



WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM

Center for Mental Health and Wellbeing

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



## Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month (also referred to as Mental Health Month) has been observed in May in the United States since 1949. The month is observed with media, local events, and film screenings.<sup>[1]</sup>

Mental Health Awareness Month began in the United States in 1949 and was started by Mental Health America (MHA) (then known as the National Association for Mental Health). Each year in mid-March Mental Health America releases a *toolkit of materials* to guide preparation for outreach activities during Mental Health Awareness Month. During the month of May, MHA, its affiliates, and other organizations interested in mental health conduct a number of activities which are based on a different theme each year.

### Mental Illness

Mental illnesses are common in the United States. It is estimated that more than one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness (57.8 million in 2021). Mental illnesses include many different conditions that vary in degree of severity, ranging from mild to moderate to severe. Two broad categories can be used to describe these conditions: Any Mental Illness (AMI) and Serious Mental Illness (SMI). AMI encompasses all recognized mental illnesses. SMI is a smaller and more severe subset of AMI. Additional information on mental illnesses can be found on the NIMH Health Topics Pages.

To read the full article and get the statistical data and graphs, please visit: [Mental Illness - National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) \(nih.gov\)](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-illness/)

**May 2024**

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**  
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

**Month**

- [Mental Health Month](#)
- [Women's Health Month](#)
- [Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#)

**Week**

- [Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week \(May 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>\)](#)

**Day**

- [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day \(May 7<sup>th</sup>\)](#)
- [International Day of Women's Health \(May 28<sup>th</sup>\)](#)

To learn more visit: [2024-National-Observances.pdf \(mhanational.org\)](https://www.mhanational.org/)



## Mental Health Conditions



### Mental Health Statistics and Facts at a Glance:

- 23.1% of U.S. adults experienced a mental health condition in 2022.
- 6% of U.S. adults experienced a serious mental health condition in 2022, which is often defined as a psychotic disorder, bipolar disorder or a severe anxiety or eating disorder that significantly impairs functioning.
- In 2022, 32.9% of U.S. adults experienced both a mental health condition and substance abuse.
- Approximately 5.2 million veterans experience a behavioral health condition in 2022.

To learn more visit:  
[forbeshealth.com](https://forbeshealth.com)

*NAMI recognizes that other organizations have drawn distinctions between what diagnoses are considered “mental health conditions” as opposed to “mental illnesses.” We intentionally use the terms “mental health conditions” and “mental illness/es” interchangeably.*

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. If you have — or think you might have — a mental illness, the first thing you must know is that **you are not alone**. Mental health conditions are far more common than you think, mainly because people don’t like to, or are scared to, talk about them. However:

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

A mental health condition isn’t the result of one event. Research suggests multiple, linking causes. Genetics, environment, and lifestyle influence whether someone develops a mental health condition. A stressful job or home life makes some people more susceptible, as do traumatic life events. Biochemical processes and circuits and basic brain structure may play a role, too.

None of this means that you’re broken or that you, or your family, did something “wrong.” Mental illness is no one’s fault. And for many people, recovery — including meaningful roles in social life, school and work — is possible, especially when you start treatment early and play a strong role in your own recovery process.

To see a list of mental health conditions and read the full article, please visit:  
[Mental Health Conditions | NAMI](#)

# Mental Health 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.

Each illness has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality ("lack of insight" or anosognosia)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains")
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

Mental health conditions can also begin to develop in young children. Because they're still learning how to identify and talk about thoughts and emotions, their most obvious symptoms are behavioral. Symptoms in children may include the following:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety, for instance fighting to avoid bed or school
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums

## Where To Get Help

Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Learning all you can about mental health is an important first step.

Reach out to your health insurance, primary care doctor or state/county mental health authority for more resources.

Contact the [NAMI HelpLine](#) to find out what services and supports are available in your community. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. [Call](#) or [text](#) 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](#) to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

To read the full article visit: [Warning Signs and Symptoms | NAMI](#)

## Here's How You Can Take Action in May:

**1. Raise your voice and advocate for change.** Speak up about mental health, contact your elected officials and stay up to date on breaking policy news.

**2. Lead by example — prioritize your self-care.** Self-care is essential for your overall health and your ability to support others.

**3. Celebrate mental wellbeing.** Embrace and honor your mental wellbeing journey.

**4. Be the difference— get involved.** Make an impact in your community. If you aren't already, consider becoming certified as a [Mental Health First Aider](#) or [Instructor](#).

To read the full article visit:

[Four Ways to Move Forward this Mental Health Awareness Month](#)



Dear Valued Referral Sources,

Special thanks for your continued support of those suffering from mental illness. Self-care is essential for your overall health and your ability to support others. Make your mental health a priority to set a positive example for others.

Sincerely,

***Jennifer Campbell, MSW, LSW***

Clinical Manager, WHS Center for Mental Health and Wellbeing - Outpatient

Washington Physicians Group

Office#: 724-627-2526

# WHS Center for Mental Health & Wellbeing



## **Contact Information:**

Inpatient Behavioral Health	P: 724-223-3195 F: 724-229-2128	155 Wilson Ave Washington, PA 15301
Outpatient Behavioral Health	Greene P: 724-627-2756	220 Greene Plaza Rear Waynesburg, PA 15370
Outpatient Behavioral Health	Peters Township P: 724-579-1075	4198 Washington Road, Suite 5 McMurray, PA 15317
Outpatient Behavioral Health	Washington P: 724-579-1075	95 Leonard Ave Building #1, Suite 301 Washington, PA 15301

## **Behavioral Health Management:**

**Jennifer Campbell, MSW, LSW** – Clinical Manager  
Outpatient Services P: 724-627-2526

**Amber Cline, RN** – Inpatient Assistant Nurse Manager P: 724-229-2425

Greene County Crisis Line: 1-800-417-9460

Washington County 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-877-225-3567

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Greenbriar Treatment Facility: 1-800-637-4673

SPHS, Center of Excellence Opiate Use Disorder Hotline: 1-888-810-8595

STTARS Sexual Assault Hotline (Greene & Washington): 1-888-480-7283