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MAY: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month in the United States. This is the month where we are urged to recognize mental illness and to reduce the stigma of mental health treatment. The CDC states that on a year-to-year basis, 1 in 5 Americans experience a mental illness. Despite ongoing advances in research, treatment, and awareness efforts, there is still much work to be done.

As we find ourselves in this unprecedented pandemic, new concerns are arising about mental illness.



According to a recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 45 percent of adults in the United States report that their mental health has been negatively affected by worry and stress caused by the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

The designation of May as Mental Health Awareness Month is necessary to promote a more positive, proactive approach to mental illness. Read below for how you can help raise awareness for this issue.

SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN HELP RAISE AWARENESS

- Educate yourself about mental health. Learn the general signs and symptoms of various mental health illnesses. Mental Health First Aid is a skills-based training course which can help you identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses.
- Use social media as a platform for forums to be open-minded and inquisitive when it comes to mental health. Starting conversations is an opportunity for you to share and learn.
- Encourage kind language revolving around mental illness to help reduce stigma. Allowing space for others to use disparaging words or phrases negatively impacts the movement.
- Talk about mental health more openly. Speak with others around you and encourage them to speak freely about their experience.
- Nurture your own mental health. Be active in self-care efforts of your daily life.