

# MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



Join us as we celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to have open conversations and help break down the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Modern life can have a significant impact on mental health — for better or for worse. About half of Americans remember a time when we were not constantly connected to the internet through smartphones, tablets, and other devices. Many younger Americans can't imagine life without the internet.

Ironically, while our devices make us more connected than ever, loneliness is an increasingly serious public health concern. We are now able to have real-time conversations with friends and family on the other side of the world. However, constant connection creates a voyeuristic mentality. Social media often shows us what we don't have or appear to be missing out on. Recent survey data show that more than half of U.S. adults (58%) feel lonely.

Some people find it hard to escape the 24-hour news cycle, social media platforms, emails, and texts. Political discord, concerning stories, and disturbing imagery routinely invade our days. At the same time, our current technology also allows us to mobilize and provide collective support more efficiently during natural disasters or periods of injustice.

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Finding a sense of calm and focusing on well-being when you are having mental health concerns can be daunting in our fast-paced, constantly-connected society. It can be especially challenging to know where to start.

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, we encourage members of this community to take action toward protecting your mental health and overall well-being.

**We encourage you to:**

## **Educate Yourself**

Take time to learn more about mental health conditions, their signs, symptoms, and treatment options. Understanding mental health can help reduce stigma and make you and others more likely to seek help when it's needed.

## **Connect with Others**

Reach out to friends, family, or support groups for emotional assistance and social connection. Talking about your feelings and experiences can help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

## **Limit Screen Time**

Take breaks from screens and technology, especially social media, which can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, comparison, and loneliness. Instead, spend time engaging in activities that nourish your mind and body. Focus on where you actually are and who you're with.

## **Build a Coping Toolbox**

Creating your coping toolbox can be as simple as writing a list (on your phone or on paper) of what helps, like breathing exercises or going for a run – this way, when you start struggling with your mental health, you don't have to remember what to do or search for tips. You can also have a physical toolbox and fill it with things like a stress ball, written notes to yourself, and photos that make you happy. If you make a physical toolbox, it's a good idea to still include a list of coping skills that help.

It's important to remember that working on your mental health takes time. Change won't happen overnight. By focusing on small changes you can move through the stressors of modern life and develop long-term strategies to support yourself and others on an ongoing basis.

If you're taking steps to improve your mental health but are still struggling or are not sure where to start on your mental health journey, we encourage you to connect with your healthcare provider or reach out to a member of our team today.

## **WE CAN HELP.**

Our outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including friends, family, health providers, or self-referrals.

**Call us today at**