



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

What is mental health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Can your mental health change over time?

Yes, it's important to remember that a person's mental health can change over time, depending on many factors. When the demands placed on us exceed our resources and coping abilities, our mental health could be impacted.

How common are mental illnesses?

Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the United States. More than 1 in 5 US adults live with a mental illness. About 1 in 25 U.S. adults lives with a serious mental illness, such as major depression.

What causes mental illness?

There is no single cause for mental illness. A number of factors can contribute to risk for mental illness, such as

- Adverse Childhood experiences such as trauma or a history of abuse
- Experiences related to other ongoing (chronic) medical conditions, such as cancer or diabetes
- Biological factors or chemical imbalances in the brain
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Having feelings of loneliness or isolation

How can you protect and support your own mental well-being?

Evaluate your mental well-being on a routine basis just like you are advised to do for your physical health. Your AFA EAP can help you connect with a professional to assist you with that process or to address any concerns you may have about your or a loved one's mental health. Your local AFA EAP committee members can be

found at [https://www.afacwa.org/your local eap rep](https://www.afacwa.org/your-local-eap-rep) or you can call 1-800-424-2406.