



May is Mental Health Awareness Month.



- 1 in 5 (20%) U.S. adults experience mental illness each year.
- 1 in 6 (17%) U.S. youth aged 6–17 experience a mental health disorder each year

When we consider this data that we previously reviewed, it can be expected that if we ourselves do not experience this challenge we will have someone close to us that do so. Mental illness is no respecter of persons. It can and will impact all races, genders, or social and economic statuses. While it is true the poor due have significantly higher rates of mental illness, the rich and famous are not immune. Thus no matter who we are or where we come from it is still more likely than not that we or someone close to us will fight this battle..

With that being said I want to briefly share some tips for addressing both of these situations.



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

- While there are many different diagnosed mental illnesses, Anxiety and Depression are the most prevalent. Thus, be aware and acknowledge when you find yourself experiencing signs or symptoms of them, especially if you notice more than one or two.
- Despite the desire to do so – Do NOT withdraw and isolated from family and friends.
- TALK IT OUT – There is no shame in being in this fight. Let those close to know what you are feeling and experiencing.
- Take care of the Body – EAT HEALTHY, HYDRATE, SLEEP (Enough, not too much), EXERCISE.
- Talk to your healthcare professional to see if medication is right for you.
- Consider talking to a pastor, counselor or other mental health professional
- Connect with others that are facing the same struggles

OTHER'S EXPERIENCE

- While there are many different diagnosed mental illnesses, Anxiety and Depression are the most prevalent. Thus, we must be vigilant and aware to observe when you someone close to you is experiencing signs or symptoms of them,, especially if you notice more than one or two.
- When you see something , SAY something! – With compassion and tenderness tell the person what you are seeing and ask if there if there is anything you can do to help.
- LET THEM TALK IT OUT – Give them the time and space to talk out how they are feeling and what they are going through. Do NOT offer advice unless it is asked for.
- There is no shame in being in this fight. Let those close to know what you are feeling and experiencing.
- Encourage them to Take care of their Body – EAT HEALTHY, HYDRATE, SLEEP (Enough, not too much), EXERCISE.
- JUST BE THERE!



If a picture is worth a thousand word and actions speak louder than words, then what is a shoulder to cry on worth? **PRICELESS!**

The Wellness and Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is a model for helping individuals manage and overcome any number of life challenges, especially those related to mental illness. The program was developed by Dr. Mary Ellen Copeland. More information about WRAP can be found at <https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/>



A key part of the program is the development of the 'Wellness Toolbox'

"This is a listing of things you have done in the past, or could do, to help yourself stay well, and things you could do to help yourself feel better when you are not doing well. You will use these "tools" to develop your own WRAP." (Mary Ellen Copeland) As part of your own personal journey, I encourage you to develop your own "Wellness Toolbox". Below are some recommended by Dr. Copeland and a some I have added as suggested starting points. Start with those activities and techniques that you know have helped you in the past, then add those things that you may not have tried in the past, but are willing to do so. Use the provided sheet and make your list. Put the list in a prominent place where you always know where it is. Take a picture and save it in your phone so it is always with you.

- -Diet considerations (Try to eat 3 healthy meals per day)
- -Hydrate – Drink more water and less caffeinated drinks
- -Exercise
- -Get outside and get some light through your eyes
- -Get an appropriate amount of sleep
- -Take medications, vitamins, minerals, herbal supplements
- -Talk to a health care professional
- -Talk to a friend-many people find this to be really helpful
- -Peer counseling or exchange listening
- -Focusing exercises
- -Relaxation and stress reduction exercises
- -Guided imagery
- -Journaling-writing in a notebook
- -Creative affirming activities like painting, singing, dancing, cooking
- -Attend a support group
- -See your counselor-
- -Surround yourself with people who are positive, affirming and loving
- -Wear something that makes you feel good
- -Spend ten minutes writing down everything good you can think of about yourself
- -Make a list of your accomplishments
- -Spend ten minutes writing down everything you can think of that you are grateful for.
- -Do something that makes you laugh
- -Do something special for someone else
- -Get some little things done
- -Repeat positive affirmations
- -Focus on and appreciate what is happening right now
- -Take a warm bath
- -Listen to music, make music or sing



Your list of tools could also include things you want to avoid like:

- -alcohol, sugar and caffeine
- -going to bars
- -getting overtired
- -certain people

MY WELLNESS TOOLBOX

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.