



Artwork by Eileen Schofield/Art Enables

DD Awareness Month Resource Guide

The intention of this resource guide is to help provide you with content for posting on social media during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (March 2021). There are no set guidelines for posting – feel free to share whatever you want, whenever you want! For more information about DD Awareness Month, or if you need help posting to social media, please visit: <http://nacdd.org/DDAM>

Who to Follow on Social Media:

NACDD - <http://facebook.com/NACDD> and <http://twitter.com/NACDD>

AUCD – <http://facebook.com/AUCDnetwork> and <http://twitter.com/AUCDnews>

NDRN – <http://facebook.com/NDRNadvocates> and <http://twitter.com/NDRNadvocates>

State DD Councils

State P&As

State UCEDDS

General Points:

- Remember to use the hashtag **#DDawareness2021**
- The hashtag is important! Every organization reading this guide has stories to share, and the DD Awareness Month is our yearly opportunity to share far beyond our individual networks.
- Generally, anything that is tagged with **#DDawareness2021** is free to be liked, commented on, and shared/retweeted. Our advice on re-sharing: use it as an excuse to reach out to groups and ask their staff to share your organization's DDAM posts as well.
- We've also found that DDAM is a great opportunity to share and promote art created by people with developmental disabilities.
- Keep track of the data connected to how many people your posts reach, as well as how many people react to them, as this will help you measure and show the impact the campaign has.
- This resource guide will be updated with new resources every Monday throughout the month of March. If you have or know of a resource that you want to be included, please email Rafa Rolon-Muniz at rrolon-muniz@nacdd.org or Robin Troutman at rtroutman@nacdd.org.
- We've created a logo this year that you are free to use however you want. Credit for the artwork should go to Eileen Schofield at the Art Enables studio in Washington DC. You can download them [directly from this guide](#) or find them on [our DDAM webpage](#).



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Messaging Advice:

Whether your organization is a self-advocacy group that has been advocating for disability rights for decades, a state council on developmental disabilities, or a corporation that is just introducing its members to the disability community, we believe that everyone is a welcome addition to this month. We simply ask that organizations participating in this campaign keep a few guidelines in mind if they share stories attached to the campaign:

- 1. Stories should include (and ideally focus on) individuals with developmental disabilities.** The disability community is wide and includes family members, support professionals, friends, etc. that also deserve to be celebrated, but it is impossible to authentically promote awareness of developmental disabilities without including the people with these disabilities.
- 2. Any posts connected to DD Awareness Month should be supportive and not negative or combative towards other disability organizations.** Our community is diverse and, like all communities, it includes

members that disagree with each other on certain issues. Healthy debate absolutely has a place in our community, as does calling attention to problems that need to be solved. However, awareness campaign posts are usually not the appropriate time or place to these debates, as it takes the focus away from the individuals and groups that the campaign should be celebrating.

- 3. Don't forget to connect posts to the programs or organizations that are improving our community.** The framing of stories is a complicated yet important subject. To keep our advice short, we just remind you to "connect the dots" between successful stories and the programs that caused the successes. Similarly, it can be effective to connect the dots between obstacles and the work that needs to be done to fix them.

Examples:

These two tweets from previous DD Awareness Month campaign exemplify the type of story sharing that fits the vision of the awareness month campaign. The tweets also connect the dots between the stories and the two different programs that they were involved in (Microsoft's Supported Employment program and SSA's Ticket to Work), and they focus on the benefits of their programs instead of attacking others.



Tweet 1 (by [ACL](#)): "ICYMI: See [ACL Administrator Lance Robinson's](#) new blog in recognition of Developmental #Disabilities Awareness Month, "Appreciating Community During Difficult Times." #DDAwareness2020 #COVID19

Tweet 2 (by [Choose Work – SSA](#)): "Having grown up with #CerebralPalsy, Shileta wanted to help young adults with disabilities find the support they need to pursue independent living. Find out how #TicketToWork helped her reach her goal. #DDAwareness19"

FOLLOW

You can find a [list of DD Council social media pages](#) on the NACDD website (or by clicking the link in this sentence).

Interested in having your organization's social media listed here? Contact Rafa Rolon-Muniz at rrolon-muniz@nacdd.org or Robin Troutman at rtroutman@nacdd.org, and we'll list it here.

