



Mental Health Category Film Scoring Form

1. How well does the film communicate a message that inspires the viewer/other youth to take action? (0-30)

Does the film offer the viewer specific suggestions of what others can do to support mental health? Does the film encourage the viewer and/or other youth to feel, act, or think differently? Films should be action-oriented in some way in order to encourage change and support.

Examples of action-oriented messages:

- **Get the facts:** Films could illustrate that a diagnosis of mental illness does not define a person and debunk the myths that say mental illness is something to fear or ignore (i.e., Recovery is possible, 1 in 5 people experience a mental health challenge in their lifetime).
- **Have a conversation:** Films can model how to talk about mental health challenges, how to recognize that something is going on, or how to approach the topic with someone they care about.
- **Talk openly and remove shame:** Films can encourage families to support young people who are experiencing a mental health challenge, reminding them that they are never a bother, and that there is no shame in getting help.
- **Be supportive:** Films can show ways friends or family members can support someone experiencing a mental health challenge. Examples: Listen or talk with them, “be there” with emotional support, connect a friend or family member to resources, and encourage help-seeking.
- **Don’t wait to get help:** Films can highlight that treatment and support work and that most people who experience a mental health challenge can recover, especially if treated early.
- **Become a mental health advocate:** Films can demonstrate the importance of young people standing up and speaking up for themselves or those living with a mental health challenge by showing youth wearing the lime green ribbon, telling their stories, or using their voices to help reduce stigma and create more equitable communities. Visit California’s Take Action for Mental Health campaign to learn more ways to get involved at www.takeaction.org.

2. How well does the film creatively tell a positive and educational story about mental health? (0-20)

3. Does the film consistently use appropriate language and messaging (where applicable)? (Yes/No, Yes = 20 points)

Please review the messaging and language guidelines below before scoring.

- **Using person-first language:** Films should use person-first language, which refers to people who are living with mental health challenges as part of their full-life experience, not people who are defined by their mental health challenges. Using person-first language respectfully puts the person before the illness. Using person-first language helps steer clear of stigmatizing language that may lead to discrimination. For example, instead of calling someone “mentally ill,” we could say that they are “experiencing a mental health



challenge; or, instead of saying “He is bipolar,” say “He was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

- **Avoiding stigmatizing language:** Films should not use derogatory terms (such as “crazy,” “psycho,” or “insane”) without explicitly communicating to the audience that these terms are unacceptable. Films should not reinforce stereotypes and labels that could keep people from seeking help.
- **Avoiding reinforcement of stereotypes:** Films should be careful not to accidentally reinforce stereotypes of people living with a mental health challenge such as: being dangerous or violent, disabled or homeless, helpless, or being personally to blame for their condition. Although popular culture and the media often associate mental illness with crimes or acting violently, people living with mental illness are more likely to be victims of crime. It is important to avoid perpetuating myths and stereotypes in order to produce an accurate, respectful, and mindful film.
- **For films about eating disorders:** Films about eating disorders should discuss the topic with care and sensitivity. Films should be positive and educational and challenge stereotypes by focusing on an individual’s personal experience rather than their size, promote help-seeking behaviors, and share stories that create empathy and understanding around the complexities and cultural factors that influence eating disorders.

5. How technically well-produced is the film? (Consider focus, exposure, audio clarity, use of graphics and/or special effects, good pacing, flow, etc.) (0-10)

6. How well does the film provide a clear and effective narrative/script that is easy to understand and makes sense? (0-10)

7. How well does the film creatively use colors, music, and/or graphics to support its main message and set a positive and hopeful tone? (0-10)