



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

External Awareness Resources

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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 create opportunities to promote mental health awareness within your community.

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, well-being questionnaires,

employee assistance program resources, and ideas for activities for the month of May.

KEY MESSAGING

The External outreach theme is *Take Time for You* and offers resources for agencies to grab and use when communicating with their community at large. You are encouraged to find ways to celebrate May is Mental Health Awareness Month with your community and the toolkit items below will help you in making these plans.

During “May is Mental Health Awareness Month,” we wish to prioritize mental health, well-being, and mindfulness in our service to our community.

This toolkit offers key insights and helpful resources for cities and counties to assess and improve their holistic health – mental, social, and physical well-being offerings to their community.

LINK BETWEEN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

This toolkit was developed and driven in response to a community, world-wide, who, whether pandemic-produced or otherwise, is experiencing mental health issues/obstacles in this ever-changing world. Parks and recreation agencies are poised perfectly to offer a holistic approach to improving mental health; we are the very “connectors” to provide our guests with ways in which to improve their mental health. Science has shown that the body is meant to move; whether that is a walk in a park, a run along a beautiful trail, or a rigorous workout in a City fitness center, movement benefits the well-being and mental health of us all. Parks and recreation is in a perfect position to offer these programs and more to our guests as we collectively strive to improve the mindfulness and holistic health (physical, social and mental) for our communities.

Mental health and physical health are fundamentally linked. People living with a serious mental illness are at higher risk of experiencing a wide range of chronic physical conditions. Conversely, people living with chronic physical health conditions experience depression and anxiety at twice the rate of the general population. Co-existing mental and physical conditions can diminish quality of life and lead to longer illness duration and worse health outcomes. This situation also generates economic costs to society due to lost work productivity and increased health service use.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Web resources – specific links to toolkits, resources, services available; ideas for community mental health, etc.

Mental Health America

[Public Policy](#)

[We Build Our Community, And Then It Builds Us](#)

Centers for Disease Control

[Public Mental Health Data](#)

[Mental Health Quiz](#)

[Youth and Adolescent Mental Health](#)

National Institute of Mental Health

[Community Education and Awareness](#)

[Shareable Resources on Coping with COVID19](#)

[Addressing Disparities: Advancing Mental Health Care for All Americans](#)

MentalHealth.gov

[Local Organizations With Mental Health Expertise](#)

[Talk About Mental Health](#)

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

[Evidence – Based Resources](#)

National Alliance On Mental Illness

[The Importance of Community and Mental Health](#)

[NRPA's Mental Health Language Guide and Abridged Guide](#) – National Recreation and Park Association's partnered project.

IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Lunch and Learns

- Healthy Brain Strategies; How to Prevent Cognitive Decline
- Conscious Eating – Eat Well to Feel Well
- Trauma Informed Care
- What is a Bully and How Can One Impact Your Life and Well-Being?

Interactive Bingo Card

- [Example from Port St Lucie](#)

Book/Podcast Club

- Browse the series at my-NA.com/Videos or YouTube.com/myNaturalAwakenings.
 - Topics include:
 - Nutrition for Managing Diabetes & A Healthy Gut
 - Acupuncture to Ease Stress
 - Boosting the Immune System
 - Finding Balance in Uncertain Times
 - Heart Health: Leg Pain & Varicose Veins
 - Healthy Kids
 - Leverage Your Subconscious to Find Your Happy Place
 - Teach Kids to Meditate
 - Tools for Happiness, and so many more!
- **Book Club – group read book ideas:**
 - A Walk in the Wood: Meditations on Mindfulness with a Bear Named Pooh, by Dr. Joseph Parent.
 - The Little Old Lady Who Broke All the Rules, by Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg
 - Where the Forest Meets the Stars, by Glendy Vanderah
 - Positive Shift: Mastering Mindset to Improve Happiness, Health & Longevity, by Catherine Sanderson
 - I Am Enough, by Grace Byers
 - Right Now, I Am Fine, by Daniela Owen
 - No One Ever Asked, by Katie Ganshert
 - The Anxiety Check-In: A Guided Journal to Support Your Mental Health and Help You Through the Hard Days, by Bree Cartwright

- Podcast suggestions
 - [The Happiness Lab](#)
 - [More](#)

Support group ideas

- Healing in Nature
- Substance Abuse Recovery Groups
- Grief & Loss: Relationships/bereavement/employment
- Stress Management Therapy Group
- Grief Group.... for parents who have lost a child

Free classes or programs – partnering with existing instructors, staff guided walks or gathering times

- Outdoor Yoga in City Parks
- Zumba
- Brain Fitness
- Functional Training
- Guided Fitness Walks along City Trails
- Forest Bathing – [example program from St Petersburg](#)
- 2021 ‘May is Mental Health Awareness Month’ [Example flyer from Port St Lucie](#)

Plan a mental health checkup day event – free blood pressure checks, mind body guides, self-checklists (from reputable source), etc.

Partner with City-operated Employee Health Clinics or Insurance groups to see what types of mental health check-up offerings they could bring at City events.

MARKETING ITEMS FOR AN AGENCY TO UTILIZE

- Icons for brochure, fliers, social media at <https://www.frpa.org/mbr/mentalhealth>
- Theme: *Take Time for You*
- Newsletter messages and articles (EX. <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/November-2019/The-Importance-of-Community-and-Mental-Health>)
- Social media posts, messages, hashtags
 - Utilize some of the messages throughout this toolkit to highlight facts.
 - Popular hashtags include: #mentalhealthawareness, #mentalhealthmatters, #mentalhealthadvocate, #mentalhealthrecovery, #mentalhealthawarenessmonth,
- QR codes with landing pages to list of resources

- [5 Key Guidelines for Talking About Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder \(SUD\)](#)

OTHER IDEAS FOR EVENTS/PROGRAMS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

- Survey the community on what they feel is the biggest need regarding their MH ([example provided](#))
- Provide safe space in center or park and offer support groups
- Newsletter providing tips, statistics, opportunities, etc.

**[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, ncfp.org

- 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).
- 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 people with Dementia.

EXAMPLE 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!				

TAKE TIME FOR YOU:
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH