

**June 2024**

## **Healthy Living: Leveraging Communication & Partnerships**

Last month Kat Combs, MPH, Community Health Director, and Kate Gross, Association Director of Teen and Family Engagement, both at YMCA of the Triangle, teamed up with their colleagues in Human Resources and Marketing Communications to increase awareness of mental health and resources as part of Mental Health Awareness Month, but it's really part of an ongoing commitment to whole health and emerging partnerships.

The Triangle emailed employees each week of the month, and a final email recapping all the association's activities during the month, to provide education around support for staff as well as highlight the Y's role in supporting community members' mental well-being too. The association:

- participated in [NAMIWalks](#) on May 18 in Morrisville, N.C., to raise awareness and help to destigmatize mental health,
- provided virtual webinars through Avance Care partnership,
- trained additional Youth Development staff in Youth Mental Health First Aid,
- launched mindful meditation and breathwork classes into its Group Fitness schedules (and will continue these classes),
- shared self-care tips and provided links to the Teen Mental Health Resource Hub and
- provided links to staff to the association Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

"Our goal this past month was to provide some literacy around mental health that made sense and was easy to digest without being overwhelming," Combs said.

## **Growing Partnerships**

"We're seeing partners coming to the table to support youth, families and adults through the Y without the Y having to bear the larger operational costs," Combs said. YMCA of the Triangle has partnered with the Avance Care to serve as a behavioral and mental health consultant and resource provider; the Y reaches out to Avance if staff in Youth Development or at camps identify a crisis or need for a referral for a child or teen. Avance is also a resource to the association's staff *and* members, with expertise through webinars, workshops, grief counseling group sessions and more; [learn more here](#).

The Y is also forming a partnership with [NAMI North Carolina](#) as part of its workplan for its Teen Mental Health grant via the Alliance and that organization's growing work around supporting youth.

How did your Y recognize Mental Health Awareness Month? The Alliance would love to learn what this looked like across the state; email [Michele.McKinley@ncycmas.org](mailto:Michele.McKinley@ncycmas.org) to share.