



## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

This awareness month was established in 1949 to increase the importance of mental health wellness and celebrate recovery from mental illness. You may be wondering why we still need a mental health awareness month since most people are aware that mental health concerns exist. This month remains important for several reasons:

1) It serves as a **reminder** to check in on themselves and loved ones, especially those who may be showing signs of struggling or those who you know to be “too proud” to initiate a conversation about their wellbeing. 2) Without open discussions, it can be difficult to know **whether experiences are “normal”** or typical in the population, or when it’s necessary or appropriate to seek guidance from mental health professionals. This can be especially complicated when it comes to children who may not have sufficient language to fully voice their feelings. 3) As highlighted during the pandemic, there is a national shortage of mental health care providers. This month encourages individuals to **advocate** for better national funding to improve the mental health care system and for policies that support people with mental illness and their families. 4) This month encourages individuals to **share their story** of personal experiences with mental health conditions. Sharing lived experiences helps others understand the range of experiences, as well as encourages others to prioritize their own mental health. People also share their stories of recovery and resilience, providing hope and inspiration for others currently struggling. 5) Finally, this month offers an opportunity for **sharing resources** and information with your communities and networks.

Mental health is an important component of overall health. Despite recent shifts over the last few decades with increased attention to the importance of mental health, some stigma remains. Some people fear talking about their own mental health because they fear others will judge them as weak. In reality, discussing your challenges is a true sign of strength - that you notice your own internal emotional experiences and are willing to share these challenges as a way to find validation, support, and resources to feel better.

Check out the page below for **mental health** and **community** resources!

Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!

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Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding The WHALE Study or the COVID-19 situation. Staff can be reached by call, text, or email: [whalestudy@unc.edu](mailto:whalestudy@unc.edu) | 919-914-0588  
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## May 1 - 5 is [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week](#)

Here is some important information about children's mental health:

- Mental health in childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones and learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems. Positive mental health indicators of affection, resilience, positivity, and curiosity are present in over 87% of children ages 3-6
- Mental health disorders involve serious changes in how children typically learn, behave, or manage their emotions - resulting in distress or challenges throughout the day. The most common diagnoses in children 3-17 include ADHD (affecting 9.8% of children, or 6 million in the US), anxiety (9.4%), behavior problems (8.9%) and depression (4.4%). Some of these conditions occur together.
- 1 in 6 children (ages 6-17) has a treatable mental health disorder (e.g., depression, anxiety, ADHD). Rates of depression and anxiety have increased over time
- 50% of mental health conditions begin by age 14 - but most cases are undetected and untreated
- Unaddressed mental health in adolescence can extend to adulthood - impacting both future mental health and limiting opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as adults

Source: [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\), 2022](#)

*Coming soon:* In fall 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act established 988 as a mental health and suicidal crisis number to connect callers to trained crisis counselors to provide de-escalation and mental health intervention services by phone, and provide connections to community resources. This line is expected to be available by July 2022, pending sufficient resources and infrastructure. Click [here](#) to learn more about how we can #ReimagineCrisis - In the meantime, please continue to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text 741-741 for mental health crises.

*Coming later:* September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month & October has Mental Illness Awareness Week (2nd - 8th)

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Click [here](#) to read this year's annual statement from the White House
- More info from [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#) and [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#)
- Download this free emoji pack (Android & iOS) to express care for loved ones <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Awareness-Resources/Sentimoji>
- Follow the hashtag #Together4MH on social media for more resources!

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
- Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
  - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- [Durham County Social Services](#)
- [Orange County Social Services](#)
- [Wake County Social Services](#)

### FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Wake County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Durham County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Orange County Food Resources](#)
- [Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools](#)
- [TABLE](#)
- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [Wake County Food Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES CONTINUED

### HEALTH & SAFETY

- [Compass Center for Women and Families](#)
  - 919-929-7122
- [Durham Crisis Response Center](#)
  - 919-403-9425
- [InterAct Family Safety and Empowerment Center](#)
  - 919-828-7501
- [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#)
  - 866-935-4783 (call) , 919-504-5211 (text)
- [Freedom House](#)
  - 919-967-8844 (Crisis Unit, Chapel Hill)
  - 1-877-967-8844 (Mobile Service)
- [Suicide prevention lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741 741

### CHILDCARE

- [NC Hotline for Critical Workers Seeking Child Care Options](#)
- [Covid Childcare Co-op Creator](#)
- [Covid Urgent Childcare](#)
- [Child Care Services Association](#)

### LEARNING

- [Scholastics Learn at Home](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [PBS Kids](#)
- [CDC Tips for Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)