

# Mental Health Awareness

Breaking the Stigma and  
Promoting Access to Care



A dark blue teardrop-shaped graphic pointing to the left, containing the text "Slides & Resources".

# Slides & Resources

# Objectives

- Recognize the signs & symptoms of the common mental health challenges of the pandemic
- Promote mental health awareness
- Break the stigma and stop the silence
- Create a compassionate culture
- Promote access to care



# The Stress Epidemic

## U.S. Stress Statistics

## Data

Percent of people who regularly experience physical symptoms caused by stress 77%

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Regularly experience psychological symptoms caused by stress 73%

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Feel they are living with extreme stress 33%

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Feel their stress has increased over the past five years 48%



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION





# Stressors of the Pandemic

- Concerns for health & safety of self & loved ones
- Adjustments to working remotely and differently for essential workers
- Sheltering in place with loved ones
- Loneliness and isolation
- Dependent care—new demands such as homeschooling



# Stressors of COVID-19

- Less social support
- Financial fears & stress—unemployment
- Racial injustice issues coming to the forefront
- Political divide and unrest
- Challenges managing uncertainty and change
- Reentry



# Signs & Symptoms of Stress

- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Relational





# Stress vs Burnout

- Stress is the body's physical and psychological response to anything perceived as overwhelming
- Burnout is a state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress





# Improve the Communication Process

## Feelings of:

- Powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Detachment
- Isolation
- Irritability
- Frustration
- Failure

## Decrease in:

- Despair
- Cynicism
- Apathy
- Emotional exhaustion

## Increase in:

- Errors
- Absenteeism
- Physical complaints
- Sleep disruption

# Mental Health Implications

- Feelings of grief and loss
- Increase in stress, anxiety and depression
- Increase in substance abuse
- Relationship conflict, abuse, violence
- PTSD/Trauma
- Increase in suicide



# Mental Health Continuum

**In Crisis**

Very anxious  
Very low mod  
Absenteeism  
Exhausted  
Very poor sleep  
Weight loss

**Struggling**

Anxious  
Depressed  
Tired  
Poor performance  
Poor sleep  
Poor appetite

**Surviving**

Worried  
Nervous  
Irritable  
Sad  
Trouble Sleeping  
Distracted  
Withdrawn

**Thriving**

Positive  
Clam  
Performing  
Sleeping Well  
Eating normally  
Normal social  
activity

**Excelling**

Cheerful  
Joyful  
Energetic  
High performance  
Flow  
Fully realizing  
potential

# Mental Health by the Numbers

1 in 4 Americans experience a mental health condition (per year)

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1 in 25 live with a serious mental health condition

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42 million deal with an anxiety disorder

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16 million deal with major depression

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Over 6 million are managing bipolar disorder

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# Minority Mental Health Awareness

- Racism's Toll on Mental Health—PTSD, fear, more labeling diagnosis, etc.
- The Mental Health Care Gap—Poverty gap, lack of representation in the field, stigma, criminal justice, etc.
- LGBTQ+ individuals are twice as likely to experience a mental health disorder during their lifetime due to stigma and trauma. Human Rights Campaign



# Early Detection of Mental Illness

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating/learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding/relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired

# Early Detection of Mental Illness

- Changes in eating habits
- Difficulty perceiving reality
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality  
(lack of insight)
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

# Substance Abuse Awareness Statistics\*



**1 out of 10**

Americans have a drug  
or alcohol problem



**1 out of 7**

of us have a family  
member with a problem

\* According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)



# Addiction Issues: Signs & Symptoms

- Inconsistency
- Relational problems
- Denying responsibility
- Physical complaints
- Lying/secretcy
- Sleep disturbance
- People around who enable
- Financial/legal consequences
- Problems handling conflict
- Performance problems
- Denial/rationalization/. minimizing
- Not morning people/high absenteeism

