



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Internal Awareness Resources

Purpose
Messaging
Mental Health and Workplace Stress
Resources
Example Proclamation

Did You Know? and Other Facts
Activity Calendar



TOOL KIT PURPOSE

This tool kit is designed with the purpose to promote awareness of Mental Health, which is recognized annually in the month of May. The tools provided ensure you will have a foundation to *Rec the Stigma* related to mental health and create opportunities to promote mental health awareness within your communities and internal work areas.

Included in this tool kit you will find a fact sheet on mental health, key messages related to mental health, a “Did you know?” section, an example mental health proclamation, additional resources for

self-assessments, wellbeing questionnaires, employee assistance program resources and a fun calendar of activities for the month of May.

Let us *Rec the Stigma* and share with others that it is ok to talk about it. Mental Health is health and you are not alone.

KEY MESSAGING

During “May is Mental Health Awareness Month,” it is critical that we huddle as one municipal team, and offer support to our fellow team member, to ensure that we prioritize mental health, well-being and mindfulness in our service to our community.

This toolkit, when practiced, offers key insights and helpful tools for municipalities, across the board, in every department, to assess and improve their holistic health – mental, social and physical well-being.

Parks and recreation professionals find themselves at the epicenter of public and community initiatives, programs, and services that affect the culture of health in a community. While ensuring critical public services such as safety, accessibility, and promoting inclusive environments for residents, often times our own personal mental and physical health take a backseat. That is why it is important as public servants that while we take care of the “we” in our community, you don’t forget to take care of the “me”. Your mental **and** physical health are important!

MENTAL HEALTH & WORKPLACE STRESS

Stress is a natural reaction to life experiences. Everyone experiences varying levels of stress from time to time; anything from family situations to work-life have the potential to elevate stress. Research shows that that short-term stress can actually be beneficial helping to boost performance and strengthen the immune response. Most recently, many public servants find themselves dealing with a multitude of new daily decisions and additional long-term stressors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the [American Psychological Association](#), long-term chronic workplace stress can be emotionally and physically harmful to your health. Some symptoms of chronic stress may include increase irritability, anxiety, depression, headaches, and insomnia. The following factors have been shown to be common sources of workplace stress:

- Low salary
- Excessive workload
- Few opportunities for growth or advancement
- Work is not engaging or challenging
- Lack of social support
- Little control over job-related decisions
- Conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations

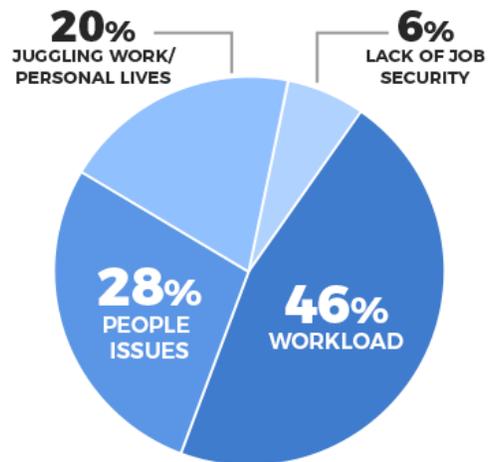
The connection to mental and physical health is important and worth learning more about. If you have experience one or more of the common workplace stressors above for an extend period of time, you many to need to examine your stress levels and take action to reduce your risk of experiencing negative health outcomes associated with chronic stress.

Assess your Stress & Well-being

The [AIS Workplace Stress Survey](#) was developed in 1998 to serve as a simple screening measure to determine the need for further investigation with more comprehensive assessments.

Online screening is the quickest way to determine if you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition Take the free mental health screening provided by [Mental Health America](#). After the screening you are provided with information, resources, and tools to help you understand and improve your mental health.

Main Causes of Stress



Source: EAP provider ComPsych's first half of 2006 StressPulse Survey.

