

Prevention Professionals of Northern Middlesex



May 7, 2021

May is Mental Health Awareness month! We will look at and answer some critical questions each week. What is the connection between mental health and substance use disorders, what are classified as mental health disorders, and what resources are available for these challenges to name just a few!

Mental Health Awareness Month!

<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Health-Awareness-Month>

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. During May, NAMI joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Each year we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

Warning Signs and Symptoms!

<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms>

Trying to tell the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy. There's no easy test that can let someone know if there is mental illness or if actions and thoughts might be typical behaviors of a person or the result of a physical illness.

Tips for How to Help a Person with Mental Illness

<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-FaithNet/Tips-For-How-to-Help-a-Person-with-Mental-Illness>

Because millions of people in the U.S. live with a mental health condition, you likely encounter people with a mental illness in your family or in your daily life. However, if you are unsure of how best to approach someone who may be struggling, these tips may help. Suggestions on how you may approach someone living with a mental health condition:

WHO ARE WE?

SAPC

SAPC is a coalition of eight communities working together to help reduce substance abuse with specific intentions for youth below the age of 18.

Communities include:

Billerica—Mike Higgins
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Chelmsford—Amanda Glaser
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Dracut—Maria Ruggiero
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Mental Health Conditions

<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions>

A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood. These conditions deeply impact day-to-day living and may also affect the ability to relate to others. Mental health conditions are far more common than you think, mainly because people don't like to, or are scared to, talk about them.

Common with Mental Health Disorders

<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Common-with-Mental-Illness>

Certain thoughts, behaviors, symptoms and conditions are directly related to mental illness. We often don't examine how we might excessively use alcohol, for example, to calm our anxious minds after a long day. Or how a loved one's refusal to enter therapy might not just be personal preference.

Individuals with Mental Illness

<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Individuals-with-Mental-Illness>

If you have a mental health condition, you're not alone. One in 5 American adults experiences some form of mental illness in any given year. And across the population, 1 in every 20 adults is living with a serious mental health condition such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or long-term recurring major depression.

Mental Health by the Numbers

<https://www.nami.org/mhstats>

It's important to measure how common mental illness is, so we can understand its physical, social and financial impact — and so we can *show* that no one is alone. These numbers are also powerful tools for raising public awareness, stigma-busting and advocating for better health care.

Share Your Story

<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Share-Your-Story>

It's important for people living with mental health conditions to know that they are not alone. Sharing a story about your mental health challenges can help in your own recovery as well as offer encouragement and support to others with similar experiences. Sharing your story also helps promote understanding and empathy to those without mental illness.

Pledge to be Stigma Free!

<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree>

Stigma is when someone, or even you yourself, views a person in a negative way just because they have a mental health condition. Some people describe stigma as a feeling of shame or judgement from someone else. Stigma can even come from an internal place, confusing *feeling* bad with *being* bad.

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