

October 2018: Mental Health Observances

Health Literacy Month

What is Mental Health Literacy?

Mental health literacy is defined as the “knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management, and prevention.”¹ This includes the knowledge and skills that increase the understanding of behavioral health disorders, reduce stigma, help recognize and prevent mental disorders, and encourage access to care on the pathway to recovery.

Mental Health Facts

- 1 in 5 Americans struggle with mental health related issues
- 1 in 17 Americans live with serious mental illness, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder²

Health Literacy Facts

- Recent research continues to show that poor health literacy is related to negative health outcomes, including increased rates of chronic illness; decreased use of health services; increased healthcare costs; and early mortality.^{3,4}

How to Promote Mental Health Literacy⁵

The importance of improved health literacy, especially in underserved and rural areas, cannot be underestimated. Low health literacy contributes to low adherence to medications.

Specific ways to improve health literacy include:

- Identify intended users of health information and services
- Structure information in a way that is appropriate for users and easy to use
- Avoid medical terminology and use plain language
- Evaluate users’ understanding before, during, and after introduction of information and services

Reducing Stigma⁶

- Talk openly about mental health
- Educate yourself and others
- Be conscious of language
- Show compassion for those with a mental health condition
- Be honest about treatment
- Encourage equality between physical and mental health conditions

Resources for Health Literacy Month:

Health Literacy Month Website: <http://www.healthliteracymonth.org/health-literacy-heroes/>

Quick Guide to Health Literacy:

<https://health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/healthinfo.htm>

Reducing Mental Health Stigma: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/October-2017/9-Ways-to-Fight-Mental-Health-Stigma>

References:

1. Reavley NJ and Jorm AF. Public recognition of mental disorders and beliefs about treatment: changes in Australia over 16 years. Br J Psychiatry. 2012; 200: 419-26.
2. National Alliance on Mental Illness. Mental Health Conditions. Date of access 28 Sep 2018. Available from: <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions>
3. Kutcher S, Wei Y, and Coniglio C. Mental health literacy: past, present, and future. Can J Psychiatry. 2016; 62(3): 154-58.
4. Berkman ND, Sheridan SL, Donahue KE, et al. Low health literacy and health outcomes: and updated systematic review. Ann Intern Med. 2011;155(2):97-107.
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Quick guide to health literacy. Date of access 28 Sept 2018. Available from: <https://health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/healthinfo.htm>.
6. Greenstein, L. National Alliance on Mental Illness. 9 ways to fight mental health stigma.2018 [Date of access 28 Sept 2018]. Available from: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/October-2017/9-Ways-to-Fight-Mental-Health-Stigma>
7. Osborne H. October is Health Literacy Month. Date of access 28 Sep 2018. Available from <http://www.healthliteracymonth.org/health-literacy-heroes/>

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Awareness Month: Setting the Record Straight

Many misconceptions exist about attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

Common misconceptions include:

- ADHD is not a real medical condition
- ADHD is the result of bad parenting
- All children with ADHD are hyperactive, and
- Children with ADHD will outgrow the condition

To address these misconceptions and improve understanding of ADHD, this year's theme for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Awareness Month is "Setting the Record Straight."

ADHD Facts:

- ADHD is a real medical condition. It is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood.
- More than 6 million children have ADHD. About 2 million of these children were diagnosed as young children between 2-5 years.
- There are three different types of ADHD: predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, or a combined presentation. Not all children with ADHD are hyperactive.
- About one-third of children do not meet criteria for ADHD as they get older, but not all children outgrow ADHD. Children who are most likely to have ADHD that continues into adulthood are those whose symptoms were very severe in childhood or those who have comorbid conditions such as depression or anxiety.
- In general, hyperactivity declines as children get older, but inattention becomes a primary problem.
- ADHD is not the result of bad parenting.

Potential Causes of ADHD:

The exact causes of ADHD are still being investigated, but many studies suggest that genes play a large role. Studies also suggest a potential link between environmental exposures and development of ADHD. Environmental exposures include smoking and alcohol use during pregnancy, and lead exposure in preschoolers. Research discounts the theory that refined sugar causes ADHD or makes symptoms worse.

ADHD Treatments:

- There are multiple forms of behavioral therapy. Behavioral therapy addresses problem behaviors by structuring time at home, and establishing predictability and routines. Parent training helps parents learn new skills or strengthen existing skills to guide their children and manage behavior. Treatments such as neurofeedback are used to reduce impulsivity and increase attention and working memory.
- Stimulants

Resources for ADHD Awareness Month:

ADHD Awareness: <https://add.org/adhd-awareness/>

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD):
<http://www.chadd.org/training-events/adhd-awareness-month.aspx>

Child Mind Institute. Parents' Guide to ADHD: <https://childmind.org/guide/what-parents-should-know-about-adhd/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ADHD Facts:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/facts.html>

For ADHD treatment guidelines, visit the Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health website to view the Florida Best Practice Psychotherapeutic Medication Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ADHD Treatment:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/treatment.html>

Bullying Prevention Month

The goal of National Bullying Prevention Month is to increase awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying on all children of all ages, and to work together to stop bullying and cyberbullying.

