



Don't Suffer Alone

MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS



The first full week of October was designated **Mental Illness Awareness Week** by a U.S. Congress resolution in 1990 to honor the advocacy work of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Awareness is important as mental illness often goes unaddressed. This impacts mental health that supports how we feel about ourselves, interact with others and function emotionally and psychologically. Mental illness is an umbrella term for a number of conditions that can be diagnosed and treated short- or long-term.

This year, NAMI has established the theme for the week of October 2 as "What I Wish I Had Known" to highlight what those with lived experience of a mental illness would have found helpful to know earlier in recovery.

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center is promoting the theme "I Wish I Had Known I Wasn't Alone" to emphasize that negative emotions and thoughts do not need to be faced in isolation. There is no reason to suffer alone with feelings such as ones of unease, anger or unwillingness to see others.

Getting a diagnosis is the start of recovery as mental illness unaddressed is unlikely to improve on its own. Treatment for some of the most common conditions, like anxiety, depression and mood swings associated with bipolar, may include counseling, medication, and lifestyle changes for better self-care.

One's mental well-being can be impacted by different concerns, but when symptoms continue and interfere with daily life they should be addressed.

Early intervention may be enough to restore one's mental well-being.

Early intervention may help to lessen the severity of a mental illness diagnosis.

A call to an individual's primary health care provider is one good place to start for early intervention.

Treatment for mental illness supports an individual in pursuing the life they want to live.

Some 1 in 5 Americans experience a mental illness in any given year.

Stigmas rooted in misinformation and misunderstanding around mental illness can cause someone to feel shame and not seek the help they need.

Encouraging someone to get professional help for a mental health concern is love.

Asking someone you are concerned about how they are, including if they feel suicidal, could help save their life. Free and confidential support for individuals in suicidal crisis or emotional distress is available 24/7 from the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

Everyone has mental health and many factors, biological, psychological and environmental, can impact it.

Anyone of any age can experience poor mental health from injury, trauma, chronic stress, lifestyle changes.

Caring for one's mental health issues is as important as seeing a provider for other medical concerns.

Some common symptoms of poor mental health include changes in sleep habits, feelings of sadness, an inability to concentrate, extreme mood swings. These signs are not a diagnosis of mental illness, but an indication to seek professional help.

Awareness of mental health in very young children is important, too. A call to their pediatrician may help address prolonged behavioral symptoms that disrupt daily activities and interactions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that “poor mental health in adolescence is more than feeling blue.” It can impact a young person’s decision-making and performance in school and lead to behavior that puts them at risk for substance use and sexual disease.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents talk first to their children about any concerns around changes in personality, behavior or habits and, if serious, talk to their pediatrician.

Fifty percent of mental illness begins by 14, and three-quarters by 24, according to the American Psychiatric Association.

MassHealth primary care providers are required to offer standardized behavioral health screenings to patients from birth to age 21.

Additional resources:

If you or someone you know may be considering suicide, contact the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988 or chat 988lifeline.org Call 911 for a medical emergency or if someone is at immediate risk for harm.

Further information on mental health is available on this CDC web page, www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/index.htm

Further information on the warning signs and symptoms of mental illness is available from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms

Further information on Children’s Mental Health is available from this CDC web page, www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/index.html

Further information on Mental Health and Teens is available from the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Mental-Health-and-Teens-Watch-for-Danger-Signs.aspx

To learn more about MiraVista, please call Kim Lee at 413-563-6049 or email her at klee@miravistabhc.care



About MiraVista

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center opened in Spring 2021 to address the critical need for additional inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services in Western Massachusetts. Located on the grounds of the former Providence Behavioral Health Hospital in Holyoke, MiraVista offers psychiatric care services for both adults and adolescents, as well as an array of recovery rehabilitation programs including Acute Treatment Services (detox), Clinical Stabilization Services (post-detox), and outpatient services such as the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), court-ordered services, and Outpatient Medication Supported Recovery. Mira Vista cares for thousands of individuals from throughout the Western Mass region each year.

Care. Reimagined.

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center was built on the premise of person-centered care. We maintain an organization of thoughtful, empathic, energized team-members committed to creating and maintaining a warm, welcoming, and effective culture of care. Our purpose is to provide compassionate, effective, inspiring care for those suffering from emotional distress and substance misuse so they are empowered to lead fulfilling lives.



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