

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness month and a good reminder to focus on the importance of mental health and its impact on your well being. Your mental and physical health are equally important components of your overall health. Did you know that depression increases the risk for long-lasting conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and stroke? Similarly, people who suffer with chronic conditions have an increased risk for mental health conditions.

Recognizing the Signs

Most people don't recognize that an underlying mental health problem is why they don't feel well. While each illness has its own symptoms, some common signs of mental illness can include:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and having low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality ("lack of insight" or anosognosia (a condition where someone is unaware of their mental illness and unable to accept it))



- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Thinking about suicide or how others would be “better off” without you
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

Symptoms in children may include:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety (i.e fighting to avoid bed or school)
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent tantrums

Where To Get Help

Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Reach out to your primary care doctor and health insurance as they will have information on resources available to you in your community.

You can also call the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), or text Helpline to 62640. Hours of availability are Monday through Friday 10 AM to 10 PM Eastern Standard Time.

If someone you know is struggling or in a crisis, help is available 24/7 at the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can call or text 988. You can also chat with someone through the website <https://988lifeline.org>.

<https://988lifeline.org/about/>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/how-to-recognize-the-signs-of-mental-health-issues>

<https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;>

