

World Physical Therapy Day advice sheet 1

Guide to planning activities

The main goal of any activities you organise for World Physical Therapy Day will be to raise the profile of the physical therapy (physiotherapy) profession, and to demonstrate what physical therapists can do to improve health. Use the day as a platform to promote how the profession is tackling these issues and improving public health.

Before planning any event, or publicity campaign, you'll need to ask four simple questions. You may have to think carefully to come up with the right answers.

What?

What do you really want to achieve? Is it increased public profile for the profession? Is there a particular health education message you want them to absorb? Or do you really want to achieve increased status for the profession among policy makers? The Movement for Health theme has been chosen by WCPT to give you the opportunity to focus on the areas of the profession's work that are most pertinent to your country. But you'll need to decide exactly the issues you want to tackle, and why.

Who?

Who do you really want to get your message through to? You may think it's everyone, but to decide on the right sort of activities, you're going to have to consider who is your main target group. Is it young people, or teachers, or older people, or the general public? Or perhaps your efforts might really be best targeted at the policy makers who as yet do not understand physical therapy or its contribution?

How?

When you've decided on your message, and whom you want to reach, it's time to decide on the best means to reach those people with your message. It might be an event, or some sort of publicity campaign. There are some ideas in the document Ideas for Activities, but you might want to think of your own.

Where?

If you're holding an event, would you like to hold one large event or several smaller ones? Is it better to hire a large space like an auditorium, or hold it in a public place like a shopping centre,

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or visit various small venues? When deciding on a location, do consider parking, transportation, public access, capacity and access for people with disabilities.

Other considerations

Planning

Allocate a team of people responsible for planning the activity, each with a clear role. Together, establish targets for what you want to achieve. You may also want to organise follow-up activities.

Timing

Set a realistic timetable, bearing in mind the following:

- Speakers and contributors may need good notice, and time to prepare
- Venues often need to be booked well in advance
- Invitations need to be sent out at least three weeks in advance
- Publicity materials may take time to get printed
- The media are more likely to cover an event if you notify them in good time

Local interest

Sometimes it's best to keep the theme local and relevant to the people in that community. Gather some local data to ensure the message is directly relevant to the audience and have some statistics available to substantiate issues and problems identified. The day provides a great opportunity for creating community awareness of these problems and how they may be tackled and prevented.

Speakers

Identify local experts, leading physical therapists, academics and celebrities who can support your messages, and can speak on your selected theme at events, or to the press.

Partners and sponsorship

Approach other organisations and companies who you think might enhance your event or campaign, perhaps providing financial support.

Media

The greater the coverage you are able to generate in the press (local, national and professional), the more impact your activity will have. There's further guidance on this in the document *Guide to Publicising Activities*.