WATCH/LISTEN:

- ONGOING – [“The Accessible Stall”](#) podcast by Emily Ladau and Kyle Khachadurian. This podcast keeps it real about issues within the disability community.
- ONGOING— [“Conversations on Showing Up for Kids!”](#) is a regular webcast of the Southern Regional Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. We hope this is an informal time and space for families to learn, share and ask questions. Families, and the professionals who support them, are invited to join the conversation! When you register you will receive a Zoom Link to join the conversation
- ONGOING: The National Dance Institute has a series of [YouTube videos](#) of their inclusive dance program called the DREAM Project (Dancers Realize Excellence through Arts and Movement) that provides children with disabilities the opportunity to dance and perform. In the unique program, children with a wide range of disabilities and a group of age-matched, neuro-typical peers dance in partnership, with the goals of maximizing participation of every child. Each dancer is encouraged to achieve their best through teamwork, creativity, empathy, and discovery, and the program culminates in a performance celebrating every student's talents and achievements.
- 2020 – [“Caregiving Across the Continuum”](#) by THINK+change. A 5-part video series that features insightful stories of caregivers who support their loved ones who are adults with disabilities.
- 2020 – [“Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day”](#) by APD Florida. An overview of the state of Florida's DD Awareness Day 2020, which falls in February.
- 2019 – [“Housing Opportunities that Help Promote Independent Living”](#) and [“Educating Students with Disabilities on SUNY Community College Campuses”](#) by the NY State DD Planning Council.
- 2019 - [“It's All About Attitude”](#) produced by the Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia (UCEDD) Dr. Tracy Rackensperger works at the Institute on Human Development and Disability at UGA as a Public Service Faculty member. Tracy enjoys being outdoors and she is always looking for an adventure.
- 2019 - [“Niko's Story”](#) from Disability Rights Oregon. Niko won an essay contest and was selected for a trip. But when the program learned that Niko experiences autism and uses a letter board to communicate, it withdrew his prize. Niko protested this discrimination with the help of Disability Rights Oregon.
- 2019 - [“Down Syndrome Didn't Stop Me Becoming A Cheerleader”](#) From BORN DIFFERENT. AC's story about being the only collegiate cheerleader in the United States with Down Syndrome.
- 2019 - [“Inclusion Today, Community Living for Life”](#) from Georgetown UCEDD. When Megan Scully's four month old son, Danny, was diagnosed with a developmental disability resulting from genetic brain lesions, two of the first questions she asked the doctors were, "Would he ever go to school?" and "Would he ever make friends?"
- 2018 - [“Everyone Wins When Everyone's Included!”](#) from Informing Families. What inclusion means.
- 2018 - [“Claws and Wings”](#) from the Delaware DD Council. A collection of personal oral histories as shared by 22 disability advocates.
- 2018 - [“My Autistic Friend Explains Autism \(And Why He's Proud to be Autistic\)”](#) by Special Books by Special Kids. Ryan explains why he is proud to advocate for the autism community.
- 2018 - [“Disability Inclusion in the Workplace”](#) from New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. A series of videos dedicated to workplace inclusion.

- 2018 - "[What Women with Autism Want you to Know](#)" from Iris. Learn what a group of women with autism want you to know.
- 2018 - "[Accessibility is for Everyone](#)" from the Nevada DD Council. Accessibility is not a privilege, it's a right. We all know there are laws about making things accessible for people with disabilities, but why is it such a big deal?
- 2018 - "[Redefining Inclusion](#)" from Taishoff Center. What's it like to hire someone with an intellectual or developmental disability? Hear what employers are saying.
- 2017 - "[Hear Me! People with Developmental Disabilities Speak Out](#)" from the Nevada DD Council is a powerful discussion with advocates where they share stigmas they encounter every day, as well as their key relationships, experiences with education, and unique pathways to employment.

Do you have or know of a video or podcast that you would like to be included in our DD Awareness Guide? Send it to NACDD staff!

