

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

A Monthly Newsletter from Atlantic Behavioral Health

April 2026

## Honoring National Minority Health Month

April is recognized as **National Minority Health Month**, an annual observance led by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. This month encourages greater awareness of health disparities and promotes efforts to improve access to quality care, which leads to positive clinical outcomes.

Mental health is an essential part of overall health. Research consistently shows that social and environmental factors — including community support, economic stability, discrimination and access to care — significantly influence emotional well-being.

**According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States are less likely to receive mental health services compared to the overall population, even when experiencing similar levels of need. Additionally, the American Psychological Association reports that individuals who experience discrimination are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety, depression and chronic stress.**

[Home Page - Office of Minority Health \(OMH\) Social Determinants of Health - Healthy People 2030](#)  
[odphp.health.gov](https://odphp.health.gov)

## How Chronic Stress Can Affect Mental Health

When stress is persistent, the nervous system can remain in a heightened state of alert. Over time, this may contribute to:

- Increased anxiety or constant worry
- Sleep disruption
- Irritability or mood shifts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Emotional exhaustion
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, or muscle tension

For those who may feel underrepresented in certain spaces, there can also be added pressure to “prove oneself,” navigate cultural differences, or manage assumptions from others. Even subtle experiences can accumulate and impact energy and resilience. Recognizing stress responses early is an act of self-care.

## Protective Strategies That Strengthen Resilience

While we cannot eliminate all stressors, we can build protective factors that support well-being.

### Strengthen Meaningful Connection

Connection remains one of the strongest buffers against stress.

- Reach out to trusted colleagues, friends, family or spiritual advisors.
- Engage in community or cultural spaces that feel affirming.
- Share your experience if helpful – or allow yourself privacy when needed.

### Regulate Information Intake

Repeated exposure to distressing news or social media can amplify stress.

- Choose reliable sources.
- Limit frequency of updates.
- Create tech-free time, especially before bed.



### Support Your Nervous System

Small resets throughout the day matter.

- Slow breathing (inhale four, exhale six)
- A short walk outside
- Gentle stretching between tasks
- Grounding exercises using all your senses (five things you see, four you feel, etc.)
- Add creative expression such as journalling, art and music

### Focus On What You Can Control

Stability in daily habits builds resilience.

- Consistent sleep routines
- Nourishing meals
- Clear boundaries around work and conversations
- Scheduling small moments of restoration



### Normalize Seeking Support

In some communities, talking about mental health has not always felt comfortable. Seeking support is a sign of strength and self-awareness. Early support can prevent stress from becoming more serious.

## Creating a Culture of Psychological Safety

Psychological safety allows employees to contribute fully without fear of embarrassment or negative consequences.

We each help build that culture by:

- Listening with respect
- Avoiding assumptions about others' experiences
- Remaining open to learning
- Addressing concerns constructively

Caring for mental health strengthens individuals, families and the entire workplace community.

During **National Minority Health Month** – and throughout the year – we encourage awareness, compassion and connection.



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

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988

The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA+ Youth: 1-866-488-7386

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 and Press 1

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) 24/7 Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

Dial 211: 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

### ADDICTION RESOURCES

**SAMHSA's National Helpline** is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and [Spanish](#))

[Also visit the online treatment locator. Call: 1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](#)

**Alcoholics Anonymous** - [Northern New Jersey AA - Meeting Finder \(nnjaa.org\)](#)

**Narcotics Anonymous** - [NA Meetings in NJ \(narcoticsanonymousnj.org\)](#)

**NJ Self Help Clearinghouse** 800-367-6274 - [FIND A GROUP | NJSHGCH \(njgroups.org\)](#)

### Atlantic Behavioral Health

**ACCESS Center:**

**888-247-1400**

Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention

Services **24/7 Hotlines:**

**Atlantic Health Chilton Medical Center: 973-831-5078**

**Atlantic Health Hackettstown Medical Center 908-454 -5141**

**Atlantic Health Morristown Medical Center: 973-540-0100**

**Atlantic Health Overlook Medical Center: 908-522-3586**

**Atlantic Health Newton Medical Center: 973-383-0973**

Website: [www.atlantichealth.org](http://www.atlantichealth.org)