

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



MAY 2024

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



May is Mental Health Awareness Month in the United States. This is a time to draw attention to the importance of mental health and highlight resources that are available to help with mental well-being. Mental illnesses are brain-based conditions. All humans have brains, so everyone is susceptible to having a mental illness at some point in life. Being aware of what signs and symptoms are and what to do if you start to recognize those signs in yourself or someone you know, can make a big difference in getting help and feeling better.

Continued on the next page →



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If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available around the clock. Call or text 988 or go to [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) to live chat with a counselor at any time.

➔ Continued from the previous page

Everyone goes through things in life that can affect mental health — stress from a job, the loss of a loved one, or life changes like having a baby or getting divorced. All of these things and more can cause us to feel and act differently for a short period of time. A mental health concern becomes a problem when the symptoms make it difficult to do daily tasks or you feel unlike yourself for more than 4 weeks.

Common signs of mental illness include:

- Feeling sad or down
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness, low energy, or problems sleeping
- Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia, or hallucinations
- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people
- Problems with alcohol or drug use
- Major changes in eating habits
- Excessive anger, hostility, or violence
- Suicidal thinking

Sometimes signs of mental illness are also physical problems, like ongoing stomach pain, back pain, headaches, or other unexplained aches and pains along with other signs listed above.

Most mental illnesses do not get better on their own. If untreated, they might get worse over time and cause serious problems. You can use the list above to talk to your doctor or other health-care provider about how you are feeling and the many options available for treatment.

If someone you know shows signs of mental distress, talk openly with them about your concerns. You cannot force someone to get professional



care, but you can offer encouragement and support. You can also help your loved one find a qualified mental health professional and make an appointment. You could even offer to take them or go along to the appointment if they would like.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available around the clock. Call or text 988 or go to [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) to live chat with a counselor at any time. You can use this resource for yourself or to discuss your concern for someone else.

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health-awareness-month>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968>

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