READ:

- ONGOING - [Pittsverse Magazine](#) is a quarterly publication written exclusively by adults diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder that aims to increase inclusion and broaden the general understanding of autism
- ONGOING – "[It's Time for a Reimagining of Disability Etiquette](#)" by writer and #CripTheVote co-founder Andrew Pulrang. He writes regularly for Forbes.com (including the linked example).
- 2021- "[People with Disabilities Report Fewer Voting Troubles.](#)" By Shawn Heasley of Disability Scoop
- 2021—[Finding Your Way: A Navigation Guide for Wisconsin Families Who Have Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities](#) is designed to help families and professionals navigate the system of care in Wisconsin.
- 2020 – "[100 Women of the Year: Judith Heumann](#)" by Time Magazine. A short profile of one of the community's most influential advocates.
- 2020 – "[Join Fight for Those with Developmental Disabilities](#)" by Chris Muns. An op-ed that summarizes DD Awareness Month's importance for people with I/DD.
- 2020 – "[Random Acts of Kindness Kick Off DDAM](#)" by Stephanie Panny. A news story about a unique type of DDAM event started by the Reaching Beyond Limits organization.
- 2020 – "[Transforming Impossible to Possible: Josh's Journey to Success](#)" by Perspectives Corporation. One of Perspectives Corporation's several long-form success stories that highlights an effective education program in Rhode Island.
- 2020 – "[Student group's workshop aims to overcome barriers](#)" by John Keenan of UNMC. An example of a higher-education program profile with a focus on its participants.
- 2020 – "[The ADA is Turning 30. Here's What You Should Know](#)" by Chia-Yi Hou of The Hill. A good overview that can introduce the ADA to a wider audience.
- 2020 – "[This Craft Brew Pub Thrives, Thanks to a Secret Ingredient: Workers with Disabilities](#)" by David Kelly of the LA Times. An example of a mainstream "human interest" story that highlights the benefits of inclusion over more problematic tropes.
- 2020 – [Resources for Creating an Inclusive Community](#) by The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. A great (and far from the only) example of a resource bank designed for but not limited to distribution among religious communities.

- 2019 – “[What Companies Gain by Including Persons with Disabilities](#)” by Chad Jerdee for the World Economic Forum. An article aimed at the wider business audience.
- 2019 – “[Prosecutor starts first N.J. program to train people with special needs to work in law enforcement](#)” by NJ.com. A news story profiling a few of the members of a unique employment training program.
- 2019 – “[Disabled Workers Shatter Employment Myths](#)” by Roberta Baker of the Laconia Daily Sun.
- 2019 - “[Talking about Healthy Relationships](#)” from Elevatus Training.
- 2018 - “[Stephan Soares’ Story](#)” from Community Access Unlimited. Read Stephan’s story about pursuing his lifelong goal of being a truck driver.
- 2019 - “[Talking about Healthy Relationships](#)” from Elevatus Training.
- 2018 - “[Oh Yes, I CAN Work! Competitive Employment for Persons with Significant Disabilities](#)” In September, the Arizona University Center on Development Disabilities (AzUCD) at Northern Arizona University partnered with the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to host two half-day trainings and a simultaneous webcast designed to advance an interagency approach to the concept that competitive, integrated employment is achievable for people with significant disabilities
- 2018 - “[One Workforce: Inclusive Employment in North Carolina](#),” a digital lookbook from the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- 2018 – “[Self Advocacy Start-Up Toolkit: More Power, More Control Over our Lives!](#)” by Self Advocates Becoming Empowered.
- 2018 – “[Stories of Supported Decision-Making](#)” by the National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making.

Do you have or know of a news article, blog post, personal story, toolkit, etc. that you would like to be included in our DD Awareness Guide? Send to NACDD staff!

PARTICIPATE/PROMOTE:

When an organization is holding a March event, we encourage everyone to promote and share posts about that event even if it’s on the other side of the country! Sharing news and posts about events that are happening around the country can be an effective way to showcase the national scope of DD Awareness Month for your local networks.

While you’ll likely learn about many more events simply through following a wide range of groups on social media, we’ll also list any events that we know about here so that you can plan ahead with posts. If you’re planning a March event, big or small, please let us know if you’d like us to add it to this list!

- **March 2nd DD Awareness & Advocacy Day at the Ohio Statehouse**

Every Ohio Celebrates March as National Developmental Disability Awareness Month. In the first week of March, hundreds of advocates come to the Ohio Statehouse to advocate on issues important to Ohioans with developmental disabilities. Please go to www.ddohio.wordpress.com. Due to the pandemic, all activities will be held virtually.

