



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM ATLANTIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS | May 2023

May Is Mental Health Month – Let’s Grow Our Mental Health!

Spring is in the air, let’s dig in and grow some good mental health! If you want to have a field of beautiful flowers, delicious fruits, and vegetables, you are going to have to get your hands in the dirt, plant some seeds and pull the weeds along the way. Your mental health is a lot like a garden and, if you want to feel your best, you have to dig in, plant some seeds and pull some old weeds.

Did you know that your mental health is foundational to your overall well-being? [The intersection between physical health and mental health: a global perspective - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#) [The intersection between physical health and mental health: a global perspective - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#) There was a time when people thought of physical health and mental health as separate parts. We now know that they are connected, and each impacts the other.

This month, we will focus on ways to **GROW YOUR MENTAL HEALTH**. The first step is to get comfortable talking about mental health. Sadly, we have had a long history of keeping conversations about our mental health hidden. Many people have been ashamed and afraid to discuss how they were feeling, even with loved ones or their medical providers. Some cultures have many taboos about discussing mental health. Different communities have a variety of views of mental health and men, and women approach the topic differently as well.

Did you ever wonder how to define good mental health?

According to the World Health Organization:

- *"Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."*

When we are not coping well, we can have a mental disorder or a mental illness.

- *"A mental disorder may be present when patterns or changes in thinking, feeling or behaving cause distress or disrupt a person's ability to function." [Mental health: What's normal, what's not - Mayo Clinic](#) Mental Health providers use the DSM V to help diagnosis a mental health disorder or illness.*

Grow Your Mental Health

LET'S DIG IN! GIVE US THE DIRT ON MENTAL HEALTH!

Our body is the foundation of good mental health. We need to dig into it with:

- Enough sleep
- A healthy diet
- Basic exercise
- Check with your medical provider to make a healthy plan to get digging!



Plant the right seeds. Our thoughts and emotions have a powerful impact on what we do and the actions we take. This takes some digging to figure out. Start out with these ideas:

- Try writing down your thoughts, memories and hopes for the future.
- Learn about Cognitive Distortions to dig deeper into your own bad thinking habits.
- Work on REFRAMING your thinking.
- Talk to a mental health provider to help pull out some old weeds.

You have done the digging, planted the right seeds and now, you will start to see the flowers blooming. Don't forget to stop and ... well, smell the roses! It's time to enjoy what you worked so hard to grow:

- Know what matters to you. Know your why. Make a list of your top three values. This will be your compass to keep you walking down your own garden path.
- Know what brings you joy. Sometimes we have been so busy digging we forget what we love. It's time to check in and make a fresh list of ideas. This might be something you used to love, something you always wanted to do, or something you never tried before.
- Take time to rest. This might be a nap, reading a good book, or a game of golf. It might be as simple as five minutes of slow breathing.

Pulling weeds. Every garden gets weeds and so does your mental health. Weeds are like bad habits sneaking back into your lovely garden. Pulling weeds is part of growing good mental health. Try these weed pulling ideas:

- Write a letter to your future self to remind you of how far you have come and to keep up the good work. This will help motivate your future self. Ask a friend to mail it to you in three months.
- Have an accountability buddy who you trust to tell you the real deal when old habits start coming back.
- Be patient with yourself. Weeds are just a part of life, in a garden and in mental health. Try taking a self-compassion break. This will give you motivation to hit the restart button on your self-care.
#meditations

A garden needs the rain so be prepared. Sometime the rain is going to fall. It might even be a hailstorm that wipes out all your hard work. Now it the time to get support:

If you are hit with too much rain, it can wipe you out. This can be a loss of health or an injury, a break-up or the death of a loved one. This is the time to reach out and dig even deeper.

- Connect with your spiritual life. Spiritual care can be the healing support you might need right now.
- Learn to meditate. Five minutes of quiet sitting can help quiet the storms.
- Try the STOP technique to get grounded. **S**top. **T**ake a breath. **O**bserve. **P**roceed.
- Use the# R.A.I.N. approach to sooth your internal weather. **R**ecognize, **A**llow, **I**nvestigate, **N**urture.

Grow Your Mental Health

Spring is here, it's time for things to grow, including growing how we talk about mental health. Let's keep the conversation going so we can all grow our mental health together.

Prepare the soil: Get ready to start growing.

- Be sure to get enough restful sleep, eat a healthy diet, exercise daily, and check with your primary care provider to make sure you are handling your health needs.

Plant the right seeds: Our thoughts and emotions have a powerful impact on what we do.

- Try journaling your thoughts and hopes for the future. Reframe your thinking into positive actions. Talk to a mental health provider to weed out old ways of thinking.

Time to smell the roses: Watch as new, positive habits begin to form.

- Know what matters to you. Know what brings you joy. Take time to relax.

Don't forget to pull up weeds: Weeds include bad habits sneaking into your garden.

- Write a letter to your future self to remind you how far you've come. Ask a friend to mail it to you in three months. Have an accountability buddy tell you when bad habits start returning. Get the support you need. Understand that rain helps growing things get stronger.



31 Days of Mental Health Challenge

For Mental Health Awareness Month, Atlantic Health System has created a 31-day mindfulness calendar for adults and families. Each day features a different mindfulness practice that can improve your well-being.

Topics include sleep hygiene, diet, exercise, cognitive distortions, journaling, storyboarding, aromatherapy, and many more. These practices are designed to be easily incorporated into daily life and to help individuals practice self-care amidst our often-chaotic lifestyles.

Whether you're new to mindfulness practices or an experienced practitioner, this calendar offers valuable tools and techniques for improving your mental health.

Visit [AHS Grow Your Mental Health 2023](#) to take the challenge!



CRISIS RESOURCES

If you feel you or someone you know may harm themselves or someone else:

- **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** 988
- **The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA+ Youth:** 1-866-488-7386
- **Disaster Distress Helpline:** Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** Dial 988 and Press 1
- **Dial 211:** 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis
- **SAMHSA Treatment Locator:** findtreatment.samhsa.gov



Website:
Atlantichealth.org



Atlantic Health System
Behavioral Health



Email:
nomorewhispers@atlantichealth.org