



## Community Educational Forum

**How to organize an educational forum featuring the DVD *Depression: True Stories* and *Words Can Work: When Talking About Depression and Other Mental Health Disorders* booklets.**

DVDs and booklets available from Blake Works are an ideal catalyst for community dialogue about the challenges facing young people.

Blake Works is co-hosting a two-hour Educational Forum at the Massachusetts State House featuring *Depression: True Stories* and *Words Can Work: When Talking About Depression and Other Mental Health Disorders*. Attendees include 300 advocates, providers, policymakers, parents, educators and corporate work/life and EAP directors.

All attendees will receive a package including the DVD and 20 *Words Can Work* booklets to use in their community outreach. These materials were made available through foundation grants.

You can have a well-attended educational forum in your community by following this step-by-step plan.

### **Four months before the event**

- Invite organizations to co-host the event. (May include representatives of your community mental health and youth organizations; departments of health; state Senators and Representatives; local mental health and youth organizations; healthcare professionals; and corporate benefit and employee assistance professionals.)

### **Three months**

- Hold first meeting of the co-hosts.
- Pick a time and place for the forum.
- Identify sponsors (Our forum is being co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and Partners HealthCare). Potential sponsors in your community may include state agencies, hospitals, insurance companies, businesses, community foundations, HMOs, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, sports teams, and Departments of Health.
- Decide whom to invite. (Blake Works and our co-hosts invited public health officials, educators, policymakers, health care professionals, mental health and youth advocates, and peer leaders.)
- Select a moderator/facilitator for the event.
- Develop a budget. (Costs include the DVD, *Words Can Work* booklets, refreshments, and may include fee for event location, and audio/visual equipment)

- Identify volunteers to help set up, welcome attendees and clean up at forum.
- List potential speakers and panel members. Include a health care professional, a parent who has dealt with a child suffering from depression, and representatives of local mental health or youth serving organizations.
- Assign tasks (finding the event space; contacting speakers/panel members; identifying funding.)
- Schedule next planning meeting.

#### **Six weeks**

- Finalize speakers and panel members.
- Create e-invite (email [info@wordscanwork.com](mailto:info@wordscanwork.com) to request template)
- Co-hosts email e-invite to their membership and contacts. (Determine who receives and logs the RSVPs)
- Write press release and event program (email [info@wordscanwork.com](mailto:info@wordscanwork.com) to request templates)
- Reserve audio/visual equipment (large screen TV or projector, microphones for speakers and panel members and microphones for audience members asking questions of the panel)
- Order DVD and *Words Can Work* booklets from Blake Works. (We offer quantity discounts)
- Plan refreshments

#### **One week**

- Confirm speakers, refreshments, audio/visual equipment, and set-up/clean-up volunteers.
- Send press release and follow up with calls to local media.
- Determine appropriate shipping method to have *Words Can Work* booklets delivered to event location.

#### **Day of event**

- Ensure sufficient seating for everyone.
- Copy any handouts, including programs. We suggest having extra copies. People who didn't pre-register may show up for the forum.
- Review agenda, videos, and handouts.
- Set up a registration table with sign-in sheets. Give one package of materials including DVD and *Words Can Work* booklet to a representative of each organization attending.
- Set up table for refreshments.
- Check all AV equipment.
- Queue video *Depression: True Stories*.

#### **Follow up**

- E-mail evaluation form to attendees. (email [info@wordscanwork.com](mailto:info@wordscanwork.com) to request template)

If you have questions about how to plan a forum we can help. Call Blake Works at 978.282.1663 or email [info@wordscanwork.com](mailto:info@wordscanwork.com).