1 in 4 Americans suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder.

May is Mental Health Month 2017

By Minerva Flores

What is mental health?

It is the well-being of the mind, involving our psychological, emotional and social behavior. It can interfere in our work, school, social or family activities. It affects how we act, think and feel. Mental health affects everyone of all economic status, gender, age, or race.

Some signs are:

- Mood swings
- Constantly having thoughts or memories you can't get out your head
- Fighting or yelling
- Believing things that are not true or hearing voices
- Feeling angry, upset, worried, confused, or scared
- Not being able to do daily tasks such as taking care of yourself, others, or getting to school or work.

Some conditions are:

- Anxiety
- Bulimia nervosa
- Cyclothymic disorder
- Depression
- Eating disorder
- Fetishistic disorder
- Hoarding disorder
- Insomnia disorder
- Mood disorders
- Nightmare disorder
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Postpartum disorders
- Reactive attachment disorder
- Specific phobia
- Trichotillomania

Tips to stay mentally healthy:

- Journaling
- Sleeping well
- Spending time with a pet
- Staying positive
- Coloring or drawing
- Exercising
- Helping others
- Getting professional help

Self-care:

You don't have to see a psychotherapist or psychiatrist but you should try healthy ways

of relieving stress. Take the time to take care of yourself and relax. If you are in need of counseling seek help. Have a support system, someone you can talk to and that will listen.

Why is mental health awareness important?

Mental health should be a priority, it is as important as physical health. We have to be socially, emotionally and psychologically healthy to function daily. We can't care for others if we don't take care of ourselves first. It is as important as going to the doctor for a general checkup or dieting and exercising to stay fit. Keep your mind healthy.

Myths and facts: *Learn about the most common mental health myths.*

Myth: Mental illness isn't real
FACT: Whether it's mild or severe. You can't just magically think your way out of a mental illness. This idea is damaging because it creates unreasonable expectations for the person who is suffering from the illness, says Nelson Freimer, MD, psychiatry professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Myth: Children don't experience mental health issues
FACT: Half of all mental health disorders show first signs before a person turns 14 years old, and three-quarters of mental health disorders begin before age 24.

Myth: Mental illnesses are caused by personal problems
FACT: Mental illnesses can arise unexpectedly and affect absolutely anybody.

No matter your race, age, gender, or economic class. You should not feel guilty or ashamed. Be uplifting have kind words. Saying that someone's mental health condition is because of weakness implies blame on the victim. That only makes them feel worse.

Myth: People with mental illnesses are violent
FACT: According to Mental Health America, approximately 95 to 97 percent of violent crimes are committed by people without a mental health disorder. Rather, Plotnick says that most people with mental illnesses never act out violently, but end up being victims of violence at disproportionate rates.

Myth: You can't prevent mental illness
FACT: According to Mayo Clinic, one of the most important steps in preventing mental illness is to keep close track of your health, watching out for any signs and symptoms of mental illness and visiting the doctor's office for routine checkups. Living a healthy lifestyle, getting enough sleep, eating well, and exercising regularly can also lower your risk of experiencing a mental illness.

Ending the Stigma

If someone confides in you about their mental health struggles don't dismiss them. Do not be judgmental. Be supportive instead and just listen. Remember it is not your responsibility to fix ,advice, or heal them in any way. The best thing you can do for someone struggling with mental health is to love them, support them, and encourage them to get help. Encouraging others is an important part of ending the stigma that surrounds mental health. There is no shame in

taking care of you and keeping yourself healthy. Working with a professional can be helpful during stressful or emotional times.

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug. - Mark Twain

Seeking Support:

http://www.beaconbh.com/

http://www.nami.org/

http://www.gnocommunity.org/

http://milestonesmha.homestead.com/

https://afsp.org/ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - 1.800.273.8255

Resources:

http://fhfjefferson.org/resources/online-resources/behavior-health-mental-health

https://themighty.com/2017/03/help-coworker-panic-attack/

https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/understanding-childs-challenges/simple-changes-at-home/13-tips-for-getting-more-sleep

http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/mental_health_facts/en/index9.html

http://ozonnews.com/10-myths-about-mental-health-that-need-to-be-set-straight-right-now/

To learn more about how you can participate in Mental Health Awareness Month, please visit http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may