



May is National Mental Health Awareness Month

In our society it's very common to hear people talk about their physical health, even posting workout progress on fitness apps, or sharing and comparing number of steps taken in a day. We celebrate weight loss and increased physical fitness by posting before and after pictures on social media, and some are even willing to post about feelings of failure when they take steps backward in their quest for a healthier body. We are much less likely however, to talk about our mental health issues, let alone reach out for support in our quest for a healthier mind.

During the month of May, you are likely to see an increased amount of information related to Mental Health advertised through many forms of media. Though Mental Health Awareness is crucial all year long, May has been designated as a time to give extra attention to a critical issue, even more so during this Covid-19 pandemic. Even those who have always considered themselves fairly mentally healthy may be experiencing increased feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and anxiety during this time of uncertainty. We are all dealing with the devastating loss of lives, threats of on-going health problems and financial ruin, and the loss of living life as we previously knew it in our society. It's taking a toll on the population in general, and those who already suffer from mental illness may be experiencing an even higher level of symptoms during this time.

Now more than ever is the time to break through the stigma of discussing mental health problems, and reach out for help and support. Many of us can improve our sense of sadness and isolation with a simple phone call to a loved one or friend, a virtual visit, or even a socially distant wave, or over-the-fence conversation with our next door neighbor. For others, more intense intervention may be necessary. A mental health diagnosis can be treated, often with great success! Much like we seek treatment for physical ailments and illnesses without hesitation, we should feel free to address mental health issues without shame, or feelings of apprehension.

If you think you might need a higher level of intervention, please seek help! Not just during this crisis, but at any point in time! Many mental health professionals in our community are providing services via tele-health during this emergency and beyond, including therapists at **Jewish Family Service**. Our Virtual Counseling services are as secure and confidential as our in-office sessions. Sessions are held through real time video-conferencing, using Zoom, and clients can attend sessions from a smartphone/laptop, or using a webcam on their desktop computer. Services are available to clients across the state of Nebraska. For more information, please call **JFS at 402 330-2024!**

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