

Key Messages

- Addressing mental health before Stage 4—this year’s theme for May is Mental Health Month—calls attention to the importance addressing mental health symptoms early, identifying potential underlying diseases, and planning an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health.
- When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don’t wait years to treat them. We start before Stage 4—we begin with prevention. So why don’t we do the same for individuals who are dealing with potentially serious mental illness?
- About half of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health disorder sometime in their life, with first onset usually in childhood or adolescence.
- Research shows that by ignoring mental health symptoms, we lose ten years in which we could intervene in order to change people’s lives for the better. During most of these years most people still have supports that allow them to succeed—home, family, friends, school, and work. Intervening effectively during early stages of mental illness can save lives and change the trajectories of people living with mental illnesses.
- One of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition is to take a mental health screening. Go to www.mhascreening.org to take a screening for either depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Use your screening results to start a conversation with your primary care provider, or a trusted friend or family member and begin to plan a course of action for addressing your mental health.
- MHA’s goal is to get every American screened and aware of their mental health, so they can address it #B4Stage4.

Feel free to supplement these key messages with the rich assortment of statistics cited throughout the fact sheets and infographics.

www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may



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