Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by Ronstadt Insurance

WHAT TO KNOW DURING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH AND BEYOND

Your mental health includes how you think, feel and act, as well as your emotional and social well-being. Mental health can change over time, depending on factors like workload, stress and work-life balance.

Mental Health Awareness Month is a national movement in May to increase awareness about mental health, fight the stigma, celebrate recovery, and support Americans with mental illness and their families. The observance was established by Mental Health America in 1949.

This article explores mental health in America and ways you can care for your mental health, take steps toward recovery and support others.

Mental Health in America

Millions of people in the United States are affected by mental illness each year. In fact, mental illnesses are some of the most common health conditions in the United States. Consider the following statistics from the National Alliance on Mental Illness:

- One in 5 adults will experience a mental illness in a given year.
- One in 25 adults lives with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression.
- Nearly 50% of people with a mental illness receive treatment.

Taking Care of Yourself

Your mental health can affect your overall well-being. For example, poor mental health can hinder your ability to think clearly, make healthy lifestyle choices and combat chronic disease. Here are some strategies to help you thrive year-round:

- **Create healthy routines.** Healthy routines include eating a nutrient-rich diet, exercising and getting enough sleep.

- **Own your feelings.** Getting caught up in emotions can be easy as you're feeling them. Taking the time to identify what you're feeling can help you better cope with challenging situations.

- **Learn your triggers.** Knowing what you negatively respond to can help you keep track of and be aware of how you react.

- **Connect with others.** Connections help enrich your life and power you through challenging times. It's important to spend time with your loved ones.

- **Cultivate gratitude.** Practicing gratitude is linked to improved mental health. Consider keeping a gratitude journal, meditating or making a point to thank people in your life.

- **Practice self-care.** Self-care techniques focused on relaxation or movement can help soothe negative symptoms of mental illness.

Mental health plays a vital role in your overall health and well-being. Awareness and adopting healthy coping strategies can help you manage your mental health.

Supporting Others

It's essential to talk openly about mental health to help reduce the stigma associated with it. Consider the following actions you can take to support others:

- **Educate yourself and listen.** Proactively learn about mental health issues, stigmas and obstacles to gain a deeper understanding of the societal changes needed. Listening is also key. Once armed with mental health details, you can help spread factual and important information.

- **Be an advocate.** Visibility and representation are vital, so speak up about mental health and support. Mental Health Awareness Month is the perfect time to start the mental health conversations you've been wanting to have with loved ones. Speak up in the workplace and the community.

- **Volunteer.** Volunteering is a great way to be a better mental health advocate. Search for opportunities at local mental health organizations or attend related events. Not only will you actively help others, but you will also have a chance to engage with the community as a mental health ally.

It comes down to treating everyone with dignity and respect and offering support and encouragement.

Getting Help

Mental health treatment—whether therapy, medication or self-care—has made recovery from or management of disorders a reality for most people experiencing mental illness. Although taking that first step to recovery can be challenging when you're struggling, it's imperative to start exploring treatment options. If you have concerns about mental health:

- Contact a doctor or mental health professional.
- Call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's **National Helpline** at 800-662-HELP (4357) for referrals to treatment facilities, support groups and community-based organizations. This resource is confidential and available 24/7.
- Call or text 988 to reach the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** to be connected to trained counselors who will listen, provide support, connect you to community resources or dispatch emergency services if necessary. This is another 24/7 confidential resource available in English and Spanish.

Mental Health Awareness Month is a great time to check in on yourself and your loved ones. Remember that no one is alone.

Contact us for additional mental health resources.