The Importance of Mental Health

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Mental health is a huge issue in the United States and there are shocking statistics to prove it. When we consider the fact that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 in 5 adults experience at least one mental health condition every year, it's hard to deny that we need to be making mental health awareness more of a priority.

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overcome the barriers that have been put up that keep us from addressing mental health in a positive, productive way. You should regularly grant yourself the permission to tune in to yourself and consider your overall mental health so you can best address your needs.

Mental health awareness might be one of the most pressing issues we're currently facing in the healthcare industry as a whole, which is why there's a national movement to celebrate mental health awareness every May. Fighting the stigma, providing support and resources to struggling individuals and their loved ones, and advocating for policy changes are all integral parts of mental health awareness month.

Why is Mental Health Important?

Mental health is more important now than ever before; it impacts every area of our lives. The importance of good mental health ripples into everything we do, think, or say.

Reasons to care for mental health

Maintaining a positive mental health and treating any mental health conditions is crucial to stabilizing constructive behaviors, emotions, and thoughts. Focusing on mental health care can increase productivity, enhance our self-image, and improve relationships.

Nurturing mental health doesn't just improve our daily functioning, but it can also help us control — or at least combat — some of the physical health problems directly linked to mental health conditions. For example, heart disease and stress are related, so managing stress might have a positive outcome on heart disease.

Other benefits of taking care of our mental health can include:

- Improving our mood
- Reducing our anxiety
- Creating an enhanced sense of inner peace
- Thinking more clearly
- Improving our relationships
- Increasing our self-esteem

> **"Our mental health is something that impacts our eating and sleeping habits and has a lot to do with our physical health as well. It is important to address our mental health needs, or oftentimes we will feel the impact of it in other areas of our health as well."**
>
> **Talkspace therapist Bisma Anwar, LMHC**

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daily basis. Mental health is a major factor when we make difficult choices, deal with stress, and relate to other people in our world.

Yet, mental health isn't just something we can deal with once and then get over. It's important in every stage of our life. From infancy all the way into adulthood — mental health is something we need to be cognizant of and handle with care.

Having a solid foundation when it comes to mental health means you can:

- Have productive, healthy relationships
- Cope with daily stress in life
- Establish a positive sense of self
- Stay motivated and physically active, and healthy
- Be more productive at work and school
- Make meaningful connections and contributions to the community
- Realize and work towards achieving your full potential

Why Should We Spread Mental Health Awareness?

By making a concerted effort to spread mental health awareness, we can work to de-stigmatize how we think about, approach, and identify mental health issues in our society.

Having those tough conversations and admitting there's a problem means we can come up with a solution. We can start removing the shame and fear that's often associated with topics surrounding mental health. Doing so can increase the likelihood of someone reaching out when they need help.

Asking for help is a sign of strength. Working together allows us to begin building a foundation that respects and honors the importance of good mental health.

Another benefit to focusing on mental health awareness is that it can make signs and symptoms of certain conditions more well-known. Early intervention is predictive of how successful mental health treatment will be for many conditions. The earlier someone is diagnosed and begins treatment, the more likely it is that they'll be able to manage their condition and improve their mental health.

Know the signs. Take our **free** mental health test

What Are the Most Common Mental Health Conditions?

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There are countless mental health conditions, and some are more common than others. According to the Anxiety & Depression Association of America, anxiety disorders are the most common mental health conditions in the United States. More than 40 million adults in the United States have an anxiety disorder, but less than 37% of people actually seek mental health treatment for their symptoms.

Other common mental health conditions include:

- Depression
- Panic disorder
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Eating disorders

> **"Some of the most common mental health conditions include depression, anxiety, PTSD, psychotic disorders, and personality disorders."**
>
> Talkspace therapist Bisma Anwar, LMHC

What Are Different Factors That Influence Mental Health?

There are so many factors that can influence mental health that it can be difficult to fully address them all. First, we want to identify the things that can have a beneficial impact on your mental wellbeing.

The following have the potential to positively affect mental stability and health:

- Seeking therapy
- Journaling
- Practicing mindfulness — like mindfulness meditation
- Exercise
- Yoga or low impact exercise
- Learning to communicate effectively can be great for mental health and emotional health

There are some factors that can negatively influence mental stability and health as well, including:

- Past trauma, abuse, or neglect
- Long-term and/or severe stress
- Social isolation
- Loneliness
- Bereavement

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- Social disadvantages
- Poverty or significant debt
- Unemployment
- A breakup or divorce
- Dysfunctional family life

How to Get Help For Mental Health

Wondering how to improve your mental health? If you or someone you care about needs mental health help, know that it's available. Remember that the earlier you treat a mental health condition, the better the chances are that treatment will be successful. You can find help through individual or family therapy, support groups, online services, community clinics, or by asking a friend or family member to assist you.

If you're in crisis or if you're experiencing suicidal ideation, you should seek help immediately. You can call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, which is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The hotline is a national network of crisis centers all over the United States. They offer confidential and free emotional support to anyone in need who's experiencing a suicidal crisis.

Sources:

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Bisma Anwar is a Licensed Mental Health counselor. She has a Master of Education and a Master of Arts degree in Psychological Counseling from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her areas of expertise include depression and anxiety, stress management, and cognitive behavioral and dialectical behavioral therapy. Bisma has extensive experience counseling children, teens, and adults from diverse backgrounds and helping them deal with various life issues. Bisma currently works at Mount Sinai Hospital in the Psychiatric Department as a therapist and has a podcast called Therappuccino where she addresses various issues related to mental health.

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