

January Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of January:

- *Mental Wellness Month*
- *National Drug Facts Week*
- *No Name Calling Week*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

Mental Wellness Month

National Mental Wellness Month is an opportunity to recognize our mental well-being as a vital component of our overall health. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental wellness as “a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

Several factors can have a negative impact on emotional and mental well-being, including relationships, financial issues, work, school, stress, substance abuse, and chronic illness. Just as people take care of their health by eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep to prevent physical illness, a similar approach should be taken with mental wellness. The following strategies can be utilized to improve mental well-being:

1. **Develop a positive attitude**—People with positive attitudes are apt to be happier, more successful, and better able to handle crisis and stress. And in concert with the positive attitude, get an attitude of gratitude for what you have instead of dwelling on what you don't.
2. **Avoid negative self-talk**—Laugh at your mistakes and say I'll remember next time.
3. **View a crisis situation as an opportunity**—Creative problem solving can expand your options. Try to make a list of good things that could result from a current problem you're having.
4. **Laugh**—Humor is a great stress reducer. Studies indicate laughter can make you healthier.
5. **Exercise**—Regular exercise increases energy and releases brain bio-chemicals to ward off depression and anxiety. Just a 15 minute walk a day will help keep body and soul together.
6. **Improve your diet**—During times of stress you can skip meals or eat junk food. A diet rich in fruit, vegetables and fiber will help you maintain the physical and mental stress you need to deal with the situation.
7. **Get enough rest**- Sleep disturbances are common during stress.
8. **Avoid alcohol use as a sleep aid**- It actually disrupts your sleep within 4 hours.
9. **Be careful not to rely on substances for emotional support**- Refrain from over using caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, or food.
10. **Ask for help**- If you feel overwhelmed, asking for help can help manage personal stress and even help prevent it from becoming a bigger problem.

SOURCES:

<http://up4health.org/2015/01/12/january-is-mental-wellness-month/>

<http://www.mhc-tn.org/news/2014/01/january-mental-wellness-month>

<http://mygutinstinct.org/january-is-national-mental-wellness-month/>

National Drug Facts Week



Launched in 2010, National Drug Facts Week joins teens and scientific experts together in an effort to shatter persistent myths about drug use and addiction that originate from the Internet, TV, movies, music, or peers.

“National Drug Facts Week has been growing every year,” said National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. “This tells us how much teens — who are bombarded daily with misinformation about drugs — want science-based facts about drug use.”

Ideas for community-based events, as well as success stories from previous years, are available at the following site: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week>

For more information, download the National Drug Facts Week Fact Sheet at <http://drugfactsweek.drugabuse.gov/files/1pagefactsheet.pdf> (PDF format, 221KB)

SOURCES:

<http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week>

No Name Calling Week

Inspired by the young adult novel *The Misfits*, No Name-Calling Week is celebrated each year in schools across the nation. Its goal is to celebrate kindness while working to create safe schools free of name-calling, bullying and bias.

Visit the following websites for more information including ideas for lesson plans and discussion questions to implement with students:

- <http://glsen.org/nonamecallingweek>
- <http://pages.simonandschuster.com/nonamecalling>

SOURCES:

<http://glsen.org>

February Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of February:

- *Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month*
- *Children of Alcoholics Week*
- *Random Acts of Kindness Week*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Teen Dating Violence Month is a national effort to raise awareness about abuse in teens and 20-something relationships and promote programs that prevent it.

Dating violence is more common than many people may think. One in three teens in the U.S. will experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse by someone they are in a relationship with before they become adults.

Dating Abuse Statistics

- *Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.*
- *One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.*
- *One in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.*
- *One quarter of high school girls have been victims of physical or sexual abuse.*
- *Approximately 70% of college students say they have been sexually coerced.*
- *Only 33% of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.*
- *81% of parents believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue.*
- *A teen's confusion about the law and their desire for confidentiality are two of the most significant barriers stopping young victims of abuse from seeking help.*

Download the toolkit filled with activities to make a difference during Teen Dating Violence Month

at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1_1Tf48vsiWSTFpclhkRndDLVk/view?usp=sharing&pli=1

Help is available to those who are experience abuse through the following contact information:



Chat at <http://loveisrespect.org>



Text "loveis" to 22522



Call 1-866-3331-9474

SOURCES:

- <http://teendvmonth.org/2015/>
- <http://www.loveisrespect.org/teenDVmonth>

Children of Alcoholics Week

One in five Americans has lived with an alcoholic family member. Since alcoholism runs in families, these children have a greater risk of becoming alcoholics themselves. These children also exhibit some form of abuse or neglect throughout their childhood. The potential lack of emotional support from a parent can cause a mix of feelings which include:

- **Guilt**- The child may see himself or herself as the main cause of the parent's drinking.
- **Anxiety**- The child may worry constantly about the situation at home. He or she may fear the alcoholic parent will become sick or injured, and may also fear fights and violence between the parents.
- **Embarrassment**- Parents may give the child the message that there is a terrible secret at home. The ashamed child does not invite friends home and is afraid to ask anyone for help.
- **Inability to have close relationships**- Due to the child's constant disappointment caused by the drinking parent, he or she often does not trust others.
- **Confusion**- The alcoholic parent will change suddenly from being loving to angry, regardless of the child's behavior. A regular daily schedule, which is very important for a child, does not exist because bedtimes and mealtimes are constantly changing.
- **Anger**- The child feels anger at the alcoholic parent for drinking, and may be angry at the non-alcoholic parent for a lack of support and protection.
- **Depression**- The child feels lonely and helpless to change the situation.

Children are often embarrassed by their home life and do not want others to know there are problems at home. The following behaviors signal a drinking or additional issue at home:

- Failure in school; truancy
- Lack of friends; withdrawal from classmates
- Delinquent behavior, such as stealing or violence
- Frequent physical complaints, such as headaches or stomachaches
- Overachieving
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Aggression towards other children
- Risky behaviors
- Depression and/or suicidal thoughts or behavior

It is important to recognize that children and adolescents will benefit from educational programs on substance abuse as well as the treatment options and support groups offered for alcohol addiction. These children are four times more likely to become an alcoholic and education or therapy may greatly reduce this risk.

