HELPING HANDS

Mental Health Month

(Compiled with the help of ChatGPT)

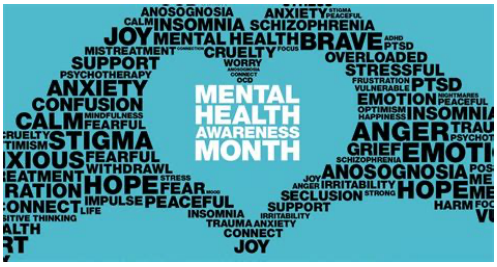


Mental health awareness is an effort to improve understanding of mental health conditions and to understand what support is available. When we talk openly about mental health, we normalize the experience. We create spaces where individuals feel safe sharing their struggles without fear of judgment. The first step toward early intervention is important and can be the difference between enduring a crisis and effectively managing a condition.

By staying aware of symptoms and familiarizing ourselves with treatment options, we not only prepare ourselves to face unexpected hurdles, but we also gain the tools to better support the friends, family, and colleagues around us.

Practical Tips for Your Wellbeing

Building resilience and emotional wellbeing is a daily practice, not a destination. Here are a few manageable ways to integrate selfcare into your routine this month:



- **Practice Self Compassion:** Be as kind to yourself as you would be to a dear friend. Acknowledge that it is okay to have bad days and that progress is not always linear.
- **Prioritize Boundaries:** Protecting your mental energy is essential. Learn to say no to commitments that overwhelm you and prioritize activities that replenish your resources.
- **Connect with Nature:** Spend time outdoors. Whether it is a brief walk in a nearby park or simply sitting in a quiet garden, nature has a profound, scientifically backed capacity to reduce stress and improve mood.
- **Check In on Yourself and Others:** Regularly assess how you are feeling. Likewise, reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while. A simple "how are you really doing?" can foster deep connection and provide much needed support.
- **Engage in Mindful Activities:** Dedicate time to activities that anchor you in the present moment, such as meditation, yoga, or creative hobbies like journaling, painting, or listening to music.

As we move through this month, set one or two small achievable selfcare goals. Place them where you will see them daily as a reminder of your commitment to yourself. Remember, prioritizing your mental health is not a sign of weakness it is an act of profound strength and self-awareness.

As a part of a community let us continue to support one another, not just this month, but every day of the year.

If you or someone you know is struggling, remember that there is support available. You do not have to carry the weight alone. Reach out to a mental health professional, a trusted friend, or a community resource. Selfcare is an overlooked part of our total health picture and involves taking intentional steps to protect and improve your health. It does not have to be an additional duty, rather it can be quick intentional breaks throughout the day. Selfcare is not selfish or a luxury. It is an important part of maintaining physical health, emotional wellbeing, and the ability to manage life's challenges.

Mental Health Awareness Month: Top 3 Resources for Support and WellBeing

Mental Health Awareness Month is an opportunity to promote emotional wellbeing, reduce stigma, and encourage people to seek help when they need it. Whether you are experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, or supporting a loved one, reliable resources can help you take positive steps toward better mental health. The following three resources offer education, support, and access to professional services.

1. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Website: https://www.nami.org

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is one of the nation's leading organizations dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by mental health conditions. NAMI provides educational materials, support groups, advocacy programs, and information for individuals and families. Its resources can help people better understand mental illness, recognize the importance of treatment, and connect with others who have similar experiences. NAMI also promotes awareness campaigns that encourage open conversations and challenge the stigma surrounding mental health. It is an excellent starting point for individuals seeking information or support for themselves or someone they care about.

2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Website: https://www.samhsa.gov

SAMHSA provides trusted information about mental health, substance use, prevention, and treatment. Its Mental Health Awareness Month resources include educational materials, awareness campaign tools, and guidance for starting supportive conversations. Individuals looking for professional assistance can visit FindSupport.gov to learn about treatment options and how to access care. FindTreatment.gov can help locate mental health and substance use treatment facilities. These resources are especially useful for employees and families who need practical guidance on finding appropriate services.

3. 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Website: https://988lifeline.org

Call or text: 988

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides free, confidential support around the clock for people experiencing emotional distress, mental health struggles, or suicidal thoughts. Individuals can call or text 988 or use the online chat service. You do not have to wait until a situation becomes an emergency to reach out. This resource can also help people concerned about a friend or family member determine their next steps. Sharing 988 information can help ensure that support is available when someone needs it most.



IAM Peer
Employee
Assistance Program

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peers do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations; they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experience.

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Helping Others

If you think a friend may be experiencing a mental health issue, reach out with compassion and concern. Listen without judgment, offer support, and let them know they are not alone. Avoid minimizing their feelings or rushing to provide solutions. Encourage them to seek professional help through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), counselor, or healthcare provider. Check in regularly and offer practical assistance. If they are in immediate danger, contact emergency services or a crisis hotline for help.