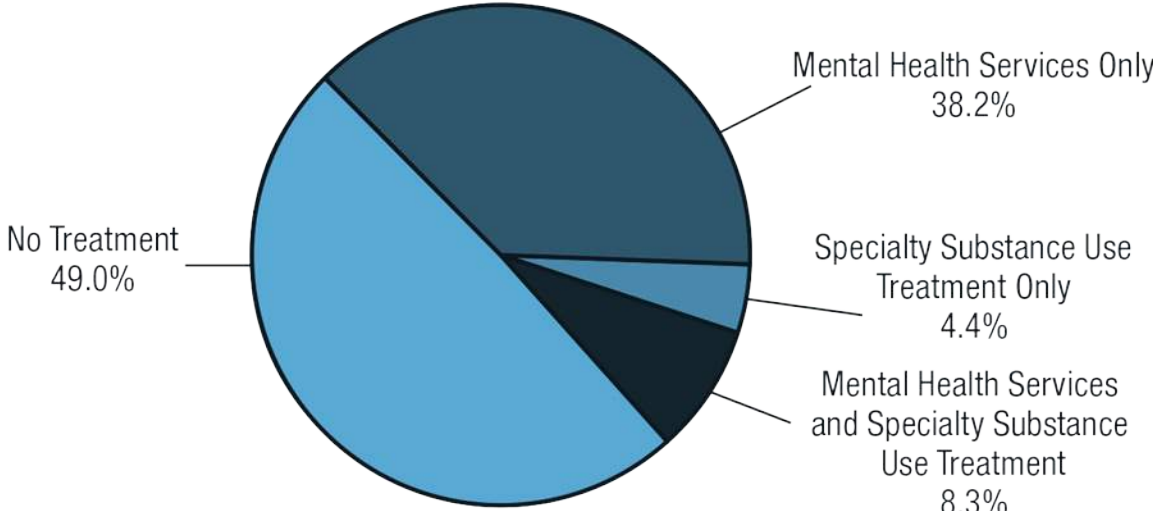


# Dual Diagnosis Statistics\*



\* According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)

# Receipt of Mental Health Services and Substance Use Treatment in the Past Year Aged 18 or Older 2017



8.5 Million Adults with Co-Occurring Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders

Note: Mental health service is defined as having received inpatient care or outpatient care or having used prescription medication for problems with emotions, nerves, or mental health. Specialty substance use treatment refers to treatment at a hospital (inpatient only), rehabilitation facility (inpatient or outpatient), or mental health center in order to reduce or stop drug or alcohol use, or for medical problems associated with drug or alcohol use.



Note: The percentages do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

# Suicide Awareness

- Suicide completion rates have surged to a 30-year high.
- Globally, over 800,000 suicides are reported each year, with many more going unreported.
- In the US, over 121 people complete suicide a day.
- Risk of suicide for people aged 18-24 highest during pandemic
- The Next Covid Crisis Could Be A Wave Of Suicides: Study predicts 75,000 “deaths of despair.”







## Ninety Percent

90% of those who suicide have an underlying mental illness.

Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S.

**HAVE HOPE**

**IT'S OK  
NOT TO BE OK**



**National Suicide  
Prevention Lifeline:  
800-273-8255**

**Hours: Available 24  
hours. Languages:  
English, Spanish.**

**[Learn more](#)**

# Suicide Warning Signs

- Hopelessness
- Despair
- Isolation
- Lack of engagement
- Avoiding future talk
- Passive statements as clues
- Cries for help
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Acting anxious, agitated or restless
- Talking about having no purpose

# Suicide Prevention

- Tell someone—speak up
- Call a hotline
- Call 911
- Go to ER
- Err on the side of caution; don't minimize or delay





# Barriers to Care

- Shame
- Stigma
- Cost
- Time
- Racism: #BIPOCMentalHealth



# Stigma

- Cultural
- Gender-based
- Mental health issues viewed as weakness
- We all have mental health just as we have
- Physical health



**WE MAY  
BE APART,  
BUT WE'RE  
IN THIS  
TOGETHER.**

**We ALL have mental health  
issues as part of being human**

**Your mental health is a  
normal response to your  
nature & nurture**

**Genetic predisposition**

**Stressors versus support and  
self-care**



# Stomp Out Stigma

- Having mental health issues:
- Is not our fault
- Does not mean we are crazy
- Is not a weakness
- Is not something you just “get over” or “push through”
- Treatment is available & effective
- Life changing & life saving



