

KEY MESSAGES

GENERAL:

- Mental Health America is proud to have founded in 1949 what is now known as Mental Health Month. Every May, we come together with millions of Americans to continue the tradition of promoting awareness, offering vital resources and education, and advocating for the mental health and well-being of everyone.
- Being able to maintain good mental health is essential to each and every individual's overall health and well-being. Mental health conditions are common, manageable, and treatable.
- One in 5 people will experience a mental health condition in any given year, and everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health.
- About half of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition sometime in their lives, with symptoms starting by age 14 for the majority of people.
- It is never too soon to seek treatment for your mental health. Getting help early saves lives.
- Mental Health America Screening provides a free, anonymous, quick, and easy way to determine whether a person is experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition. Take a mental health test at mhascreening.org.
- This May, through new resources, we will help you:
 - Learn how modern life affects mental health with new tools to navigate our changing world.
 - Act by building your coping toolbox so you can manage stress, difficult emotions, and challenging situations.
 - Advocate to improve mental health for yourself, your friends and family, and your community.

2024:

- This year's theme for Mental Health Month is Where to Start: Mental Health in a Changing World.
- The world is constantly changing – for better or for worse – and it can be overwhelming to deal with everything going on around you.
- We know relationships and the pressures of work and school can impact your mental well-being, but it can be less obvious when the world around you is the root cause of issues. Politics, climate change, the economy, and other factors that can feel out of your control play a role in a person's mindset.
- While society is getting more comfortable discussing mental health, it can still be hard to know "Where to Start" when it comes to taking care of your own well-being.

LEARN:

- To fully understand how the world around us affects mental health, it is important to know what factors are at play – some of which an individual can change, such as screen time, and others that may be outside of their control, like access to basic resources or current events.
- Social drivers of health include economic status, education, your neighborhood, social inclusion, and access to resources like nutritious food, health care, green space, and transportation. All of these factors can have a far-reaching impact on not just your physical health, but also your mental health. Loneliness, current events, technology, and social drivers are having an impact on the mental well-being of Americans, but there are protective measures that can prevent mental health conditions from developing or keep symptoms from becoming worse or severe.
- Navigating uncertainty and fear about what is happening in the world and what the future holds can feel overwhelming, but no one has to suffer in silence. There is hope.

- In today's tech-filled world, screens can dominate our daily lives and impact our mental well-being. What we choose to look at and how much time we spend on our devices really matters and can make a big difference in how we feel.
- It's common to feel like no one understands what you're going through, but reaching out can be the first step in improving your mental health. Loneliness can take a toll on your mental and physical health, and it's important to find meaningful ways to connect with others.

ACT:

- There are many ways to take action – big and small – to improve mental health and increase resiliency, regardless of the situations you are dealing with.
- Knowing when to turn to friends, family, and coworkers when you are struggling with life's challenges can help improve your mental health. MHA's 2024 Mental Health Month toolkit has tools for starting these important conversations.
- Change is hard, but it's unavoidable in life. It's important to find coping skills that can help you process these changes, prioritize your mental well-being, and accept the situations in life that we can't control.
- Life can be challenging, but every day shouldn't feel hard or out of your control. If it does, there is help. One free, anonymous, quick, and easy way to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition is to take a mental health test at mhascreening.org.
 - After you take a mental health screen, you will be given resources and tips to try on your own, ways you can connect with others or find a provider, and learn about treatments.
 - Your screening results can be used to start a conversation with your primary care provider or a trusted friend or family member.
 - A mental health test is a great way to begin planning a course of action for addressing your mental health.
- Seeking professional help for your mental health when self-help efforts aren't working is a sign of strength, not weakness. You don't have to go through these struggles alone.

ADVOCATE:

- "Advocacy" doesn't always mean talking to a government official or local leader. There are things everyone can do to improve the way mental health conditions are perceived and treated.
- Storytelling is a powerful way to break down stigma and promote open conversations about mental health.
- It can be intimidating, but everyone has the power to drive policy change. Contact your elected officials and urge them to support legislation that increases funding for mental health services, expands access to treatment, and protects the rights of people with mental health conditions.
- Integrating mental health care into primary care, and providing mental health programs in schools, workplaces, and communities can improve the well-being of everyone.
- In an election year, it's especially important to understand where candidates stand on mental health issues. Mental Health America has resources that can help, and we urge everyone to vote with mental health in mind.