Effects of Mental Health in the Workplace

Research shows that employees miss work more often due to stress and anxiety than physical injury or illness. Mental illness leads to more lost workdays than chronic conditions such as arthritis, asthma, and diabetes. According to the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), depression causes an estimated 200 million lost workdays each year at the cost of \$17 billion to \$44 billion to employers. Half of the employees with depression are untreated. Poor employee mental health can translate to several organization issues:

- Increase healthcare costs
- High Turnover Rates
- Low employee engagement or morale
- High Absenteeism or [Presenteeism](#)
- Reduce productivity
- Lower company reputation

Take Action: Create a Culture Supportive of Employee Mental Health

Creating a workplace environment supportive of mental health is as important as ensuring employee physical well-being. All levels of the organization have a role to play. By taking action to improve workplace culture and implement strategies supportive of mental health, parks and recreation agencies can work to mitigate the potential risks and effects of poor mental health can have on their employees.

Free Workplace Mental Health Planning Resources

[Right Direction](#) - Right Direction is a first-of-its-kind initiative that gives employers the tools they need to address depression in the workplace.

[CDC Workplace Health Solutions](#) - CDC provides national leadership and support for employee health, safety, and well-being in the worksite setting.

[National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) - is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

[American Institute of Stress](#) - their mission is to improve the mental and physical health of the community and the world by setting the standard of excellence of stress management in education, research, clinical care, home life and the workplace.

[Mental Health America](#) - nation's leading non-profit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and promoting the overall mental health for all.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

What is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems. Most cities/counties have some type of EAP and may provide some of the services outlined below for free or at a discounted rate for your and even your family.

EAP provides critical support for serious issues.

COUNSELING SERVICES Anxiety and stress Depression Grief Parenting Drug or alcohol abuse Relationships – individual, marital, and family	FAMILY CAREGIVING SERVICES Prenatal care Daycare/summer camps Special needs services Assisted living In-home care Transportation services
LEGAL SERVICES Adoption Bankruptcy Child custody Criminal issues Divorce Estate Planning Real estate Mediation	FINANCIAL SERVICES Bankruptcy alternatives Budgeting Credit issues Identity theft Education funding Income taxes Mortgages

Benefits of using your EAP

- Encourage a positive work environment - decrease stress-caused issues
- Free - counseling and life management services are generally free or low cost
- Confidentiality - services are confidential and will not be discussed with employer
- Family members are eligible - EAP is available to you and all members of your household
- Smart growth tool - personal and professional growth tools to help you regain balance in life

**[Example] PROCLAMATION DECLARING MAY 2023
AS “MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH”**

WHEREAS, mental health is part of overall holistic health; and

WHEREAS, one in five adults experience a mental health problem in any given year; and

WHEREAS, approximately one-half of chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14 and three-quarters by age 24; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the 2nd leading cause of death among young adults, and 90% of people who die by suicide have an underlying mental illness; and

WHEREAS, text messages to the federal disaster distress hotline increased 1,000% in 2020; and,

WHEREAS, many Americans and Floridians are experiencing mental health challenges that they have never experienced before and need assistance to navigate the mental health system; and

WHEREAS, this does not include the significant ripple effect on their families and friends. The impact of mental illness reaches families, neighborhoods, schools, the workplaces; and

WHEREAS, an important part of educating the community and erasing stigma is raising awareness around the fact that mental health services are inclusive of other services besides a therapist or a medication prescriber. Mental health services include services and supports that help individuals with mental illness recover holistically, inclusive of their social, vocational, and community contributions; and

WHEREAS, mental health services support not only the individuals who live with a mental illness, but also are beneficial to their families, friends and the community at large by decreasing homelessness, hospitalizations, and criminalization of the mentally ill - all of which impose a significant emotional, mental and financial cost to our community; and

WHEREAS, each business, school, government agency, healthcare provider, organization, park and recreation agency, and citizen share the burden of mental illnesses and have a responsibility to promote mental wellness and support prevention efforts; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, _____, _____ of the _____, do hereby proclaim May 2023 as Mental Health Awareness Month, and call upon the citizens, government agencies, park and recreation agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools in _____, to recommit our community to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health, and the steps our citizens can take to shine a light on mental illness, fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for equal care.

DID YOU KNOW

This section provides some facts that you can use to get people's attention, start conversations, and begin to break down the barrier that stop us from talking to each other about these topics. It is suggested that you provide the resource link accompanying any statement from this list. Use the sources list at the top to get these facts straight from the source.

