

# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

## What is Mental Health?

The state of our mental health changes over time and is influenced by many factors. This month, it is important to recognize the importance of our mental well-being and how it impacts every area of our lives. To examine our own mental health status, we must first understand what it is and what it means to be mentally healthy.

"Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood." (MentalHealth.gov, 2022)

Our mental health is just as important as our physical health and must be cared for in the same way. Throughout this month, we will focus on ways to maximize and maintain our mental wellness.

## Did you know?

- 21% of U.S. adults live with a mental health condition (1 in 5).
- Anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder are the top 3 mental health diagnoses.
- 15% of U.S. adults reported having a substance use disorder in the past year.
- Individuals who frequently drink alcohol are more likely to be depressed than those who drink in moderation.
- Deaths by suicide are on the rise, with about 1 death every 11 minutes.\*\*\*

## Resources to learn more:

- + MentalHealth.gov
- + National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- + National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- + Mental Health America (MHA)
- + World Health Organization (WHO)
- + American Association of Suicidology (AAS)
- + Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- + National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD)
- + National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

## Contributing Factors to Mental Health:

**Family History:** Some mental health conditions are hereditary, so be curious about your family's history. Ask members of your family about their mental health and stay informed on conditions that could potentially affect you.

**Support:** When life gets tough, having friends, family, and other social support people to turn to is crucial to our emotional and mental well-being. Stay connected to those who uplift you and/or create new relationships.

**Coping Skills:** Identify things to do when sad, overwhelmed, or unable to deal with the present situation. Try and focus on things you can do by yourself, for yourself, that are easily attainable. Healthy coping skills leave us feeling better, not worse.

**Self-Care:** Making time to intentionally focus on our personal needs, interests, and goals is necessary for our overall well-being. Self-care has significant physical and mental impacts.

**Work:** Reduce as much stress as possible in your work environment by evaluating your workload, organizing your time, and creating and implementing professional boundaries.

**Movement:** Regular exercise improves brain functioning and can help alleviate anxiety and depression. Create a workout routine or simply take the stairs whenever possible.

**Food:** What we eat impacts how we feel. A balanced diet of whole and nutritious foods promotes positive mental and physical health. Add as many healthy as you can to your diet.\*

**Media:** High rates of news/social media consumption are linked to increased levels of anxiety and depression. Try and limit how much screen time you spend; moderation is key.\*\*



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