

DMH CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2019



DISCUSSING MENTAL WELLNESS SHOULD NOT BE A TABOO TOPIC - JOIN THE MA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN TALKING OPENLY ABOUT MENTAL WELLNESS.

Did You Know: One in 5 adults in the United States will experience a mental illness in their lifetime, and according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) approximately four percent or 222,000 adults in Massachusetts currently have a diagnosable mental illness. This means we all know people living with mental health conditions - a neighbor, co-worker, friend and/or family member. To better understand those around us, we need to learn more about the facts, barriers, and triumphs concerning mental health. With increased knowledge and understanding, together we can eliminate harmful language used to describe mental health conditions that keep people from seeking treatment and being safe. Showing support and using person-centered language creates a healthy, safe place that encourages open conversations regarding mental wellness.

Overall good health includes good mental health. It is important to do away with the fear, judgment, and misconceptions that prevent people from realizing mental wellness. So how do we start incorporating valuable wellness practices into our lives?

- **Use Mindful Language:**
 - **Use person first language.** This means referring to the person and not just their diagnosis. [Example: “A person living with/ or experiencing psychosis,” rather than “a psycho” or “crazy.”]
 - **Opt for strength-based language.** Instead of focusing on the negatives there is an intent to focus on the positives. Using strength-based language promotes empowerment instead of reinforcing negativity. [Example: “A person living with a mental health diagnosis” rather than “A person suffering with a mental illness.”]
 - **Think and talk about wellness as a whole** rather than parse out components of wellness.
 - **Additional Language Resources:** [Mental Health America: Person-Centered Language](#); [The Power of Language in Strengths-Based Approaches](#); and [The Diversity Style Guide \(The Disability Glossary\)](#).
- **Share Information:** Follow credible accounts on social media and share information that may connect people to resources, information and facts; or spark healthy online discussions and engagements. To follow the MA Department of Mental Health (DMH) on social media, please visit us at [Mass.gov/dmh](https://www.mass.gov/dmh) and find all of our social media sites.

Here are some of the organizations DMH follows. Please visit these websites to connect to social media accounts on mental health.

- [U.S. Health and Human Services](#) and [MentalHealth.gov](#)
 - [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Mental Health](#)
 - [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\);](#)
 - [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) and [NAMI Massachusetts;](#)
 - [Mental Health America;](#) and
 - [Massachusetts Association for Mental Health](#)
 - [Parent/Professional Advocacy League ppal.net](#)
- **Start with A Conversation:** Mental Health America provides some useful tips to start a conversation with friends and loved ones - [Time To Talk: Tips For Talking About Your Mental Health](#).
 - **Plan a Community Conversation:** Request support for a community conversation in partnership with the MA Department of Mental Health (DMH); or if planning a discussion in your workplace consider contacting your Human Resources department for resources, such as and not limited to, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) support.

During May is Mental Health Month, the MA Department of Mental Health (DMH) challenges you to incorporate one or more of these practices into your everyday life. Reducing mental health stigma can start with one small change. - We never know who may need support and care.