

TIP OF THE MONTH

Mental Health Matters

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How prevalent are mental health struggles?

- More people will experience mental health issues than not.
- By age 75, more than half of people in the US will have experienced mental illness.
- About one in five adults has a mental illness and one in 20 adults has a serious mental illness, such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.

Mental illness affects people between the ages of 18 and 25 more than any other age group, and almost 15 million people over the age of 12 experience a substance use disorder. Every year in the US, almost 11,000,000 million adults think seriously about suicide.

It's important to recognize that the development

of mental health issues is complex and often includes biological and social factors. Symptoms can include:

- sleep problems
- lack of concentration
- aches and pains
- irritability
- low motivation
- self-medication

Mental health disorders are more common than you might think, but they are still stigmatized – in our society as well as by those who have mental health disorders. **Eight in ten workers say shame and stigma prevent them from seeking treatment for a mental health condition.**

Would you like to change the way the world sees mental health?

Using person-centered language to discuss mental illness and addiction recognizes the dignity of affected people and can avoid perpetuating stigma. Below are simple suggestions for language replacements so you can avoid using language that is derogatory toward anyone.

DEROGATORY/LABELING TERM	PERSON-CENTERED, NEUTRAL TERM
crazy, insane, nuts	person with mental illness
schizophrenic	person with schizophrenia
substance abuser	person with a substance use disorder
committed suicide	died by suicide

There are many ways we can all make a difference. Talk about mental health and wellness practices as part of life. This normalizes the human experience that includes mental health challenges and makes it easier for someone who is experiencing distress to ask for support.

If you are worried about someone, tell them in a calm, compassionate manner that you are concerned, and ask how they are doing. Then actively listen. “You haven’t seemed like yourself this week, how are you doing?”

Avoid saying things like, “We all feel bad sometimes” or “It could be worse” as this minimizes or invalidates their experience.

Offer support. Thank them for sharing with you and let them know you want to support. Ask, “How can I help?”

Offer to help them connect with care, such as with FEAP or other resources. Encourage them to add the crisis phone 1-800-273-8225 or text (741741) into their contacts.

To understand more and help eliminate stigma, take National Alliance on Mental Illness’s (NAMI) [StigmaFree Pledge](#).

If you are concerned for the mental well-being of yourself or someone else, FEAP is available for confidential assistance: 434.243.2643 or uvafeap.com.

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