

Mental Health Awareness Month: Education, Advocation and Support



Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, youth mental health and mental illness among adults was increasingly exacerbated; and, a recent study conducted by [Mental Health America](#), reported that 19% of adults experienced a mental illness — resulting in a 1.5 million people increase over last year’s dataset — and 9.7% of youth (12.4% for youth who identify as more than one race) struggle with severe depression.

Amidst the pandemic, youth and adults alike are struggling with the profound impact that grief, isolation, and loss of income has and continues to have on our everyday lives. Now, more than ever, it is crucial to minimize the stigma surrounding mental health and find ways to stay connected.

Know the Signs and Symptoms

Mental illness affects everyone differently and trying to decipher between behaviors and signs isn’t always clear; however, common signs that someone is struggling can include:

- Excessive worrying or fear, including panic attacks
- Continuous depressive, sad or low state of being
- Confused thinking or issues concentrating
- Extreme mood changes and manic episodes
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Difficulties understanding or relating to others
- Avoiding friends or family and social settings
- Difficulty perceiving reality, delusions, or hallucinations
- Overuse and abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Suicidal ideation and/or physical harm
- Inability to complete normal, daily tasks
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes
- Prolonged or intense feelings of irritability or anger

You’re Not Alone

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with one or more mental illnesses. Mental health awareness starts with public education and advocacy, as well as support — to acknowledge that it’s okay to not be okay while creating and providing readily available resources, and treatments because everyone deserves to live healthy, fulfilling lives.

This month, we urge you to get involved and connect with your community to prioritize the mental health of yourself, friends, and loved ones and to focus on supporting one another, and healing in safe ways.

Resources for Help

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline**
 - 800-950-6264 or, in a crisis, text “NAMI” to 741741
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
 - 800-273-8255 or [live chat with 24/7 counselors](#)
- **Mental Health America 24/7 Crisis Center**
 - 1-800-273-8255 or text “MHA” to 741741
- **Mental Health America, Non-Crisis Support**
 - [Find a warmline in your state](#)
- **SAMHSA Treatment Facilities Locator**
 - 1-800-662-4357 or [online locator map](#)
- **Low- To No-Cost Mental Health Treatment Locator**
 - [HRSA Health Centers online locator map](#)