# Breaking the Stigma

- Be mindful of language related to mental health & addiction
- Avoid use of these terms in a negative connotation:
- Bipolar, alcoholic, etc.
- Refrain from terms that foster shame & stigma:
- Crazy, wacko, insane, unhinged, mental case, psycho





# STOP SHAMING PEOPLE FOR:

taking medication for mental health

being in therapy

showing symptoms of mental illness

relapsing in recovery

using coping methods that differ from yours

past trauma

using humor to cope

visible, healed self harm scars

suicidal thoughts or ideation

being open with their mental health

not being ready to talk openly about their mental health

**Stop  
Shame &  
Blame**

# Create a Collaborative Culture

- Avoid phrases that discourage support & collaboration:
  - "man up"
  - "power through"
  - "put on your big girl pants"
  - "suck it up"
- Speak in terms of "I, We and Us" versus "You and Them"



## Compassion

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

MAYA ANGELOU





# Practice Compassion

- Don't assume you know what others are feeling
- Ask how they are doing
- Listen actively
- Don't minimize or argue with feelings
- Avoid judgment
- Ask for what they need



# Empathy

- Must important relational tool
- Put yourself in the other's shoes
- Deep understanding
- Reflect understanding of other's feelings with kindness and compassion
- Shared emotional experience
- Keep a developmental lens
- [Useful article](#)





# Empathic vs Non-Empathic Responses

"It is completely understandable that you are upset. (Validating)

"Don't let it get you that upset. You shouldn't feel that way." (Invalidating)

"That must have been really disappointing. I imagine you feel very frustrated."  
(Empathic, recognizing feelings.)

"It's not that big of a deal. What's our schedule today?" (Minimizing, Under-responsive)

"I felt similarly when I went through XYZ. How can I help?" (Relating, Normalizing,  
Supportive)

"I wouldn't care if that happened to me. You are too sensitive. Buck up." (Critical)

# 4 Steps to Providing Support

- Approach: state what you are noticing in a kind, compassionate and confidential manner
- Listen: without judgment and respond with empathy
- Give reassurance, information and resources
- Be the bridge: Encourage professional help, support & follow-up
- How to make a referral [video](#) & [article](#)



# Define Your Role

What are your responsibilities?

- Education
- Resources
- Intervention
- Know and update Policies & Procedures

What are not your responsibilities?

- To diagnose or determine their degree of suffering /impairment
- To be a therapist
- Treatment outcome



# Speak Up & Ask for Support

- Avoid isolating with your feelings
- Connect with others
- Speak up & share openly
- Ask for what you need
- Create and participate in online communities
- Utilize teletherapy



# Barriers to Accessing Support

- Busyness
- Fear (difficulty trusting)
- Pride
- Shame or stigma
- Guilt
- Fear of imposition
- Low self-esteem, not feeling deserving
- Learned helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Loss of power and control (ego)
- Loss of credit (ego)
- Early life messages
- Expense
- Introversion or shyness
- COVID-19 safety precautions



# Benefits

- Ginger - on demand mental health support and coaching 24/7, and new: 8 free sessions with a live therapist! Download the Ginger app or check out the wiki for more info.
- EAP - mental health, financial and legal support through our health insurance carriers. Reach out to Benefits@ with questions. On our wiki
- Mindfulness Club - Meditation group that meets twice a week to meditate together. Check out the Events & Activities calendar for details.



# Utilize Your Benefits

- Vacation
- Sick benefits & FMLA for time as needed
- Insurance Benefits (Mental Health Parity Law)
- EAP Services
- Flex Spending/Health Savings Accounts



# Understanding Mental Health Providers

- **Psychiatrists (MD)** provide medication and sometimes therapy.
- **Psychologists (PhD, PsyD)** provide therapy and sometimes testing.
- **Therapists (LCPC, LCSW, LMFT)** provide therapy.





