwd=Zm5lbnRlc8JleHRuA2FlbQlzMABicmlkETZkd0JJMnRpWFFQUlV3bEpkc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQOMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHl2cme9ggQJVRhSSDAe5MalabL7oGsbu2tHZaBeldiSvYwvB53rL_U9YFvos_aem_01J27fZVMCICrVzT5Y8RJQ#/registration)

**Thursday, May 21, 2026 9:00 am - 3:30 pm**

**MHANYS - Adult Mental Health First Aid**

The Adult MHFA course is appropriate for anyone who wants to learn how to help an individual who may be experiencing a mental health crisis or concern. Sometimes, the best first aid is you. Take the course, save a life, strengthen a community.

**Register at** [https://mhanys.org/mhfa\\_5-21-26/](https://mhanys.org/mhfa_5-21-26/)

There is 2 hours of pre-work required prior to the instructor led session. Must be a NYS resident.

**Thursday, May 21, 2026 10:00 am - 11:00 am**

**MHANYS - Strength in Community: Community as Soul Medicine**

Right now, in every culture, in every family, in every community group organization, and institution, there's a story being told. Sometimes the story is clear and inspiring, and other times it's hidden beneath frustration, fear, and blame. But no matter how it's told, every story shapes behavior. And for individuals and community members, the ability to reframe a narrative is one of the most powerful tools we have. Because language doesn't just describe reality. It creates it. The future will be shaped not only by technology and policy but by the stories we choose to tell, listen to, and pass on. Consider attending this conversation and sharing a narrative you have reframed or one you would like to reframe.

**Register at** [https://mhanys.org/may\\_month\\_community/](https://mhanys.org/may_month_community/)

**Thursday, May 21, 2026 6:30p-8:00 pm**

**NAMI Family Support Group in Lockport, NY**

**Registration required** at [online@namibuffalony.org](mailto:online@namibuffalony.org) or (716) 226-6264

[Namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar](http://Namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar)

**Friday, May 22, 2026 12:00 pm -1:00 pm**

**GOW CARES Alliance Lunch & Learn Virtual**

Kratom: What It Is, What It Does & Why It Matters

Come learn all about kratom, how it works, and why people are buzzing about it these days. Kratom is a rapidly growing, unregulated herbal substance that acts as an atypical opioid, posing significant safety and addiction risks despite its popularity as a "natural" supplement.

**Register at** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/kratom-what-it-is-what-it-does-why-it-matters-tickets-1986217016564?aff=oddtcreator>

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**Week 4**

**Wednesday, May 27, 2026 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

**MHANYS - Combatting Stigma: From High School to the Professional World**

From high school to college and the professional world, a panel discussion exploring ways we can all reduce stigma. By the end of the panel you will walk away with way that YOU can reduce stigma. Moderated by MHANYS' Graham Healey, Assistant Director, Mental Health Information Center.

**Register at** [https://mhanys.org/may\\_month\\_combating\\_stigma/](https://mhanys.org/may_month_combating_stigma/)

**Thursday, May 28, 2026 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

**Town Hall hosted by Community Health Alliance of North Tonawanda (CHANT)**

Location: North Tonawanda Intermediate School, 1500 Vanderbilt, N. Tonawanda, NY

This Town Hall will bring together students, families, and community partners to focus on youth well-being, substance use prevention, and strengthening community support systems. A free spaghetti dinner, refreshments, and dessert for all attendees. Youth volunteers will be assisting throughout the event, and North Tonawanda Parks & Recreation will be offering activities for children so parents can be fully engaged. The evening will also include speakers, such as the North Tonawanda Superintendent, NT Chief of Police, and CHANT's data analyst, who will share key insights from our Community Hub survey and youth survey to help guide meaningful discussion around local needs and trends.

**Thursday, May 28, 2026 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm**

**New Directions Youth & Family Services (NDYFS) Family Peer Recovery Support Group “Better Together”**

Family Empowerment Center, 157 Canal Street suite 102, Lockport, NY

All Niagara County caregivers raising a child with substance use disorder under the age of 21 are welcome to the group. Each meeting will either include training related to substance use, a guest speaker, or other educational information along with time for open discussion. Refreshments will be available. Childcare will be provided for those who register.

***Register by calling or texting 716-334-3358***

**Friday, May 29, 2026 PRIDE Flag Raising Ceremonies**

9:00 am - Art Park (Lot B - 4<sup>th</sup> St., Lewiston, NY)

10:30 am - Niagara Falls State Park (Terrapin Point Goat Island, Niagara Falls, NY)

1:00 pm - Niagara Falls City Hall (745 Main St., Niagara Falls, NY)

2:30 pm - N. Tonawanda City Hall (216 Payne Ave, N. Tonawanda, NY)

3:30 pm - Kenan Center (433 Locust St., Lockport, NY)

Bring your flags, your friends and your fabulous self! Free entry. All ages welcome.