SOURCE:

http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/Facts_for_Families_Pages/Children_Of_Alcoholics_17.aspx

Random Acts of Kindness Week

International Random Acts of Kindness Week challenges people to attempt at least one random act of kindness each day of the celebratory week. Examples include:

- *Let someone go before you in line*
- *Write a thank you note to someone who you appreciate*
- *Do a favor for someone such as shoveling snow for a neighbor*
- *Collect clothes to donate*
- *Volunteer for a charity*
- *Give compliments*

For ideas, FAQs, and downloadable resources such as cards and bookmarks, please visit: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/rak-week>

SOURCE:

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org>

March Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of March:

- *Self- Harm Awareness Month*
- *National Problem Gambling Awareness Month*
- *National Poison Prevention Week*
- *Brain Awareness Week*
- *National Youth Violence Prevention Week*
- *Kids Kick Butts Day*
- *World Bipolar Day*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

Self- Harm Awareness Month

This observance aims to raise awareness of the issue of people self-harming (deliberately hurting themselves physically in order to deal with the emotional pain they are experiencing.) Due to the stigma around mental and emotional health, there are several misconceptions surrounding the issue of self-injury. The truth is that:

- *Self-harm is not a mental illness, nor is it an attempt to commit suicide.*
- *It doesn't just affect girls. Boys self-harm too, but they are much less likely to tell anyone about it.*
- *People from all walks of life self-harm, regardless of their social or ethnic background.*
- *Self-harm is not merely an 'attention seeking behavior'.*
- *It is not easy for a young person to stop self-harming behavior.*

For additional information and resources, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.lifesigns.org.uk/siad/>
- http://www.routledge mentalhealth.com/articles/support_self-harm_awareness_month_this_march/

SOURCE:

http://www.youngminds.org.uk/about/our_campaigns/self-harm_awareness_day

National Problem Gambling Awareness Month

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month. The goal of this campaign is to educate the public and healthcare professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and promote the availability of help and hope both locally and nationally.

Signs and Symptoms of Addiction to Gambling

- *Gambling in secret or lying about the amount and/or intensity of gambling*
- *Trouble controlling gambling*
- *Gambling even when there is trouble paying one's bills or expenses for self and/or family*

It is important for problem gamblers to understand that denial keeps problem gambling going. If friends and family are worried, a problem gambler should listen to them carefully, take a hard look at how gambling is affecting their lives, and remember that asking for help is not a sign of weakness.

For additional information, visit <https://ncadd.org/in-the-news/1029-march-2014-a-s-national-problem-gambling-awareness-month->

SOURCE:

<http://www.ncpgambling.org/programs-resources/programs/awareness-month/>

National Poison Prevention Week

National Poison Prevention Week aims to help people learn more about ways to keep themselves and their families safe from poison.

Most Common Poisons Among Children:

- *cosmetics and personal care products*
- *cleaning substances*
- *pain medicine/fever-reducers*
- *coins, thermometers*
- *plants*
- *cough and cold medicines*
- *pesticides*
- *vitamins*
- *hormones and hormone antagonists (diabetes medications, contraceptives)*
- *gastrointestinal preparations*
- *antimicrobials*
- *arts, crafts and office supplies*
- *antihistamines*
- *hydrocarbons (lamp oil, kerosene, gasoline, lighter fluid)*

Most Common Poisons Among Adults:

- *pain medicine*
- *sedatives, hypnotics, antipsychotics*
- *cleaning substances*
- *antidepressants*
- *alcohols*
- *food products and food poisoning*
- *cosmetics and personal care products*
- *chemicals*
- *pesticides*
- *cardiovascular drugs*
- *fumes, gases, vapors*
- *antihistamines*
- *anticonvulsants*
- *antimicrobials*
- *stimulants and street drugs*
- *plants*
- *cough and cold preparations*

If you suspect someone has been poisoned, immediately call the Poison Help line at **1-800-222-1222**. Additional information and resources can be found by visiting:

<http://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/national-poison-prevention-week/index.html>

Did You Know?

“Take Back Medications” are held in Putnam County semiannually. For more information, contact:

- Putnam County Communities That Care Coalition (845-225-4646)
- Putnam County Sheriff’s Office (845-225-4300)
- Putnam County Department of Health (845-808-1390)

SOURCE:

<http://www.poisonprevention.org/>

Brain Awareness Week

Brain Awareness Week (BAW) is a global campaign to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. Activities include open days at neuroscience labs, exhibitions about the brain, lectures on brain-related topics, social media campaigns, displays at libraries and community centers, and classroom workshops. For more information, visit <http://www.sfn.org/public-outreach/brain-awareness-week>

SOURCE:

<http://www.dana.org/BAW/>

National Youth Violence Prevention Week

The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness and to educate students, teachers, school administrators, counselors, school resource officers, school staff, parents, and the public on effective ways to prevent or reduce youth violence.

Youth violence refers to harmful behaviors that can start early and continue into young adulthood. The young person can be a victim, an offender, or a witness to the violence. This includes various behaviors such as bullying, slapping or hitting, robbery and assault. The ultimate goal is to stop youth violence before it starts. For more information including several prevention and intervention strategies, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/youth-violence-accomplishments-a.pdf>

SOURCES:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/>
- <http://nationalsave.org/what-we-do/save-events/national-youth-violence-prevention-week/>

Kids Kick Butts Day

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against tobacco. The campaign's main goal is to protect children from exposure and addiction to tobacco by raising awareness, changing public policies to limit the marketing and sales of tobacco to children, altering the environment in which tobacco use and policy decisions are made, and actively countering the tobacco industry and its special interests

Take a look at the following facts provided by the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention:

Tobacco use leads to disease and disability.

- *Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases (including emphysema, bronchitis, and chronic airway obstruction), and diabetes.*
- *For every person who dies from a smoking-related disease, about 30 more people suffer with at least one serious illness from smoking.*
- *More than 16 million Americans suffer from a disease caused by smoking.*

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death.

- *Worldwide, tobacco use causes more than 5 million deaths per year, and current trends show that tobacco use will cause more than 8 million deaths annually by 2030.*
- *Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths per year in the United States, including an estimated 41,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure. This is about one in five deaths annually, or 1,300 deaths every day.*
- *On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.*

The tobacco industry spends billions of dollars each year on cigarette advertising and promotions.

- *\$8.4 billion total spent in 2011*

Tobacco use costs the United States billions of dollars each year.

- *More than \$289 billion a year, including at least \$133 billion in direct medical care for adults and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity*

Thousands of young people start smoking cigarettes every day.

- *Each day, more than 3,200 persons younger than 18 years of age smoke their first cigarette.*
- *Each day, an estimated 2,100 youth and young adults who have been occasional smokers become daily cigarette smokers.*

Many adult cigarette smokers want to quit smoking.

- *In 2011, 68.9% of adult smokers wanted to stop smoking and 42.7% had made a quit attempt in the past year.*

For more information, visit the following websites:

- <http://www.kickbuttsday.org/about/>
- [http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what we do/youth initiatives/kick butts day/](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what_we_do/youth_initiatives/kick_butts_day/)

SOURCE:

http://www.preventionpartners.com/events/kick_butts_day.cfm

World Bipolar Day

World Bipolar Day (WBD) will be celebrated each year on March 30th, the birthday of Vincent Van Gogh, who was posthumously diagnosed as probably having bipolar disorder. The vision of WBD is to bring world awareness to bipolar disorders and eliminate social stigma. The goal of World Bipolar Day is to bring the world population information about bipolar disorders that will educate and improve sensitivity towards the illness.

