



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

ALBANY — The last two years have been stressful for everyone, from children to adults, and staff at Linn County Mental Health want people to know that it's OK to sometimes feel overwhelmed.

They also want you to know that help is available anyone with serious mental health concerns at no charge by calling 541-967-3866. Members of the Linn County Mental Health Crisis Team are available 24/7 by calling 1-800-304-7468, or dial 9-1-1.

You are not alone. Everyone at some time, feels overwhelmed and stressed out.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in five adults has experienced a mental illness and one in 20 has experienced a serious mental illness. One in 15 adults has experienced a substance use disorder and mental illness at the same time and more than 12 million adults have had serious thoughts of committing suicide.

Young people also experience mental health issues. One in six children ages 12 to 17 have had a major depressive episode and 3 million have had serious suicidal thoughts.

One in five young people say the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative effect on their mental health and one in 10 young people under the age of 18 have experienced a mental health condition following a COVID-19 diagnosis.

Educators report major behavioral issues among students as they have returned to in-school learning.

The Linn County Mental Health Advisory Board offers the following suggestions to help mid-valley residents deal with stress/mental illness:

General/Stress

If you have ever noticed changes in your sleep patterns, a decrease in energy level, you find your eating habits are changing, or you're isolating yourself; you might be experiencing chronic stress.

Some helpful tips to try, include allowing yourself time to relax, reaching out to positive people in your life, and asking for support; are all signs of strength.

It's important to figure out what works best for you!

Sleep

Having trouble sleeping? This isn't just another mattress commercial.

Did you know that "lack of sleep" can affect your mental and physical health?

According to the Sleep Association, between 50 to 70 million U.S. adults have a sleep disorder.

If you're not rested you may notice you have difficulty concentrating, an increase in irritability, you can't make it through the day without wanting a nap, or you struggle with remembering things.

Some helpful tips to improve your sleep are making sure your sleep area is comfortable for you, turning your electronics to nighttime mode, creating a night time routine or if your evenings are too hectic, having a regular wakeup time will help you sleep better.

Physical Exercise

When you think of exercising do you think of the gym, sports, sweating? What about doing the dishes, walking your dog, mowing the lawn or maybe playing with your kids?

Physical activity is really any time you're up and about. Did you know physical activity is directly related to your mental health? It relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts overall mood.

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity every week. This could be walking your dog for 10 minutes three times a day during the week or maybe as simple as taking your kids to the park for half an hour a few days a week.

Eating Habits

Do you wish it was easier to eat healthy?

Did you know eating a well-balanced diet can affect your mental health?

Some easy ways to work on healthy eating habits include drinking a glass of water before you eat a meal, bring a healthy snack with you instead of buying

something on the run, doing your best not to skip meals and keeping variety in your diet.

It's important to remember eating healthy isn't one size fits all; figure out what works best for you.

Symptoms of possible mental health issues:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality ("lack of insight" or anosognosia)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains")
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

National Alliance on Mental Illness

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