- **March 4th – National Assistive Technology Awareness Day**

The U.S. Senate is currently passing a bill that will make March 4th the national day to recognize all of the assistive technology specialists, program coordinators, researchers, and organizations who work in this field and help people get access to AT. The hashtag will be #ATAwarenessday, and you can learn more at:

<https://www.ataporg.org/>

- **March 18th – Early Screening of Children for Developmental Delays: How Parents and Providers Can Help.** On Thursday March 18th at 4pm ET Join the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities. Parents, community providers and clinic-based organizations and professionals play a key role in the early identification of young children with developmental delays and the facilitation of early referrals for further evaluation and intervention. When children are not screened early and routinely, opportunities for early identification, referral and intervention are delayed. To register click: kennedykrieger.zoom.us or call 443-923-9592

- **March 21st – World Down Syndrome Day**

The United Nations has declared “3/21” to be World Down Syndrome Day in honor of the date’s number.

Many campaigns and events have grown out of this day, including #lotsofsocks campaign that involves wearing wild and mismatched socks. There are also advocacy events around the globe and a conference at the UN HQ in New York. For more information on all of these events, visit:

<https://www.worlddownsyndromeday2.org/>

<https://www.ds-int.org/world-down-syndrome-day>

- **Looking Forward – April is National Autism Awareness Month**

- **Disability Policy Seminar.** For more information on the Disability Policy Seminar please go to www.disabilitypolicyseminar.org or contact your State DD Council, local ARC chapter; local UCP chapter; local UCEDD, local TASH; or Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered.

Building awareness doesn't end on March 31st! At the beginning of April, we pass the torch to the Autism Society, as they lead the national awareness campaign for autism. They challenge you to #CelebrateDifferences in your community and get involved for NAAM, joining their mission to spread awareness, promote acceptance and ignite change! Share their resources in your classroom or store front, engage your employees in fundraising efforts, or attend an event. Find the option best for you at the Autism Society's NAAM website:

<https://www.autismawarenessmonth.org/>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/AutismSociety>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AutismSociety>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/autismsociety>

COVID-19 Resources

While numerous organizations have created, gathered, and/or promoted COVID-19 (coronavirus) general resources, it's important to share I/DD-specific resources as well given the virus's potential impact on people with compromised immune systems or other such complications that lead to increased risk. A significant percentage of people with I/DD fall into this category, and many more are at risk if the pandemic disrupts the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce or overtaxes the healthcare system.

If it makes sense for you to use DDAM as a context or reason to share DD-specific COVID-19 resources, please go ahead and share away. It is extremely important to counteract the narrative that the virus's danger is overblown because of its low mortality rates with younger adults without previous respiratory issues. The type of person-focused stories that are often shared during DDAM can be an effective complement to these resources, as it can help everyone become better able to view people with I/DD as individuals and not as a group or demographic.

Below are some resources you could start with sharing. For those interested in state-specific resources, we encourage you to contact one of the state's DD Act organizations (the DD Council, Protection and Advocacy, or University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities).

- **Disability-focused Information:** The [ACL COVID-19 page](#) has put together a list of disability-related COVID-19 information and resources. It is updated regularly.
- **Multilingual Information:** The [New Hampshire UCEDD COVID-19](#) page has a bank of multilingual resources and language access contact information.
- **Plain-Language Information:** The Green Mountain Self-Advocates and the Vermont DD Council have [a plain-language guide to COVID-19](#) set at a 3rd-grade reading level.
- **General Information:** The [CDC COVID-19 page](#) is the most reliable source of general information about the virus. It is updated regularly. Some highlighted CDC pages are below:
 - [People at risk for serious illness](#)
 - [Steps to prevent illness](#)
 - [What to do if you are sick](#)
 - [Community mitigation strategies](#)
- **Questions for State/Federal Governments:** A group of U.S. Senators wrote three letters on [accessibility](#), [HCBS](#), and [nursing homes](#) that list out questions that should be asked of government agencies to ensure they take effective action against the pandemic.

- **Medicaid:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have [a list of Frequently Asked Questions and other resources](#) about Medicaid and CHIP programs.
- **Special Education:** The Department of Education's Office of Special Education Services (OSERS) has [a Q&A about providing special education services](#) as more school districts and universities continue to close or suspend classes.
- **Behavioral Health:** For those who are at higher risk of serious illness due to the coronavirus, it is important to manage the anxiety and stress that may be heightened further by quarantining and social distancing. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has [guidance about taking care of your behavioral health](#) during the quarantines of the months ahead.

DD Awareness Month Proclamations

Need help preparing a proclamation for DD Awareness Month?

[Click here to see examples of proclamations and resolutions](#)