Bipolar Disorder is a mental illness that represents a significant challenge to patients, health care workers, family members and our communities. While growing acceptance of bipolar disorder as a medical condition, like diabetes and heart disease, has taken hold in some parts of the world, unfortunately the stigma associated with the illness is a barrier to care and continues to impede early diagnosis and effective treatment. In order to address the disparity in how bipolar disorder is viewed in different parts of the world, the Asian Network of Bipolar Disorder (ANBD), the International Bipolar Foundation (IBPF), and the International Society for Bipolar Disorders (ISBD) came together to work on the concept of a world bipolar day.

It is estimated that the global prevalence of bipolar disorder is between 1 and 2% and has been said to be as high as 5% and, according to the World Health Organization, is the 6th leading cause of disability in the world. In order to address this global problem, we need a global solution. With support from leading experts from around the world, groups like ANBD, IBPF, and ISBD are supporting efforts to investigate biological causes, targets for drug treatment, better treatments, better methods of diagnosis, the genetic components of the illness, and strategies for living well with bipolar disorder. Collaborations between research and advocacy groups are continuing to grow, and WBD is a tribute to the success of this strategy.

Any local events being organized can be shared with the world on the WBD Facebook page (www.facebook.com/worldbipolaraday).

For more information, please visit <http://ibpf.org/blog/world-bipolar-day-call-action>

SOURCE:

<http://www.isbd.org/advocacy-and-patient-resources/world-bipolar-day>

April Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of April:

- *National Child Abuse Prevention Month*
- *Stress Awareness Month*
- *Distracted Driving Awareness Month*
- *National Alcohol Awareness Month*
- *Medication Safety Week*
- *Alcohol-Free Weekend*
- *National Alcohol Screening Day*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

First declared by the presidential proclamation in 1983, Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse. Child maltreatment is a significant public health problem in the United States. According to Child Protective Service agencies, more than 686,000 children were victims of maltreatment in 2012. Another 1,640 children died in the United States in 2012 from abuse and neglect. In addition, the financial costs for victims and society are substantial. A recent CDC study showed that the total lifetime estimated financial cost associated with just 1 year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment is \$124 billion.

Child maltreatment includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent or caregiver that results in harm or potential harm. There are four common types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** is the use of physical force, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other shows of force against a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves engaging a child in sexual acts. It includes behaviors such as fondling, penetration, and exposing a child to other sexual activities.
- **Emotional abuse** refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include name calling, shaming, rejection, withholding love, and threatening.
- **Neglect** is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. These needs include housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care.

A body of research has identified factors known to prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect. These— are outlined in the Resource Guide which can be found at: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/resource-guide/?hasBeenRedirected=1>

For additional information, please refer to the following online resources:

- **National Child Abuse Prevention Tip Packet:** https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/tipsheets-2015_en.pdf
- **Child Abuse Fact Sheet** http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/ChildPhysicalAbuse_Factsheet.pdf
- **Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit:** <http://www.nctsn.org/products/child-welfare-trauma-training-toolkit-2008>
- **MCTSN Child Physical Abuse Speaker Series:** <http://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=18>
- **Q&A About Child Physical Abuse:** http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/qa_kolko_final.pdf
- **Positive Parenting Tips:** <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/index.html>
- **Tips and Brochures:** <http://www.preventchildabuse.org/index.php/news-and-publications/tips-and-brochures>

SOURCES:

- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/>

- <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cm-factsheet--2013.pdf>

National Stress Awareness Month

During National Stress Awareness Month, health care professionals and health promotion experts across the country join forces to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic. This cooperative effort aims to inform people about the dangers of stress, successful coping strategies, and harmful misconceptions about stress that are prevalent in our society.

One of the key components to managing stress effectively is carving out at least 10-15 minutes a day for some stress relieving activities including:

- Exercising
- Reading a book
- Playing a sport
- Spending time with a friend or loved one
- Meditation
- Yoga

For more information on reducing stress, gaining control over negative emotions, and improving relationships, download the free e-book at: <http://stressawarenessmonth.com/free-stress-relief-ebook-2015/>

SOURCES:

- <http://www.foh.hhs.gov/calendar/april.html>
- <http://www.foh.hhs.gov/dbdmarketing/nsam.html>
- <http://stressawarenessmonth.com/>

Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Distracted driving includes any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player

The number of people killed in distraction-affected crashes decreased slightly from 3,360 in 2011 to 3,328 in 2012. An estimated 421,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver in 2012. This was a nine percent increase from the estimated 387,000 people injured in 2011.

With text messaging requiring visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction. Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field blindfolded. A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive. 20 percent of teens and 10 percent of parents admit that they have extended text conversations while driving. Engaging in visual-manual subtasks (such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting) associated with the use of hand-held phones and other portable devices increased the risk of getting into a crash by three times.

The best way to end distracted driving is to educate all Americans about the danger it poses. To learn more, visit the following websites:

- <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/distracted-driving-awareness-month.aspx>
- <http://www.nsc.org/DistractedDrivingDocuments/The-Great-Multitasking-Lie-print.pdf>

SOURCES:

- <http://www.distraction.gov/index.html>
- <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/distracted-driving-awareness-month.aspx>

Medication Safety Week

Medication Safety Week is a time to raise awareness of the importance of taking medication safely. This observance has seven themes:

- **Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet**
Discard outdated medicines and old prescriptions. Many drugs lose their potency over time. Store medicines in their original containers and in a cool, dry place, away from children and pets.
- **Know Your Medicines.** Make a list of all the medicines you are taking (both the generic and brand names), the drug's purpose and why you are taking it.
- **Read Medicine Labels Carefully**
Note precautionary stickers as well as the route, dose and frequency of your medicines. Keep medicines in their original containers. Pay attention to warnings and special instructions such as whether or not to take the medication with food. The effectiveness of many medicines is dependent upon taking them at the correct times and by the correct route.
- **Dietary Supplements Awareness**
Discuss taking a dietary supplement with your doctor or practitioner and your pharmacist *before* you start it. Herbal medicines and other supplements can react with medicines.
- **Organize Your Medicines**
Keep an updated record listing all medicines and supplements you are taking. Use of a medicine organizer box may be helpful, especially for those taking more than one pill several times a day.
- **Transitional Care Awareness**
A change in medical regimen can place you at increased risk. Be diligent about communication with all healthcare professionals. Make sure you understand your medicines and how you are to take them before leaving the hospital or doctor's office. Ask for written instructions.
- **Better Communication With Health Professionals**
Actively seek information from your pharmacist about the pills and the supplements that you are taking. Ask for print-out sheets on drugs. Discuss all risks and benefits and possible side effects with your prescribing practitioner.

For more information on taking medications safely, please

visit: http://www.womensheart.org/content/HeartWellness/medication_safety.asp

Keeping Kids Safe

In 2011, 67,700 children were seen in emergency room for medicine poisoning. Children's curiosity paired with the fact that many medications look like candy, puts kids at risk. Here are a few tips to keep children safe:

- *Put all medicines up and away and out of sight including your own.*
- *Consider places where kids get into medicine.*
- *Consider products you might not think about as medicines (vitamins, eye drops, etc.)*
- *Put the toll-free Poison Help Number into your home and cell phone: 1-800-222-1222.*

Visit the following link for additional: <http://www.safekids.org/tip/medication-safety-tips>

SOURCES:

- <http://www.safekids.org/medicinesafety>
- http://www.womensheart.org/content/outreach/medicationsafetyweek/whatis_medicationsafetyweek.asp

National Alcohol Awareness Month

April is Alcohol Awareness Month, a time to learn about the health and social problems caused by drinking too much. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) encourages the public to dedicate this month to understanding how excessive drinking can affect health, to evaluating their own drinking habits, and to discovering the latest developments in treatments for alcohol use disorders.

Many adults drink moderately and responsibly without complications, and there are indications from research that some can derive modest health benefits. At the same time, alcohol-related problems — which result from drinking too much, too fast, or too often — are among the most significant public health issues in the United States and internationally.

NIAAA encourages people to evaluate their drinking habits during Alcohol Awareness Month. The NIAAA website can help you with the following informational and self-assessment tools:

- <http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/IsYourDrinkingPatternRisky/WhatsLowRiskDrinking.asp> (*Information on recommended drinking limits*)
- <http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/IsYourDrinkingPatternRisky/WhatsYourPattern.asp> (*An interactive tool for individuals to self-assess their drinking patterns and determine whether they could benefit from a change*)

For those who find that their drinking patterns are above the recommended limits, cutting back or quitting can have significant health benefits. People who reduce their drinking decrease their risks for injuries, liver and heart disease, depression, stroke, sexually transmitted diseases, and several types of cancers.

Underage Drinking

Adolescents use alcohol more frequently than they do all other illicit drugs combined, according to the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The study found the following rates of alcohol use among adolescents:

- About 9.3 million persons aged 12 to 20 reported drinking alcohol in the past month.
- Approximately 5.9 million were binge drinkers and 1.7 million were heavy drinkers.
- 889,000 youths aged 12 to 17 needed treatment for an alcohol use problem, but only 76,000 received treatment at a specialty facility.

To learn more about underage drinking and how to talk to kids about it, please visit: http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/media/Underage_Brochure_508final.pdf

SOURCES:

- <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/niaaa-recognizes-alcohol-awareness-month-2015>
- <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/national-alcohol-awareness-month%20>

The following page contains information regarding Alcohol Free Weekend and National Alcohol Screening Day, two integral components of National Alcohol Awareness Month.

Alcohol Free Weekend

This observance is designed to raise public awareness about the use of alcohol and how it may be affecting individuals, families, and the community. During this seventy-two-hour period, NCADD extends an open invitation to all Americans, young and old, to participate in three alcohol-free days and to use this time to contact local NCADD affiliates and other alcoholism agencies to learn more about alcoholism and its early symptoms.

You can contact NCADD/Putnam by phone at 845-225-4646 or email at carmel.ny@ncadd.org. To find another NCADD affiliate, visit: <http://ncadd.org/index.php/affiliate-network/find-an-affiliate>

National Alcohol Screening Day

National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD) is an outreach, education, and screening initiative that raises awareness about harmful and dependent drinking behaviors and connects individuals who are at risk with treatment options. NASD is held annually on Thursday of the first full week of April. Thousands of colleges, community-based organizations, and military installations provide the program to the public each year.

Coalitions can find a local event or take an anonymous screening online at www.HowDoYouScore.org. The screening site is free and accessible to the public year-round.

SOURCES:

- <http://mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/initiatives>
- <http://ncadd.org>

May Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of May:

- *Family Support Month*
- *National Mental Health Awareness Month*
- *National Child Mental Health Month*
- *Children's Mental Health Awareness Week*
- *National Anxiety and Depression Awareness Week*
- *National Prevention Week*
- *National Schizophrenia Awareness Week*
- *National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day*
- *World No Tobacco Day*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

Family Support Month

“Family Support Month” aims to raise awareness of the importance of “family,” which child-development experts describe as “someone who has a strong emotional attachment to another.” Family Support Month provides an opportunity for families to share special time together, to develop or renew relationships, identify or rediscover needs and to remind everyone of the importance of family involvement in raising healthy, confident children.

A few simple and easy ways to support and promote an emotionally fulfilled and healthy family include:

- *Positive physical contact and interaction, such family game nights, story time, etc.*
- *Consistent daily routine*
- *Modelling positive adult relationships*
- *Loving and appropriate discipline in a controlled environment, provided with comfort and a follow up discussion thereafter.*
- *Giving sincere verbal recognition and praise to one another*
- *Age appropriate new experiences, such as going to the park, camping, baking cookies, etc.*

For additional information and resources, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.familysupportamerica.org/>
- <https://www.kidspeace.org/aboutkidspeace.aspx?id=1958>

SOURCE:

<http://www.cmrn.co.za/index.php/news-events/articles/105-may-is-family-support-month>

National Mental Health Awareness Month

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. In 2013, President Obama proclaimed May as National Mental Health Awareness Month and brought the issue of mental health to the forefront of our nation's thoughts. This provides a time for people to come together and display the passion and strength of those working to improve the lives of the tens of millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

Trying to tell the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy. There's no easy test that can let someone know if there is mental illness or if actions and thoughts might be typical behaviors of a person or the result of a physical illness. Each illness has its own set of symptoms but some common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:

- *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*
- *Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality*
- *Abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs*
- *Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes*
- *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 (mostly in adolescents)*

Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Learning all you can about mental health is an important first step. Reach out to your health insurance, primary care doctor or state/country mental health authority for more resources. Contact the NAMI HelpLine at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) to find out what services and supports are available in your community.

SOURCE:

<http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Know-the-Warning-Signs>

National Child Mental Health Month/Week/Day

As described by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), National Children's Mental Health Month, Week, and Day help raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health and its essential role in a child's healthy development.

Mental health conditions can begin to develop in young children. Since they're still learning how to identify and talk about thoughts and emotions, their most obvious symptoms are behavioral.

Symptoms in children may include:

- *Changes in school performance*
- *Excessive worry or anxiety, for instance fighting to avoid bed or school*
- *Hyperactive behavior*
- *Frequent nightmares*
- *Frequent disobedience or aggression*
- *Frequent temper tantrums*

For more information about these observances and how to get involved, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.samhsa.gov/children>
- http://www2.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Childrens_Mental_Health_Awareness_Week&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=167630

SOURCE:

<http://www.samhsa.gov/children>

National Anxiety and Depression Awareness Week

The first week of May gives rise to the National Anxiety and Depression Awareness Week. More than any other time of year, the first week of May offers many opportunities to screen for mental illnesses that include anxiety.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety is the first step to getting someone the help that they need.

Symptoms of anxiety include:

- *Feelings of apprehension or dread*
- *Trouble concentrating*
- *Irritability*
- *Pounding heart*
- *Sweating*
- *Stomach upset or dizziness*
- *Frequent urination or diarrhea*
- *Shortness of breath*
- *Tremors or twitches/muscle tension*
- *Headaches*
- *Fatigue*
- *Insomnia*

Symptoms of depression include:

- *Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness*
- *Loss of interest in daily activities*
- *Appetite or weight changes*
- *Sleep changes*
- *Anger or irritability*
- *Loss of energy*
- *Self-loathing*
- *Reckless behavior*
- *Concentration problems*
- *Unexplained aches and pains*

Many people with anxiety disorders also suffer from depression at some point. Since depression makes anxiety worse (and vice versa), it's important to seek treatment for both conditions. For additional information, please visit <http://www.adaa.org/>

SOURCE:

<http://www.helpguide.org/>

National Prevention Week

National Prevention Week is a SAMHSA-supported annual health observance dedicated to increasing public awareness of and action around substance abuse and mental health issues. There are three primary goals of National Prevention Week:

- 1) To involve communities in raising awareness of behavioral health issues and in implementing prevention strategies*
- 2) To foster partnerships and collaboration with federal agencies and national organizations dedicated to behavioral and public health*
- 3) To promote and disseminate quality behavioral health resources and publications*

National Prevention Week is timed to allow schools to take part in a prevention-themed event before the school year ends, raising awareness in students of all ages. The percentages of marijuana, cigarette, and alcohol initiates among youth increase between spring (April and May) and summer (June and July.) Therefore, the timing of National Prevention Week helps to educate young people and their families at this crucial time of year.

For additional information and resources, please visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week>

SOURCE:

<http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week>

National Schizophrenia Awareness Week

Schizophrenia Awareness Week is about sharing information and developing understandings of a complex mental illness. Schizophrenia is a major mental illness that causes an altered experience of reality. It is one of a group of disorders known as psychosis. Schizophrenia affects people's thoughts, perceptions and behaviour and interferes with their ability to function at work, school or relate to other people.

People with schizophrenia often experience stigma in the community, which can be one of their biggest problems. Most people find schizophrenia hard to understand and there are many myths about the illness. Contrary to popular belief, people with schizophrenia do not have a 'split personality'. Only a very small number of people with schizophrenia become violent but they do have a higher rate of suicide than the general population.

The main symptoms of schizophrenia are hallucinations and delusions. A hallucination means hearing or seeing something that isn't real, such as hearing voices when no one is there. A delusion means believing something that can be proven to be untrue, such as having a microchip implanted in your head. The symptoms can be frightening to experience. Other symptoms include confused thoughts, unusual behaviour and lack of motivation for everyday tasks. Schizophrenia affects about one out of 100 people, and the symptoms usually begin in late adolescence or early adulthood. It is generally a long-term illness and can cause serious disability when left untreated.

Schizophrenia is now more treatable than ever before, and getting help as early as possible can improve the outcome. Most people require medication as the major part of treatment, but it's important to get support in other areas too.

If you suspect you or someone you know may be experiencing the symptoms of schizophrenia, see a doctor as soon as possible.

For additional information and resources, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.sfnsw.org.au/Schizophrenia-Awareness-Week>
- <http://www.sardaa.org/>
- <http://www.schizophrenia.on.ca/Events/National-Schizophrenia-Psychosis-Awareness-Day>

SOURCE

<http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/schizophrenia>

World No Tobacco Day

Every year on May 31st, World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) is observed, highlighting the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption. Take a look at the following facts provided by the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention:

Tobacco use leads to disease and disability.

- *Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases (including emphysema, bronchitis, and chronic airway obstruction), and diabetes.*
- *For every person who dies from a smoking-related disease, about 30 more people suffer with at least one serious illness from smoking.*
- *More than 16 million Americans suffer from a disease caused by smoking.*

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death.

- *Worldwide, tobacco use causes more than 5 million deaths per year, and current trends show that tobacco use will cause more than 8 million deaths annually by 2030.*
- *Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths per year in the United States, including an estimated 41,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure. This is about one in five deaths annually, or 1,300 deaths every day.*
- *On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.*

The tobacco industry spends billions of dollars each year on cigarette advertising and promotions.

- *\$8.4 billion total spent in 2011*

Tobacco use costs the United States billions of dollars each year.

- *More than \$289 billion a year, including at least \$133 billion in direct medical care for adults and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity*

Thousands of young people start smoking cigarettes every day.

- *Each day, more than 3,200 persons younger than 18 years of age smoke their first cigarette.*
- *Each day, an estimated 2,100 youth and young adults who have been occasional smokers become daily cigarette smokers.*

Many adult cigarette smokers want to quit smoking.

- *In 2011, 68.9% of adult smokers wanted to stop smoking and 42.7% had made a quit attempt in the past year.*

For additional information, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.who.int/campaigns/no-tobacco-day/2015/event/en/>
- <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/world-no-tobacco-day>
- <http://www.whathealth.com/awareness/event/worldnotobaccoday.html>

June-August Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the months of June-August:

- *National Minority Mental Health Month*
- *National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

National Minority Mental Health Month

National Minority Mental Health Month aims to raise awareness of the importance of mental health services for all populations by highlighting the statistical link between mental health, substance abuse, and minority communities. Information and resources for this observance including an activity planning guide, promotional posters and videos, and webinars can be found at: <http://www2.nami.org/Template.cfm?Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=138672>

SOURCE:

<http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/communique/2013/05/minority-health.aspx>

National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness **Day**

The purpose of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day is to encourage everyone to raise public awareness of PTSD and its effective treatments so that everyone can help all those affected. Following trauma, most people experience stress reactions but many do not develop PTSD. Mental health experts are not sure why some people develop PTSD and others do not. However, if stress reactions do not improve over time and they disrupt everyday life, seeking help to determine if PTSD is a factor is important. For more information, visit <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/national-ptsd-awareness-day>

SOURCE:

http://www.ptsd.va.gov/about/ptsd-awareness/ptsd_awareness_month.asp

September Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of September:

- *National Recovery Month*
- *National Suicide Prevention Week*
- *World Suicide Prevention Day*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

National Recovery Month

National Recovery Month aims to educate Americans about the various ways in which substance use treatment and mental health services aid those with mental and/or substance use disorders to live healthy, rewarding lives. By celebrating the achievements made by those in recovery, the observance reinforces these positive messages:

- *Behavioral health is essential to overall health.*
- *Prevention works.*
- *Treatment is effective.*
- *People can and do recover.*

SAMHSA's 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health indicates 4.1 million people ages 12 and up receiving treatment for a substance use issue. The survey also indicates a decline in the number of adolescents using tobacco products, alcohol, and illicit drugs. The detailed results can be found at:

<http://archive.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2013SummNatFindDetTables/Index.aspx>

For additional resources and information, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.recoverymonth.gov/>
- <https://ncadd.org/for-the-media/press-releases-a-news-articles/356-september-is-national-recovery-month>
- <http://www.psychiatry.org/mental-health/more-topics/national-recovery-month>

SOURCE:

- http://www.samhsa.gov/samhsaNewsLetter/Volume_22_Number_4/25th_recovery_month_resources_statistics/

National Suicide Prevention Week/World Suicide Prevention Day

National Suicide Prevention Week and World Suicide Prevention Day are great opportunities for all sectors of the community - the public, charitable organizations, communities, researchers, clinicians, practitioners, politicians and policy makers, volunteers, those bereaved by suicide, other interested groups and individuals - to focus public attention on the unacceptable burden and costs of suicidal behaviors with diverse activities to promote understanding about suicide and highlight effective prevention activities.

Initiatives which actively educate and involve people are likely to be most effective in helping people learn new information about suicide and suicide prevention. Examples include:

- *Launching new initiatives, policies and strategies on World Suicide Prevention Day.*
- *Holding conferences, seminars, lectures, panels, etc.*
- *Writing articles for national, regional and community newspapers, blogs and magazines*
- *Organizing memorial services and other events to remember those who have died by suicide*
- *Holding depression awareness events in public places and offering screening for depression*
- *Organizing walks to political or public places to highlight suicide prevention*
- *Distributing leaflets, posters and other written information*
- *Holding training courses in suicide and depression awareness*

Understanding Suicide

Suicide is a serious public health problem that takes an enormous toll on families, friends, classmates, co-workers, and communities, as well as on our military personnel and veterans. 41,149 Americans took their lives in 2013, the most recent year for which full data are available. Suicide accounted for 12.6 deaths for every 100,000 people nation-wide, making it the country's 10th leading cause of death. Unlike many other leading causes of death, suicide continues to claim more lives each year.

90% of people who die by suicide have a potentially treatable mental disorder at the time of their death—a disorder that often has gone unrecognized and untreated. The disorders most often associated with suicide are depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Substance abuse, either on its own or in combination with another mental disorder, can also be a factor when someone takes their own life.

Finding Support

If you have lost someone to suicide, you are not alone.

You may find that sharing your experience and your grief with others helps you to heal.

Below are resources to help you connect with people who will understand what you are going through:

- Find a Support Group by visiting <https://www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide-loss/find-support/find-a-support-group>
- Join the Survivor e-Network at <https://www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide-loss/find-support/join-the-survivor-e-network> to connect and communicate with over 50,000 survivors worldwide.

SOURCES:

- <https://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide>
- <http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week>
- <https://www.iasp.info/wspd/>

October Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of October:

- *ADHD Awareness Month*
- *Cyber Security Awareness Month*
- *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*
- *National Bullying Prevention Month*
- *Talk About Your Medicines Month*
- *Mental Illness Awareness Week*
- *National Drug Free Work Week*
- *National Teen Driver Safety Week*
- *OCD Awareness Week*
- *Red Ribbon Week*
- *National Depression Screening Day*
- *World Mental Health Day*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

ADHD Awareness Month

This observance raises awareness about ADHD, the brain-based Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the percentage of children in the United States who have ever been diagnosed with ADHD is now 9.5% and 4.4% of adults ages 18-44 in the United States exhibit some symptoms.

When left undiagnosed and untreated, ADHD contributes to problems succeeding at school and/or work, difficulty in relationships, an increase in driving citations and accidents, struggles with overeating and obesity, and problems with the law. According to Dr. Joseph Biederman, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, "Evaluating, diagnosing and treating this condition may not only improve the quality of life, but may save billions of dollars every year."

Diagnosing ADHD is a complex process. In order for a diagnosis of ADHD to be considered, the person must exhibit a large number of symptoms, demonstrate significant problems with daily life in several major life areas (work, school, or friends), and have had the symptoms for a minimum of six months. What makes ADHD different from other conditions is that the symptoms are excessive, pervasive, and persistent. Behaviors are more extreme, show up in multiple settings, and continue showing up throughout life. No single test will confirm that a person has ADHD. Instead, diagnosticians rely on a variety of tools, the most important of which is information about the person and his or her behavior and environment. If the person meets all of the criteria for ADHD, he or she will be diagnosed with the disorder. Symptoms include:

- *Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes.*
- *Has difficulty sustaining attention.*
- *Does not appear to listen.*
- *Struggles to follow through on instructions.*
- *Has difficulty with organization.*
- *Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring a lot of thinking.*
- *Loses things.*
- *Is easily distracted.*
- *Is forgetful in daily activities.*
- *Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in chair.*
- *Has difficulty remaining seated.*
- *Runs about or climbs excessively in children; extreme restlessness in adults.*
- *Difficulty engaging in activities quietly.*
- *Talks excessively.*
- *Blurts out answers before questions have been completed.*
- *Difficulty waiting or taking turns.*
- *Interrupts or intrudes upon others.*

Once diagnosed, ADHD treatment is multi-faceted and includes medication, various types of psychotherapy, behavioral interventions, education or training, and educational support. Usually a person with ADHD receives a combination of treatments.

It is also important to note the link between ADHD and other mental health conditions, as this may affect the type of treatment given. Up to 30% of children and 25-40% of adults with ADHD have a co-existing anxiety disorder. Experts claim that up to 70% of those with ADHD will be treated for depression at some point in their lives. Sleep disorders are also two to three times more likely to affect people with ADHD.

SOURCE:

<http://www.adhdawarenessmonth.org/>

Cyber Security Awareness Month

Cyber Security Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness of the various ways in which we can ensure that our online information and activities are kept safe and secure. The internet is a powerful and useful tool, but should not be utilized without taking basic precautions.

Viruses, spyware, and botnets can threaten our internet security in a variety of ways including the harvesting of personal data such as passwords, social security numbers, credit card numbers, addresses, and other personal information. You can protect yourself by:

- *Having the latest security software to protect your computer from viruses and malware.*
- *Protect all devices connected to the internet (computers, smart phones, gaming systems, etc)*
- *Remember to run security scans on USBs and other external devices, as these can also be infected by viruses and malware.*
- *Delete emails that look suspicious, even if the sender is someone you know. If the email comes from a company urging you to act quickly for a reason such as your account being compromised, contact the company directly.*
- *Reduce spam by enabling filters on your email programs, reporting spam, and hiding email addresses from social networking sites.*
- *Do not reveal personal or financial information in an email.*
- *Make passwords strong and lengthy.*
- *Use different passwords for every account.*
- *Ask for protection beyond passwords so that you must verify your identity prior to conducting business online.*
- *Make sure online shopping sites are secure and use safe payment methods.*
- *Allow only trusted people to view your social networking pages.*

If you think your cyber security has been compromised, do not hesitate to take the following steps:

- *Report it to the appropriate people.*
- *Contact your bank and credit card companies immediately.*
- *Watch for any unauthorized charges to your credit and debit account.*

Parents can protect their kids' cyber security by:

- *Keeping locations and gaming systems in a central location so that activities can be monitored*
- *Limiting time on internet devices including gaming systems*
- *Help children create and keep track of secure user names and passwords*
- *Make sure user names don't reveal any pertinent personal information such as age and school*

For more information, visit:

- <http://stopthinkconnect.org/campaigns/keep-a-clean-machine/>
- <http://www.getnetwise.org/>
- <http://www.onguardonline.gov/>

SOURCE:

- <https://www.staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/>

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic violence is the wilful intimidation, assault, battery, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical, sexual, psychological and emotional violence. The frequency and severity of domestic abuse can vary and it does not always manifest as physical abuse. However, the one constant is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control. Examples of abusive tendencies include but are not limited to:

- *Forceful physical acts including hitting, punching, biting, and pushing*
- *Forcing and/or pressuring sexual acts that the victim does not want/is not comfortable with*
- *Refusing to use protection when having sex or sabotaging birth control*
- *Pressuring or forcing the victim to use drugs or alcohol*
- *Destroying the victim's property*
- *Controlling household finances and/or taking the victim's money*
- *Threatening to hurt or kill the victim's friends, loved ones, or pets*
- *Intimidating the victim with guns, knives, or other weapons*
- *Looking at or acting in ways that scare the person they are abusing*
- *Showing jealousy of the victim's family and friends and time spent away*
- *Accusing the victim of cheating*
- *Preventing the victim from making their own decisions (i.e. controlling who the victim sees, where they go, or what they do, how they dress and wear their hair, etc.)*
- *Embarrassing or shaming the victim with put-downs*
- *Stalking the victim or monitoring their victim's every move*
- *Preventing the victim from working or attending school/harassing the victim at either*

Domestic violence is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. More than 10 million women and men are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. Victims of domestic violence experience an array of emotions from the abuse inflicted upon them and display various behaviors:

- *Wanting the abuse to end, but not the relationship*
- *Feeling isolated, depressed helpless, guilty, ashamed and/or embarrassed*
- *Having anxiety and suicidal thoughts*
- *Abusing alcohol or drugs*
- *Impulsivity or aggression*
- *Feeling financially and/or emotionally dependent on their abuser*
- *Feeling scared to leave the relationship due to shared children/pets or cultural beliefs*
- *Being hopeful that their abuser will change and/or stop the abuse*
- *Fearing judgment if they reveal the abuse*
- *Denial of abuser's behavior*
- *Withdrawal from others*
- *Being unaware of what services are available to help them*

Without help, the abuse will continue. If you are a victim of relationship abuse or suspect it may be happening to someone you care about, talk to someone you trust or contact one of the following resources:

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:**
 - 24 Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)
 - Website: <http://www.thehotline.org/> (Live Chat support available daily-7:00am-2:00am)
- **Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men and Women:**
 - 24 Hour Crisis Hotline: 888-7HELPLINE/888-743-5754
 - Website: <http://www.dahmw.org/>
- **Putnam/Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center:**
 - 24 Hour Crisis Hotline: 845-628-9284
 - Website: <http://pnwwrc.org/>

National Bullying Prevention Month

National Bullying Prevention Month is a time when communities can unite nationwide to raise awareness of bullying prevention through events, activities, outreach, and education. Many parents are concerned that their child might be a victim of bullying. Signs that a child is being bullied include becoming withdrawn, showing fear when it is time to go to school, decline in school performance, speaking of another child with fear, noticeable decline in self-esteem, and signs of physical altercations, such as bruises, scrapes and other marks.

The following strategies can help students prevent or manage or manage situations involving bullying:

1) Walk Away

Walk away from the situation so the bully does not see you upset. If you see a classmate being bullied, you can interrupt it and walk away with them.

2) Stand Up To The Bully

This does not mean trying to fight the bully in any way or to bully them back. That can make the bullying worse and have other bad consequences for you. Instead, stand up for yourself or others by calmly talking to the bully. Ask them why they are bullying you or others.

3) Practice Makes Perfect

When people are bullied or witness bullying, they can feel sad, angry embarrassed, and scared. This can make it hard to come up with a way to handle the situation when it happens. Practice what to say and do with family and friends beforehand so that you feel prepared and more confident.

4) ALWAYS Tell An Adult

Always make an adult aware of the situation. They will have great advice to give and it is important to make sure someone is aware of what is going on in case it gets worse. People you can talk to include family members, teachers, monitors, and your principal. If you are nervous to talk to someone, bring along a friend you trust who can help you explain what is happening. It is important to tell an adult if you witness bullying too.

5) Be Aware of How You Treat Others

Be sure to treat all people with kindness and respect. Before you say or do anything ask yourself how it will make others feel. Avoid excluding people, name calling, teasing, or gossiping. Apologize if you think you may have accidentally hurt someone's feelings.

6) Protect Yourself From Cyber Bullying Too

Bullying does not always happen in person. Cyber bullying happens online or through text messages. You can protect yourself by doing the following:

- *Think about what you post. You never know what someone will forward.*
- *Do not post or share anything that could hurt or embarrass anyone.*
- *Let your parents have your passwords but do NOT share passwords with friends.*
- *Have your parents help you put privacy settings on anything you post. Remember to not give out any important information (address, phone number, etc.) online.*
- *Make sure your parents always know what you are doing online and who you are talking to. Follow their internet rules. They care about you and want you to be safe.*
- *Talk to an adult you trust about any messages or things you see online that make you sad, scared, or uncomfortable.*

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/>
- <http://www.stompoutbullying.org/index.php/campaigns/blue-shirt-day-world-day-bullying-prevention/>
- <http://www.cute-calendar.com/event/national-bullying-prevention-month/21309.html>

SOURCE:

- <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/child-bullying.html>

Talk About Your Medicines Month

“Talk Before You Take”—a simple message that conveys the importance of talking about the benefits and risks of prescribed medications before a prescription is written and filled. Increasing communication about prescriptions can help patients:

- *Understand medication side effects*
- *Avoid adverse drug reaction*
- *Improve adherence to medicine regimen(s)*
- *Live healthier lives*

10 Questions to Consider When Talking With Your Healthcare Provider:

1. *What is the name of the medicine, and what is it for?*
2. *How and when do I take it, and for how long?*
3. *What side effects should I expect, and what should I do about them?*
4. *Should I take this medicine on an empty stomach or with food?*
5. *Should I avoid any activities, foods, drinks, alcohol or other medicines while taking this prescription?*
6. *Is there a certain time of day when it's best to take the medication?*
7. *Will this medicine work safely with any other medicines (including over-the counter) that I'm taking?*
8. *When should I expect the medicine to begin to work, and how will I know if it's working?*
9. *How should I store this medicine?*
10. *Is there any additional written information I should read about the medicine?*

TalkBeforeYouTake.org provides free, downloadable tools that patients and healthcare providers can use to spark better and more effective medicine communication.