Sources: nimh.gov, cdc.gov, afsp.org, floridasuicideprevention.org, nami.org, ncadv.org, who.int, state.sc.us, ncfrp.org

- Major Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the U.S.
- Percent of physician office visits with depression indicated on the medical record: 10.6%
- Percent of Emergency Department visits with depression indicated on medical record: 11.2%
- Research suggests that depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental and psychological factors.
- In 2019, 12 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.5 million planned a suicide attempt, and 1.4 million attempted suicide.
- 10.3% of Americans have thought about suicide
- There are 1.38 million suicide attempts annually.
- In Florida, suicide is the 8th leading cause of death.
- In Florida, suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for those ages 10-24
- In Florida, one person dies of suicide every two hours.
- Men die by suicide almost 4X more often than women.
- Anxiety is the most common mental health disorder in the U.S.
- One in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner contact sexual violence, and/or intimate partner stalking.
- One in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner.
- The first 72 hours when a victim of domestic violence leaves is the most dangerous because the batterer is looking for them.
- 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.
- One in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence.
- We must make a shift in our perspectives toward trauma. Rather than asking "What's wrong with you" must be replaced with "What happened to you."
- Once we shift the perspective to "What happened to you," we must then shift toward a healing centered to trauma, "What's right with you."
- Adverse childhood experiences - ACEs - are categorized by abuse (psychological, physical, sexual), household dysfunction (substance use, parental separation/divorce, mental illness, domestic violence or imprisoned household member, and neglect (emotional or physical). ACEs are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today.
- In a Kaiser Permanente study, 68 % of Americans have experienced one or more ACE.
- In the same study, 26% of Americans have experienced 3 or more ACEs.

- About every 16.6 minutes, someone in this country intentionally ends his/her life.
- 60% of us will personally know someone who dies by suicide.
- Myth: Suicidal people are fully intent on dying. Fact: Most suicidal people are undecided about living or dying – which is called suicidal ambivalence.
- Myth: Males are more likely to be suicidal. Fact: Men COMPLETE suicide more than women. However, women attempt suicide three times more often than men.
- Myth: Suicide occurs in great numbers around holidays in November and December. Fact: Highest rates of suicide are in April while the lowest rates are in December.
- Most suicidal people don't really want to die – they just want their pain to end.
- About 80% of the time people who kill themselves have given definite signals or talked about suicide.
- Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.
- There are an estimated 6 million people with Alzheimer's Disease.
- By 2050, it is projected there will be 13 million with Dementia.
- IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
 - 70% of Americans report the economy is now a significant source of stress, compared to 46% in 2019.
 - 1/3 of Americans have displayed clinical signs of anxiety, depression or both since the pandemic began.
 - 18% of Americans report they had experienced anxiety, depression or both since the pandemic began, compared to 9% in 2019.
 - Text messages to a federal disaster distress hotline run by Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration increased 1,000% (20,000 in April 2020 compared to 1,790 in April 2019).

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

May 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Get ready and invite others to join	2 Take your lunch break in a park	3 Complete a random act of kindness	4 Start a journal	5 Have coffee/tea with a	6 Take 5 minutes of silence and just breathe	7 Start a new book. Read it OUTSIDE.
8 Explore a new park or beach	9 Look around and notice 5 things meaningful	10 Take a yoga or meditation class	11 Share an inspiring quote with others to give them a boost	12 Keep doing your BEST	13 Complete 20 minutes of outdoor cardio	14 Take a Kayak or Canoe adventure
15 Take in a Sunset	16 Compliment a co- worker	17 Eat a healthy snack or meal	18 Play a game	19 Show gratitude	20 Self-reflect	21 Take your 4-legged friend to a dog park
22 Watch the Sun Rise	23 Learn something NEW	24 Eat your lunch outside	25 Make a list of things you love about yourself	26 Bird watch in a local park.	27 Make a plan with an old friend or coworker	28 Just sit in a park and notice all you observe. Take in the fresh air.
29 Plant a garden or visit a community garden	30 Take time to reflect on your journey and how you can make positive changes for	31 Have a device free day!				

REC THE STIGMA: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH