

The Faith Health Link



Sowing Seeds of Wellness

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HISTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



Mental Health Awareness Month was first celebrated in 1949. It was commemorated by the Mental Health America organization, which was then known as the National Committee for Mental Hygiene and then later as the National Mental Health Association before it got its current name.

Clifford Whittingham Beers founded the association. Beers, who was born in 1876 in Connecticut, was one of five children in his family who all suffered from mental illness and psychological distress. All of them also went on to spend time at mental institutions and it was from his hospital admittance that he discovered that the mental health field had a notorious reputation for malpractice, maltreatment, and immense bias.

Beers went on to author "A Mind That Found Itself," which is a bestseller even today. The book made an immediate impact and helped to launch the mental health reform movement in the United States. By acknowledging the seriousness of his condition as well as highlighting the brutal practices that may have slowed his recovery. Gaining popularity and support from medical professionals, Beers founded the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Beers and his colleagues at the association wanted to find ways to make sure that mental health patients not only received the right care but also did not feel alone in their fight against mental diseases.

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. During May, organization such as, The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Each year they fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

For 2022's Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI will amplify the message of "**Together for Mental Health.**" Using this time to bring our voices together to advocate for mental health and access to care. **Together**, we can realize our shared vision of a nation where anyone affected by mental illness, no matter their background, culture, ethnicity or identity, can get the appropriate support and quality of care to live healthy, fulfilling lives. [MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH -May 2022 - National Today](http://www.namihq.org/mental-health-awareness-month-may-2022)



May is Mental Health Awareness Month



Mental Health Awareness Month dates back to the year of 1949 as first being recognized. Data shows that “nearly one in five adults in the US has a mental health condition.” That most likely means, that we know a family member, friend, co-worker, and or a church member that

has a mental health diagnosis. Taking care of our Mental Health is just as important as ensuring we take care of our medical concerns. Mental Health plays a key role in how we are functioning daily, affecting our “mood, thinking, and even our behavior.” Usually those changes, are noticeable in our attitude, personality, and during our interactions with others. It can also determine how we manage life stressors and contribute to the choices we make.

Mental Health Disorders are nothing to be ashamed of, why; because they can be caused by a number of factors that may be related to or brought on by “trauma, abuse, chronic medical conditions, and or biological or chemical imbalances.” God reminds us in his word, *Psalm 139: 14*; “*I will praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*”. That reminds us as believers of God, that we should fully embrace ourselves and take the best care of ourselves as we can. So, if individuals feel that they may be experiencing a mental health crisis, it is important that these individuals seek support and talk to someone about it. Initially, the most crucial step to take is speaking with your physician about your concerns and deciding together what the next step may be. Individuals with mental health concerns can and do live fulfilling lives with support systems in place.

Local Resources that provide Mental Health Services:

Mental Health Services of the Roanoke Valley
1345 Clarke Ave. SW
Roanoke VA 24016
(540) 342-2915

laccparishnurse@hotmail.com

Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare
611 McDowell Ave. NW
Roanoke VA 24016
(540) 266-9200

Family Services of Roanoke Valley
360 Campbell Ave. SW
Roanoke VA 24016
(540) 563-5316

Carilion Clinic Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
2017 Jefferson St. 2nd Floor
Roanoke VA 24014
(540)981-8025

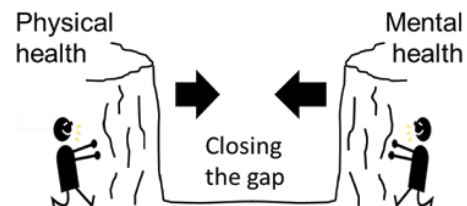
National Counseling Group
3912 Electric Rd. Building C
Roanoke VA 24018
(540) 776-0716

Lewis Gale Pavilion
1902 Braeburn Dr.
Salem VA 24153
(540) 772-2801

Source: MentalHealth.gov and Lifespan.org

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How Does Mental Health Affect Physical Health



Although the mind and body are often viewed as being separate, mental and physical health are actually closely related. Good mental health can positively affect your physical health. In return, poor mental health can negatively affect your physical health.

Effects of Mental Health on Physical Health

Your mental health plays a huge role in your general well-being. Being in a good mental state can keep you healthy and help prevent serious health conditions. A study found that positive psychological well-being can reduce the risks of heart attacks and strokes. On the other hand, poor mental health can lead to poor physical health or harmful behaviors.

Physical Health Conditions That May Affect Mental Health

Your physical well-being also has an impact on your mental health. People with physical health conditions may also develop mental health conditions.

Psoriasis is a dermatological condition characterized by painful red sores on the skin. It is associated with acute stress and depression.

Individuals with psoriasis experience emotional and psychological distress that negatively impacts their overall health and quality of life. Stress and depression mainly come from anxiety, stigma, and rejection.

Being diagnosed with cancer or having a heart attack can also lead to feelings of depression or anxiety. Around one-third of people with serious medical conditions will have symptoms of depression, such as low mood, sleep problems, and a loss of interest in activities.

Why is good mental health important to good physical health?

Seeking treatment for mental health problems is crucial for so many reasons, notably because when you seek treatment for anxiety, depression and other mental health issues, your physical body also benefits. With good mental health comes better quality and frequency of sleep, regular heart rhythm, and improved breath pattern

How to Take Care of Your Mental and Physical Health

If you want to improve your general well-being, you should take care of both your physical and mental health.

Here are some ways to take care of yourself physically and mentally:

- Get regular exercise. Exercise is important for keeping physically fit, but it can also help improve your mood. A daily 10-minute walk may increase your mental alertness leaving you energetic and in a good mood.
- Eat a proper diet. A diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in processed sugars or fats can make you feel better physically and mentally.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs. Although drinking and smoking may make you feel better in the short term, they can have a negative effect on both your physical and mental health.

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- Get enough sleep. A good night's sleep is around seven to nine hours for adults. You can also take a 30-minute nap during the day to feel more alert.
- Try relaxation techniques. Meditation, deep breathing, and focusing your thoughts can all help when you are feeling stressed.
- Develop good mental practices. Try to focus on positive emotions and events rather than negative ones.
- Seek help from others. Talking with friends or family members can help you feel less stressed. Getting others to help with difficult situations can also reduce the burden you feel.

THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Please understand that going to therapy does not mean you are not a Christian or that you lack faith in God. In fact it means that you are smart enough to realize you need help so that you can live that abundant life that Christ wants you to have (John 10:10b). We serve a wise God that knows that in this life we will need help. And sometimes that help comes in the form of a counselor, therapist, psychologist or even psychiatrist. [How Does Mental Health Affect Physical Health \(marriageandfamilywellnesscenter.com\)](http://marriageandfamilywellnesscenter.com)

Understanding the Impact of Stigma on People With Mental Illness



Maintaining mental wellbeing in the face of life's many stressors can be challenging. However, the stigma surrounding mental health issues can make the challenge even greater. The purpose of Mental Health Awareness Month is to increase understanding and reduce stigma concerning mental health conditions and challenges.

What is Stigma?

Stigma is when someone sees you in a negative way because of your mental illness. Stigma happens when a person defines someone by their illness rather than who they are as an individual. While stigma is one of many factors that may influence care seeking, it is one that has profound effects for those who suffer from mental illness. The following story of Dr. Lorna Breen shows how treatment could have resulted in a completely different outcome.

Lorna Breen, MD, was an emergency physician working at a frenetic pace at the height of the coronavirus pandemic in New York City in 2020. She contracted COVID-19, returned to work early out of a sense of duty. As it became clear that Breen needed psychiatric help, her main fear was that she would lose her license to practice medicine for accepting treatment. (Other common reasons physicians do not seek help is their concern that colleagues will find out or they will be shunned by the medical profession.)

After struggling with psychiatric challenges she took her life on April 29, 2020, she died while visiting family in Charlottesville, Virginia. She was 49. She had no previous psychiatric history before this. Her only known risk factor for suicide was being a physician. ***"Treatment without consequences" could have saved her life***

On March 18, 2022 it was memorable day for the approximately one million physicians licensed to practice medicine in the U.S. It was the day President Biden signed into law the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act; legislation designed to promote the mental health of medical professionals.

We must seek to reduce mental health stigma, for everyone, just not physicians, so that seeking mental health care will be viewed as a sign of strength

If you or someone you know is considering suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Mental Health First Aid

You may know CPR and the Heimlich maneuver. You can call 911. But can you administer first aid in a mental health crisis?

It's easy to tell when someone is having a heart attack, is choking, or can't breathe. But what does depression look like? Or anxiety? What would you say to a person you know who says they are thinking about suicide? How can you help in a panic attack? Training is available as a Mental Health First Aider. Just like traditional first aid, mental health first aid doesn't teach participants how to diagnose disorders. Instead, the training teaches people how to offer initial support until the appropriate professional help is received or until the crisis is resolved.

The **Mental Health First Aid Course** is an 8-hour course that teaches you how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. **To find a course contact Blue Ridge Behavior Healthcare [Mental Health First Aid – Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare \(brbh.org\)](https://www.brbeh.org)**

How to Observe Mental Health Awareness Month

Take care of yourself

Life has numerous ups and downs. Some are solvable but others not so much. When your mental health acts up, seek the right treatment and make yourself better because life has much more to offer than just pain and suffering.

Take care of your loved ones

Check up on your friends and family. Many times, all people need is a shoulder to cry on and/or an ear to listen. Support and encourage them if they are being treated for any mental problems.

Talk about mental health

One of the best ways to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month is by talking about it with your peers. The more you talk about it, the more normalized it will become. This is one of the aims of the month as the stigma attached to mental health has led to countless delays in treatment AND research on the matter.

Please note: Information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, if you feel that you may be experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact your primary care physician, for further guidance and intervention.