



May is Mental Health Month

Family members and friends, children and the elderly, rich and poor: mental illness can affect anyone – no matter what age, gender, race or ethnic background.



Mental Health Month is an annual observance designed to increase awareness about mental health and mental illness.

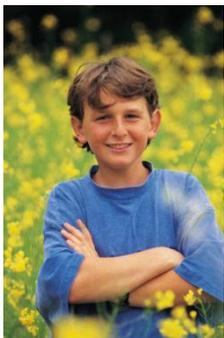
Mental health disorders are real, common and treatable. They are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. An estimated 25 percent of Americans, ages 18 and older — about one in four adults — suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder in a given year. That is nearly 60 million people nationwide and 400,000 in Idaho.

Why is good mental health important?

Good mental health is essential to overall health and personal well-being. It contributes to the ability to lead a healthy, balanced, and productive life. Emotional problems can impair a person's thinking, feelings and behavior and, over time, can become increasingly serious and disabling. Most people can't "just snap out of it" and unfortunately, many people do not seek treatment for mental health issues for a number of reasons. They may be hesitant to make contact with a mental health professional because they fear discrimination, or they may not know how to access services. Yet, overall quality of life is greatly improved when a person with mental health concerns or problems seeks help and receives appropriate treatment from a qualified professional.



For more information about mental health and mental illness, visit these websites:



- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) www.samhsa.gov
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) www.nami.org
- Federation of Families www.idahofederation.org
- Mental Health America www.mentalhealthamerica.net

To get help:

Contact your primary care physician for an initial assessment. Your doctor may be able to treat you for some types of mental illness like depression or anxiety. If needed, a referral will be given to someone who specializes in treating mental illness.

You may have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These programs are typically designed to help employees stay emotionally healthy and productive. EAPs provide confidential counseling and are often available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Churches, temples, and other places of worship often offer counseling and other types of assistance. For more information about mental health services in Idaho visit www.mentalhealth.idaho.gov

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal call 1 800-273 TALK (8255).