



WELLNESS TIPS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



Mental health awareness is the ongoing effort to reduce the stigma around mental illness and mental health conditions by sharing our personal experiences. Often, because of misconceptions about mental health and mental fitness, people frequently suffer in silence and their conditions go untreated. Mental health awareness is an important social movement to both improve understanding and increase access to health-care.

TIPS FOR OCTOBER WELLNESS

Understand Your Symptoms

A lot of people who have mental health symptoms don't actually realize that their struggles are a result of untreated disorders. Awareness is helpful to understand your symptoms. While all conditions have different symptoms, some signs to look out for include: changes in sleeping patterns, loss of appetite, impulsive decision making, turning to drugs or alcohol in moments of distress, or suicidal thoughts.

If you haven't been feeling like yourself lately, this may be an indication to take a closer look at your mental health.

Start a Conversation

While you may feel uncomfortable talking to someone about your concerns regarding their mental health, simply letting them know you care can make a difference in how they are feeling, and may pave the way for you to start a conversation with them. By talking and listening you can create an opportunity to encourage someone to seek help if needed. Everyone experiences mental health issues at some time in their lives, and it is vital not to underestimate the importance of just being there for someone. Ask someone how they are doing or feeling. Encourage them to engage with an open question focused on them and their wellbeing.

What You Can Do to Help

Although the general perception of mental health has improved over the past decades, studies show that stigma is powerful. Stigma affects not only people seeking treatment, but also resources available for treatment. Here are a few powerful things you can do to help:

- 1) Showing individuals respect and acceptance removes a significant barrier to success. Having people see the individual and not the illness makes a difference for someone who is struggling.
- 2) Advocating within our circles of influence helps ensure these individuals have the same rights and opportunities as other members of your church, school and community.
- 3) Learning more about mental health allows us to provide helpful support to those affected in our families and communities.