Mental Illness Awareness Month October 2016

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. Join in the campaign to shine light on mental illness and replace stigma with hope. Provide support, educate others and advocate for equal care.

What is Mental Illness?

A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or mood. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.

Recovery, including meaningful roles in social life, school and work, is possible, especially when you start treatment early and play a strong role in your own recovery process.

What can I do?

You can raise awareness about Mental Illness in your school community.

- **Learn about Mental Health:** Know the warning signs, where to get support and why mental health is so important. A mental illness regularly disrupts thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and function, but with early intervention and proper support and treatment, outcomes can be improved.
- **Fight the stigma:** Educate others and correct the myths you hear with the facts.
- **Advocate:** Organize a group of students or class to increase awareness around mental health and promote the services offered at your local LAUSD Wellness Center.
- **Find help and support:** Share your story. If you or someone you care about is experiencing mental health problems, talk to your school social worker, counselor, or mental health professional.

- **Educate:** Debunk and correct the myths you hear about mental health issues and services.
- **Engage:** Work with students and staff to discuss how you can raise awareness and decrease stigma about mental health at your school/office.
- **Empower:** Foster resiliency among youth and staff by promoting positive coping skills and help seeking behavior.
- **Embrace:** Make your classroom or office a safe space where all students are welcome and can seek help.

LAUSD School Resources

For assistance and support, contact your Local District School Mental Health Coordinator or Mental Health Consultant.

For school consultation, Monday-Friday from 8am-4:30pm, contact LAUSD School Mental Health at (213) 241-3841.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION / After Hours Services
If you need IMMEDIATE help, call 911. Los Angeles School Police Department (213) 625-6631.

For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Department of Mental Health 24-hour ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771.

Resources for Mental Health Support

Community Hotlines
NAMI Helpline (800) 950-NAMI (6264)
Trevor Lifeline (866) 488-7386 (24 hours)
Veterans Crisis Line (800) 273-8255 (Press 1)
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-TALK (8255)
(24 hours)

Online Resources
www.mentalhealth.gov/ | www.nami.org/ | www.teenline.org/
www.eachmindmatters.org/ | www.thetrevorproject.org/

Text and Chat Resources
Crisis Chat (11am-11pm, daily) – www.crisischat.org/chat
Teen Line – text "TEEN" to 839863
Veterans Crisis Line – text to 838255
TrevorText – Text "Trevor" to 1-202-304-1200

Smartphone Apps
MY3 | Teen Line Youth Yellow Pages | PTSD Coach

Myths & Facts about Mental Illness

Myth: Mental health conditions are uncommon.
Fact: Mental illness is more prevalent than many people think: 1 in 5 Americans experiences it in their lifetime. 1 in 25 Americans experience a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. It can affect anyone, including all ages, races, income levels and religions. These common conditions are medical, and can cause changes in how people think and feel.

Myth: Mental illness is the result of bad parenting.
Fact: Children can, and do, have mental health conditions. Research shows that 1 in 5 children between the ages of 13 and 18 have or will have a mental illness. In fact, 50% of all lifetime cases begin by age 14. While environmental factors can affect a person's mental health, biological factors can affect individuals just as well. Mental health conditions are not simply a side effect of parenting, but a combination of influences.

Myth: People are "faking it" or doing it for attention.
Fact: No one would choose to have a mental illness, just as no one would choose to have a physical illness. The causes for mental health conditions are intensively studied and they are real. For anyone living with a mental health condition, their specific symptoms may not always be visible to an untrained observer. It can be challenging to relate to what people with mental health conditions are going through, but that doesn't mean that their condition isn't real.

Myth: Mental illness is caused by personal weakness.
Fact: Just like any major illness, mental illness is not the fault of the person who has a mental health condition. It is caused by environmental and biological factors, not a result of personal weakness. A stressful job or home life makes some people more susceptible, as do traumatic life events like being the victim of a crime.

Myth: You're just sad, not depressed.
Fact: Depression is not something a person can will away. People often have the misconception that a person can just "cheer up" or "shake it off." It is not just "the blues," but a serious medical condition that affects the biological functioning of our bodies. However, there are treatments like cognitive therapy or medication that can help address the symptoms of depression.

Myth: You don't need therapy. Just take a pill.
Fact: Everyone has different treatment needs. There is no one, right way to recovery. While medication can help, it may not be the only thing a person needs to feel their absolute best. Often a combination of therapy and medication provides the best outcomes. You should speak with a mental health professional to help determine what is the best treatment plan.

Myth: People with mental illness are "damaged" and different.
Fact: A mental illness does not make someone any less of a person. They are not broken or odd; they just have different experiences that not everyone has to face.

Myth: You can't help someone with mental illness.
Fact: Everyone can help those living with mental illness by speaking and acting in a way that preserves personal dignity. If you are a part of removing mental illness stigma in our society you are helping everyone affected by a condition. Two easy ways to do this are:

- Using person-first language. This means that a person is not their illness; an example would be saying "she has depression" not "she is depressed".
- Do not use offensive slang. A person with a mental health condition is not *crazy*, *psycho*, *insane*, or *loony*. When you use these words you are implying again that a person is solely their illness.

EachMind MATTERS

California's Mental Health Movement

We are a community of individuals and organizations dedicated to a new understanding of mental wellness and equality, starting here in California. Early support and help for mental health challenges can reduce suffering and save lives. We all have mental health; our minds deserve the same respect as our bodies.

WHY LIME GREEN?

Lime green has emerged as the national color of mental health awareness, and **EACH MIND MATTERS** has adopted this vibrant color - symbolic of vigorous life and flourishing health - to represent our efforts to overcome the stereotypes, stigma, and discrimination associated with mental illness. Wear the lime green ribbon to take the movement everywhere you go.

Nearly 9 out of 10

Californians who are experiencing a mental health challenge have been discriminated as a result.

California Well-Being Survey, 2015
RAND Corporation

An average of 6 to 8 years passes after the onset of symptoms of a mental health challenge before many people actually reach out for help. Often, this hesitation to seek help is the result of the stigma that surrounds our notions of mental health, as well as the fear and pain of discrimination associate with these beliefs.

Join us and learn more at EachMindMatters.org

Speak Up!

Now is the time to change the conversation.

Each Mind Matters wants more people engaging in the conversation about mental health in a new way. One way you can do this is by sharing your LIME GREEN STORY.

Lime Green Story

It's not just what you say, but how you say it...

By sharing your story, you let others know that it's okay to talk about mental illness- in talking openly, we offer each other support and can break down the barriers that prevent people from seeking help.

Tools You Can Use

We've got everything you need to get started.

EachMindMatters.org has many resources ready for use, from messages and toolkits to stories of recovery and promotional items to help share the message.

@eachmindmatters   /eachmindmatters   @eachmindmatters

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CalMHSA