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Healthy Insights

INFORMED • ENGAGED • EMPOWERED

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May is Mental Health Awareness Month

What is mental health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act as we go through life. Mental health guides how a person handles stress, relates to others, and makes choices. It is important at every stage of life, from childhood and youth through adulthood.

What are mental illnesses?

Mental illnesses are serious conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood and behavior. These conditions affect a person's daily functions and/or ability to relate to others. Mental illnesses are common: More than 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime.

What's important to remember is that mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable.

Some early warning signs of a problem

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities



- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

Help is available.

If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms, talk to your primary care doctor or another healthcare professional. Studies show that people with mental health problems get better and many recover completely. There are more treatments, services and community support systems than ever before.

How can you improve your mental health?

- Stay positive
- Be physically active
- Connect with others
- Find a sense of meaning and purpose
- Get enough sleep
- Meditate
- Get professional help, if needed



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For more information

If you are in a crisis situation, call any of these help lines:

- Emergency Medical Services—**911**
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or Live Online Chat.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Treatment Referral Helpline, **1-877-SAMHSA, 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**.

Visit the websites of national agencies and advocacy and professional organizations

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America www.adaa.org
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance www.dbsalliance.org
- Mental Health America www.mentalhealthamerica.net
- National Alliance on Mental Illness www.nami.org
- You may also want to check the website of your state or county government and search for the health services department.

IPRO Healthy Insights is authored by Dr. Clare Bradley, IPRO's Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer, and a nationally recognized public health advocate.

IPRO is a non-profit organization that works with government agencies, providers and patients to measure and improve healthcare for all. For over 30 years we've made creative use of clinical expertise, emerging technology and data system solutions to make the healthcare system work better.