



## MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM ATLANTIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS | MAY 2022

### CELEBRATING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

*Caring for our Mental Health*

#### **What Have We Learned About Mental Health?**

We've learned so many things over the past two years including that we need to make our mental health a priority. And while everyone's needs and solutions vary, we learned how important our relationships and social connections are. Sharing our lives with our families and friends help us to be hopeful and resilient. We learned that trying new hobbies or experiences can provide us with enjoyment and connection to others who like the same activities. Some people learned how to connect through virtual technology – but they remained connected. And some people learned it's ok to reach out for professional help...and that it's not as scary as previously thought.

### **Let's Talk Out Loud About Mental Health!**

Mental health has often been something whispered about, or not even discussed. But, we can no longer deny how important our mental health is to our overall health and we need to talk about it.

#### **No More Whispers.**

Let's end the whispering about mental illness and addiction. There is no shame. You can't catch it, and like many other diseases, no one asks for it. It affects all ages, ethnicities, income levels and genders. We all know someone. Don't fear it. Don't judge it. Understand it. Let's not whisper anymore.

[NoMoreWhispers@atlanticealth.org](mailto:NoMoreWhispers@atlanticealth.org)

SUPPORTING, EDUCATING, CHANGING - TOGETHER



**Atlantic Health System**  
Behavioral Health

# Lessons Learned About Mental Health

Mental health is part of our overall well-being. It needs as much attention as our physical health. They are integrally connected. It's not only ok to talk to your doctor about your mood and general mental health, but it's essential. They can help make sure you are getting the right mental health care.

## WE LEARNED.....

### Steps to building resiliency and good mental health

- Good sleep hygiene, talk to your doctor if you are not sleeping well
- Keep things in perspective – remember other hard times you have gotten through before
- Lean into your strengths – write down the things you are good at and past accomplishments. You can build on this!

### How important social connection is to our mental health

- Reach out to family and friends
- Use technology to stay connected if you can't have real-time, in-person visits
- Make time to play

### How important it is to pay attention to our mental health and to take steps toward good health.

- You might need someone to talk to, cry with, vent to. Getting support from family and friends, spiritual advisors is an important part of supporting good mental health.
- Sometimes it helps to have a mental health professional guide us in medication needs or help us learn new skills to cope, grieve and bounce back from the hard stuff.
- *IT IS OK TO GET HELP!*

### When we are under too much stress, we can turn to things that cause us more harm than good

- Drinking too much, shopping too much or numbing ourselves with too much social media or news.
- Good mental health support can get us back on track to find healthy ways to cope with the pain and struggles of life.

### We need time to grieve all the losses over the past two years.

- We need to be with each other in safe places to gather.
- Too much social distancing is not good for our mental health and can lead to loneliness and isolation, sometimes a sign of depression.
- We are learning creative ways to get connected with technology, but we also need real human connection.

***"Life can be challenging, but every day shouldn't feel hard or out of your control. If it does, one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition is to take a mental health screening"- Mental Health America at [mhascreening.org](https://mhascreening.org)***



# Health Care Heroes

Here is what some *Atlantic Health System* health care heroes learned about caring for their own mental health as we live with the pandemic

"As we navigated through the uncharted territory of the COVID-19 pandemic, many emotions surfaced causing fear, worry, and feelings of powerless. For myself personally, I channelled my energies into strengthening my mindset so that I could be a source of mental support for those in need. Whether offering support to my colleagues, family, or friends, I practiced mindfulness, the art of letting go, in order to be the strongest version of myself during such trying times. I found that empowering others was just the medicine I needed to successfully guide me through. My six-year-old daughter reminded me daily to "look on the bright side." I took her solid advice and used it as a constant reminder during such times of uncertainty." - Amy E. Haley

"If I experience a physical symptom in my body, such as shortness of breath, I go to my MD or get lab work done. It seems that in Mental Health we tend to suppress or ignore signs that something is wrong and don't take any action. Then, the problem often worsens. The mind is part of the body and should be treated similarly. When I stop seeing the joy in my life or fail to find the positives and start to only focus on sadness...I know it's time for a 'checkup' and I ask for help". -Joan Pollner



"I am often forced to take an inventory of my mental health because the uncomfortable nudge I feel is my mental state reminding me that I am not okay, or that I am trending toward a path that I need to take corrective actions on. For me, having great mental hygiene is synonymous with breathing; the moment I stop, I feel the difference. I always feel that suffocating and overwhelming effect." - Geralda Vastey



"...The self-care exercises at times were ineffective, but I realized it at least gave a momentary pause from the storm. Walking around the outside of the hospital to get fresh air, going to Mickey's garden, crying on the phone to a retired chaplain friend and meditation bolstered my spirit as well. But the true remedy was these exercises combined with the compassion, support, and determination of my *Morristown Medical Center* colleagues." - Chaplain Debbie Grek

During the past two years, my biggest lesson was learning to take "sips of no." I had come to the realization that self-care was paramount to my overall well-being and that setting stronger boundaries with those around me was necessary for my mental, physical and spiritual wellness. -Jean Marie Rosone



## WHO NEEDS TO LOOK AFTER THEIR MENTAL HEALTH?

**Everyone!** Mental Health America reminds us that mental health is important for all of us. Taking care of yourself is critical to prevent your mental health from worsening – factors like nutrition and gut health, stress, sleep, relationships, trauma, and more can contribute to poor mental health. If your mental health is in a good spot, it is a great time to practice coping skills – ways to help you deal with hard feelings – so that you're better able to handle tough times when they happen.

**If you feel you or someone in your household may harm themselves or someone else:**

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK** (1-800-273-8255). The Online Lifeline Crisis Chat is free and confidential. You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

**If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety:**  
**Disaster Distress Helpline** call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

**If you need to find treatment or behavioral health providers in your area:**  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment>

**Mental Health Resources:**

[cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping](https://cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping)

[APA.org](https://www.apa.org) (American Psychological Association)

[NAMI.org](https://www.nami.org) (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

**Atlantic Behavioral Health ACCESS Center:**

888-247-1400

**Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention Services 24/7 Hotlines:**

Chilton Medical Center: 973 – 831 – 5078

Hackettstown Medical Center 908 – 454 – 5141

Morristown Medical Center: 973 – 540 – 0100

Overlook Medical Center: 908 – 522 – 3586

Newton Medical Center: 973 – 383 – 0973



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