# Free Self Test Tools

- [psychologytoday.com/us/tests](https://psychologytoday.com/us/tests)
- [psychcentral.com/quizzes/](https://psychcentral.com/quizzes/)



# Support Resources

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**
  - **Advocate for Change—Vote4MentalHealth**
  - Take the **StigmaFree Pledge** to #CureStigma
  - **Share your story**
  - Take action on **advocacy issues**
  - **Walk for mental health**
- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Advocacy Center**
- **Hope for the Day**

Hope for the Day's tagline is "It's okay not to be okay" and they provide education, outreach and action to break the silence around mental health.





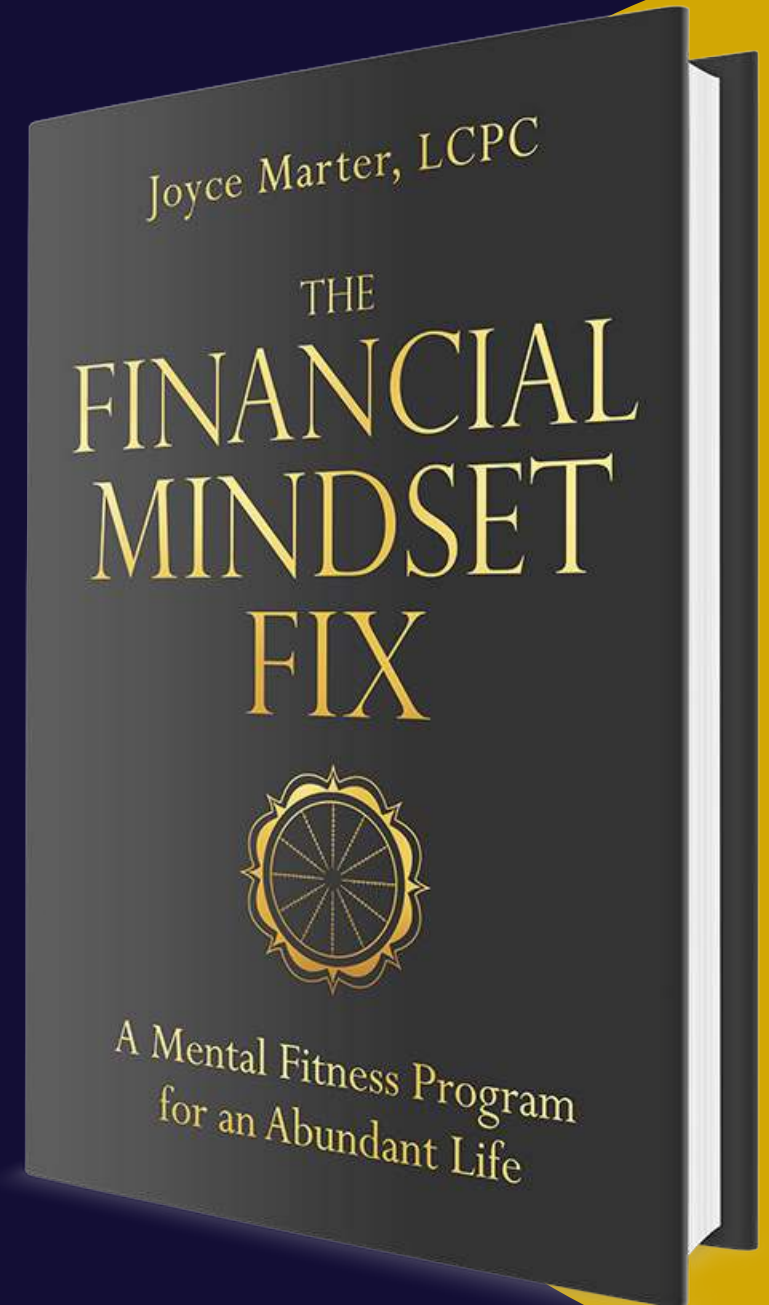
<b>KEEP (doing)</b>	<b>START (doing)</b>	<b>STOP (doing)</b>

**What are  
you going  
to do now?**

**Open yourself up to  
a life of greater  
prosperity, joy,  
and happiness**

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**Joyce Marter**





# Thank You!

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