

# Animated, Star-Studded Short Film "Bug Therapy" Premieres May 1 to Support Mental Health Awareness Month

*Sterling K. Brown, Meghan Trainor, Jay Leno, Tom Green, Dr. Phil McGraw, Emily Goglia and Jason Reisig Star in Film to Help End Mental Health Stigma*

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2023 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Citronella Stories announces the North American premiere of "[Bug Therapy](#)," a 3-D award-winning, animated short that focuses on mental health. Sterling K. Brown, Meghan Trainor, Jay Leno, Tom Green, Dr. Phil McGraw, Emily Goglia and Jason Reisig all voice characters pushing barriers to destigmatize mental health. [See the trailer](#).



Cintronella, a mosquito who faints at the sight of blood (voiced by Meghan Trainor), consults with Dr. Pill (voiced by Dr. Phil McGraw) in the May 1st premier of "Bug Therapy," a star-studded short film that aims to help eliminate mental health stigma.

In honor of Mental Health Awareness month, "Bug Therapy" will be available at select theaters and on limited virtual platforms at no cost starting May 1. You can [watch the film here](#):

[www.linktr.ee/bugtherapymovie](http://www.linktr.ee/bugtherapymovie).

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*Jessica Cruz, CEO, NAMI CA  
(National Alliance on Mental  
Illness)*

Michael Jann (Emmy-nominated former "Tonight Show with Jay Leno" and "Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon" writer) and Michele Jourdan collaborated on the project to eliminate the stigma attached to mental health and underscore the importance of therapy.

ABC News praised the film saying, “The writers saw comedy as a way to successfully tackle serious issues while sticking to a family-friendly format.”

In "Bug Therapy," Citronella (Trainor), a mosquito who faints at the sight of blood, tries to muster the courage to attend group therapy, led by Dr. Pill (Dr. Phil McGraw), to overcome her phobia. She learns that everyone faces mental health struggles — Stick Bug (Brown) battles depression over never feeling seen, Fly (Leno) is OCD and germophobic and can't stop washing his hands, Grasshopper (Green) suffers from addiction to coffee, Praying Mantis (Goglia) is narcissistic/delusional and believes she's God, Dragonfly couple (film writers Michael Jann and Michele Jourdan) are co-dependent, and Spider (Reisig) tries to overcome his phobia of spiders.

"This film is literally our mission statement to fight the stigma and to change the conversation about mental health," said Jessica Cruz, CEO NAMI CA (National Alliance on Mental Illness). "This could help so many people."

The film, which has received stellar reviews and festival awards, was the recipient of an Epic Games MegaGrant. It is set for a wider theatrical release in June, with a global release scheduled this fall. The filmmakers are also in development creating a full-length feature film, as well as a series, as part of an ever-expanding "Bug Therapy" universe.

The film is animated by 88 Pictures and directed by Jason Reisig ("Smallfoot"). Randy Mills is Producer and Eric Bergman Co-Produces. In addition to being co-creators, Michael Jann and Michele Jourdan of Citronella Stories are Executive Producers, along with Jason Reisig, Randy Mills, and 88 Pictures' Milind D. Shinde.

#### Why An Animated Film on Mental Health?

Animated films continue to break barriers and box office records all over the globe, as evident with 2023 Academy Award®-winner for Best Animated Film "Pinocchio," 2022 Academy Award®-winner for Best Animated Film "Encanto," and "Inside Out," which, like "Bug Therapy," addresses mental health issues in a creative and positive way, and won the 2015 Oscar® for Best Animated

# BUG THERAPY.

"Bug Therapy" is available on special limited online platforms and at select theaters at no cost for the entire month of May in support of Mental Health Awareness Month.



Sterling K. Brown, Meghan Trainor, Jay Leno, Tom Green, Dr. Phil McGraw, Emily Goglia and Jason Reisig voice the quirky, hilarious and loveable cast of bugs in the May 1st premiere of "Bug Therapy."

Film. Due to its popularity, a sequel, "Inside Out 2," is in production and set for release in June 2024. The combined box office earnings of these three films alone stretch well over \$1 billion. Many of these films have taken home multiple Oscar® Awards, Golden Globe® Awards, Grammy® Awards and more. This is a clear demonstration of the massive popularity and global demand for meaningful, captivating, elevated animated genre films like "Bug Therapy."

Michael Jann and Michele Jourdan: "Right now, more people than ever are struggling with mental health challenges. We just wanted to make people laugh and bring the issue to the forefront of conversation with the message, 'Everyone struggles with something, and there's no shame in asking for help.' We're blown away by the amazing stars who instantly jumped on board to make this film as funny and entertaining as it is. Their hilarious performances show 'It's okay to not be okay!'"

How to Watch "Bug Therapy" for Free in May:

The special limited release of "Bug Therapy" across online platforms will begin on May 1st, May Day, an appropriate date as the origin of "Mayday" comes from the French phrase "M'aidez," which means "Help me," and fits with the main messages of the film. "Bug Therapy" will also screen at the NAMI Conference which takes place in Minneapolis, MN from May 24-27, 2023 with encore screenings online June 6-8.

Jann and Jourdan will be screening the film and will share their personal story. NAMIcon will engage, challenge, and include guests in dynamic discussions and inspiring moments — all in the name of mental health awareness, education and advocacy.

Follow "Bug Therapy" on social media @BugTherapyMovie.

Please note: NAMI has a helpline available Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. ET. Connect by phone 800-950-6264 or text "Helpline" to 62640 to speak to someone. For more resources, visit NAMI.org.

Editor's note: Additional assets & Interviews available upon request.

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