

# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



## MENTAL ILLNESS

Understanding the what and how mental illness affects us is step one.

## HOW CAN I HELP

Tips on how to help with your own mental health struggle or a friend.

## RESOURCES

At the county we have many resources available to receive help.

# WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

**Mental illness** affects 1 in 5 adults in the United States. According to the American Psychiatry Association (APA) "50% of mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% begin by age 24." That means, chances are either you, or someone you know, is struggling with their mental health right now.

The CDC defines mental health as "our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices."

When our mental health is struggling it causes unrest in every part of our lives. So it is important to recognize the signs that you or a loved one may be struggling. The APA has put together a wonderful video that helps define mental illness as well as list the symptoms we need to be the most aware of. Please take 2 minutes to watch the [video](#) below.



Another important reminder is that mental health struggles do not look the same on everyone. We are all unique, which means the way we handle and show symptoms of mental illness will be unique.

This is why it is so important for us to be genuine and to listen to those around us. You never know who is struggling, or who has had a bad day or who is simply fighting to get up in the morning.

Try to make it your goal each morning to give yourself and those around you grace. Choose to think the best of yourself and others and remember at times we all struggles. So let's lift one another.

# HOW CAN I HELP?

## Listen

The most important aspect of any relationship is listening. We cannot understand or show empathy to those who are struggling if we do not actively listen to those around us.

However, active listening is a skill most of us have to develop. So here are some tips to help improve your active listening skills.

1. Ask open-ended questions
2. Put away distractions (sit phone down, turn-off the music, make eye contact)
3. Watch their body language. Often people will say one thing but their body language will say something else.
4. Reflect. Summarize what you are hearing back to the person. It will ensure you understand and help them feel heard.

## Ask

In order to identify where you or someone you care about is at in their mental health journey, you have to ask.

Questions provoke the mind to reflect.

Personal reflection can help us identify struggles that are hindering a healthier mental health state. And open ended questions to a loved one can help them know someone cares and wants to know where their current mental health state is at.

Questions to Ask:

- How are you feeling?
  - I've noticed you \_\_\_\_\_. How are you feeling?
  - How would you like things to be different?
  - I know \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Acknowledge something that is happening in their life.) Anything you want to talk about?

(Taken from [Columbia University](#))

## Movement

I am sure you are sick of hearing us praise the rewards of movement but there really is no better natural remedy.

If you have the ability and mental health capacity movement helps clear the mind, regulate the dysregulated and helps reframe our perspective.

From the time we were infants we used movement to regulate our emotions (think rocking a crying baby). When we were children, frustration, sadness, or anger were often worked out on the playground. The only thing that has changed is now we are adults with busy, stressful lives and sedentary jobs.

So when you feel out of balance try movement. Simply going for a walk can help calm and shift our emotions.

Wharton  
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ONLINE



Improving Communication Skills  
Active Listening

Professor Maurice Schweitzer



# RESOURCES



BluNovus is Salt Lake County's EAP. It is available to all benefited employees and their families. BluNovus is a wonderful resource that offers on demand help to those in crisis, as well as 6 free counseling sessions for every issue. They also offer wellness coaching and financial and legal counseling. Simply download the app, use registration code SLCOUNTY and get started today.



When we or a loved one are in the midst of a mental health crisis, we may need to go through extra means to protect ourselves or our loved ones. All Salt Lake County Libraries have firearm locks and naloxone for FREE, no questions asked and available at any time, just ask any library worker and they can help.



NAMI is also a wonderful FREE resource that offers peer to peer mentoring, several support groups as well as free classes and seminars to those who have loved ones struggling with mental health.



Suicide prevention starts with you! QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) is a wonderful program that gives you the tools and confidence to know when someone is in crisis, how to question their desire to live, how to persuade them to stay alive and where to refer them for help. We all have the ability to make a difference and save a life. Join us for our next QPR Training on May 15th or June 7th to learn how. [Register with this link.](#)



If you or someone you know is in crisis do not hesitate to call the mental health equivalent of 911 and dial **988**. The suicide prevention lifeline will connect you with someone who can listen and help you through crisis.