What are bullying and cyberbullying?

- Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
- Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose
- Cyberbullying is when bullying occurs through use of technology. Cyberbullying includes threatening text messages; rumors sent through email or spread through social networking sites; use of embarrassing pictures, videos or websites, or creation of fake profiles.

Bullying Prevention Efforts

Bullying prevention efforts include identifying warning signs of bullying; teaching children how to identify bullying and how to stand up to it safely; quick and consistent response from adults, parents and school staff; and anti-bullying laws and policies at the state and national level. The PACER Center for Bullying provides free resources and toolkits for children of all ages to teach about bullying and bullying prevention. For more information, visit the links below.

Resources for National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month:

Parent Advocacy Center for Educational Rights (PACER) National Bullying Prevention Center: <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/>.

PACER. National Bullying Prevention Month: <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/>.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Stopbullying.gov.
<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

U.S. department of Health and Human Services – Office of Adolescent Health. Healthy Adolescent Relationships Resources and Publications:
<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-training/adolescent-health-library/healthy-relationships-resources-and-publications/index.html>.

Stomp Out Bullying. Change the Culture.

<https://www.stompoutbullying.org/campaigns/national-bullying-prevention-awareness-month>

Mental Illness Awareness Week: CureStigma

October 7-13, 2018

During one week in October each year, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and participants around the country work to improve understanding of mental health and reduce negative perceptions through advocacy during Mental Health Awareness Week. This year's Mental Health Awareness Week takes place between October 7 and 13, and the theme is "CureStigma."

Improving awareness of mental health and facilitating access to care are important because each year, millions of Americans suffer from mental health conditions but hesitate to seek help. Even though many people can be treated, less than half of adults in the United States who need care get the help they need. Barriers to seeking care include embarrassment about having a mental health condition, denial that mental health conditions exist, difficulty recognizing symptoms, and lack of access to healthcare. People with mental health conditions often face rejection, bullying, and discrimination, which contribute to unwillingness to seek help. By actively promoting understanding mental health and facilitating open discussions, Mental Health Awareness Week is one step towards reducing the barriers people with mental health conditions face when thinking about getting the care they need.

Resources for Mental Health Awareness Week:

National Alliance on Mental Illness: <https://www.nami.org/>; <https://www.curestigma.org/>

Mental Health America. Mental health awareness week. Date of access 1 Oct 2018.

Available from: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/MIAW>

International Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Awareness Week

October 7-13, 2018

What are obsessions and compulsions?

- Obsessions are repeated thoughts, urges, or mental images that cause anxiety
- Compulsions are repetitive behaviors that someone with OCD feels the need to do in response to an obsessive thought

OCD Facts:

- Estimates of prevalence are that 1 in 100 adults have OCD
- OCD can occur at any time from preschool to adulthood, but is most commonly diagnosed in pre-adolescent to early adulthood years
- 70% of individuals with OCD will benefit from cognitive behavioral therapy or medication

OCD Awareness Week Events:

- Mental Health Advocacy Capital Walk
- Promoting OCD Awareness on Social Media
- Live question and answer sessions hosted by the International OCD Foundation

For more information, visit the links below.

Resources for OCD Awareness Week:

Beyond OCD: <http://beyondocd.org/ocd-facts>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children's Mental Health: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/ocd.html>

International OCD Foundation. OCD Awareness Week:
<https://iocdf.org/programs/ocdweek/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder:
<https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Obsessive-Compulsive-Disorder>

For OCD treatment guidelines, visit the Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health website to view the Florida Best Practice Psychotherapeutic Medication Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

World Mental Health Day: Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World

October 10, 2018

What is World Mental Health Day?

- World Mental Health Day is a day for global mental health education, awareness, and advocacy.
- This year's theme is "Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World."
- The day is an initiative of the World Mental Health Foundation to raise public health awareness of mental health issues.
- This year's focus includes topics such as bullying, the effects of trauma on young people, the effects of war-related trauma on children, mental health responses following natural or man-made disasters, major mental illness in young people, mental health responses following, and early intervention.

For more resources and information, visit the links below:

Resources for World Mental Health Day:

World Federation for Mental Health – World Mental Health Day 2018:

<https://wfmh.global/world-mental-health-day-2018/>

World Federation for Mental Health. World Mental Health Day Report:

https://wfmh.global/wp-content/uploads/WMHD_REPORT_19_9_2018_FINAL.pdf

National Alliance On Mental Illness. <https://www.nami.org/>

Mental Health Commission of New South Wales. World Mental Health Day.

<https://nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/events/world-mental-health-day-2018>

United Kingdom Mental Health Foundation. World Mental Health Day.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/world-mental-health-day>.