For additional information, please contact the following organizations:

National Council on Patient Information and Education (*A coalition whose mission is to improve communication of information on appropriate medicine use to consumers and healthcare professionals*)

Phone: 301-340-3940

Website: www.talkaboutrx.org

TogetherRx Access (*Provides a free prescription savings card for individuals who are legal residents of the United States, are not eligible for Medicare, do not have prescription drug coverage, and meet certain household income levels.*)

Phone: 800-250-2839

Website: www.TogetherRxAccess.com

NeedyMeds (*A free, online clearinghouse to help people who cannot afford medicine or healthcare costs.*)

Website: www.NeedyMeds.com

Partnership for Prescription Assistance (*Helps patients who lack prescription drug coverage get free or nearly free medicines by increasing awareness of existing PAPs.*)

Phone: 888-477-2669 (888-4PPA-NOW)

Website: www.pparx.org

SOURCE:

- TalkBeforeYouTake.org

Mental Illness Awareness Week/World Mental Health Day

Mental Illness Awareness Week was established in 1990 by the U.S. Congress in recognition of efforts by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to educate and increase awareness about mental illness. It takes place every year during the first full week of October. During this week, mental health advocates and organizations across the U.S. join together to sponsor a variety of events to promote community outreach and public education concerning mental illnesses such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Examples of activities include art/music events, educational sessions provided by healthcare professionals, advertising campaigns, health fairs, movie nights, candlelight vigils, and benefit runs. Mental Illness Awareness Week also coincides with similar organizational campaigns in early October such as World Mental Health Day, National Depression Screening Day, and National Day Without Stigma.

Prevalence of Mental Illness

- Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experiences mental illness in a given year.
- Approximately 1 in 20 adults in the U.S. experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.
- Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13–18 experience a severe mental disorder in a given year.
- 1.1% of adults in the U.S. live with schizophrenia.
- 2.6% of adults in the U.S. live with bipolar disorder.
- 6.9% of adults in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.
- 18.1% of U.S. adults experienced an anxiety disorder such as posttraumatic stress disorder and OCD.
- Among the 20.7 million adults in the U.S. with a past year substance use disorder, 8.4 million had co-occurring mental illness.

Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help. Only 62.9% of U.S. adults, and just over half (50.6%) of children aged 8–15 received mental health services in the previous year.

Consequences of Lack of Treatment

- Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year.
- Mood disorders, including major depression, dysthymic disorder and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults aged 18–44.
- Individuals living with serious mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions. Adults in the U.S. living with serious mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than others, largely due to treatable medical conditions.
- Over one-third (37%) of students with a mental health condition age 14–21 and older who are served by special education drop out—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. (more common than homicide) and the second leading cause of death for people aged 15–24.
- More than 90% of children who die by suicide have a mental health condition.
- Each day an estimated 18–22 veterans die by suicide.

SOURCE:

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

<https://www.nami.org/Logon?ReturnUrl=%2fExtranet%2fNAMI-State-Organization-and-NAMI-Affiliate-Leaders%2fAwareness%2fMental-Illness-Awareness-Week>

National Drug Free Work Week

Drug-Free Work Week was initiated by the U.S. Department of Labor as a cooperative agreement focused on improving safety and health in the construction industry through drug-free workplace programs. The first Drug-Free Work Week was observed in 2006, and in subsequent years more and more organizations -- representing a range of industries -- also rallied behind the effort helping to firmly establish it as an annual opportunity to reinforce to employers and employees alike that "Drugs Don't Work!"

Today, the National Drug-Free Workplace Alliance, a division of Drug Free America Foundation, in collaboration with organizations focused on alcohol and drug abuse prevention and workplace safety and health, promote this observance. Together we spread the word to encourage individual workplaces to conduct activities designed to educate and encourage a safe and healthy work environment - reflecting the true spirit of Drug-Free Work Week.

Understanding the Problem:

Substance abuse by employees results in:

- *Higher health care expenses for injuries and illnesses*
- *Higher rates of absenteeism*
- *Reductions in job productivity and performance*
- *Increased workers' compensation and disability claims*
- *Safety risks for employers*

Employees with substance abuse issues often:

- *Fail to fulfill major role obligations at work, school or home.*
- *Use substances in situations where it is physically hazardous (e.g. driving an automobile or operating a machine when impaired by substance use).*
- *Have recurrent substance-related legal or financial problems.*
- *Continue to use substances despite persistent social or interpersonal problems that are a result of the substance use.*

For more information and resources, please visit <http://www.ndwa.org/linkdownloads.php>

SOURCE:

<http://www.ndwa.org/dfww.php>

National Teen Driver Safety Week

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of 14- to 18-year-olds in the United States. In 2012, there were 2,055 teen drivers involved in fatal crashes, and 859 (42%) of those teen drivers were killed in the crashes. Parents are the biggest influence on teen's safety behind the wheel, but according to a recent survey, only 25 percent of parents take the time to talk with their kids about driving safety including the dangers of consuming alcohol before driving, the importance of wearing seat belts, dangers of speeding, and the harmful distractions caused by texting, passengers, and other behaviors which affect a driver's focus. Teens should be spoken to often, especially in the early stages of their driving experience. Keep the following eight danger zones in mind when guiding safe driving discussions with teens:

Danger Zone #1: Driver Inexperience

Crash risk is highest in the first year a teen has their license. Provide your teen with at least 30 to 50 hours of supervised driving practice on a variety of roads, times of day, and weather & traffic conditions.

Danger Zone #2: Driving with Teen Passengers

Crash risk goes up when teens drive with other teens in the car. Parents can address this by following their state's Graduated Driver Licensing system for passenger restrictions. If their state doesn't have such a rule, they can limit the number of teen passengers your teen can have to zero or one.

Danger Zone #3: Nighttime Driving

All fatal crashes are more likely to occur at night; but the risk is higher for teens. Parents should set a driving curfew for at least the first six months of licensed driving and practice nighttime driving with their teens.

Danger Zone #4: Not Using Seat Belts

The simplest way to prevent car crash deaths is to buckle up. Parents should require their teen to wear a seat belt on every trip.

Danger Zone #5: Distracted Driving

Distractions increase your teen's risk of being in a crash. Parents should discuss and ban all activities that may take their teen's attention away from driving including cell phone use, eating, or playing with the radio.

Danger Zone #6: Drowsy Driving

Young drivers are at high risk for drowsy driving, which causes thousands of crashes every year. Teens are most tired and at risk when driving in the early morning or late at night. Parents should know their teen's schedule to ensure he or she is well rested before getting behind the wheel.

Danger Zone #7: Reckless Driving

Research shows that teens lack the experience, judgment, and maturity to assess risky situations. Make sure your teen knows to follow the speed limit and adjust their speed to match road conditions. Remind your teen to maintain enough space behind the vehicle ahead to avoid a crash in case of a sudden stop.

Danger Zone #8: Impaired Driving

Even one drink will impair your teen's driving ability and increase their risk of a crash. Be a good role model: never drink and drive. Reinforce this message with a [Parent-Teen Driving Agreement](#).

SOURCE:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ParentsAreTheKey/danger/index.html>

OCD Awareness Week

OCD Awareness Week is an international effort to raise awareness and understanding about obsessive compulsive disorder and related disorders, with the goal of helping more people to get timely access to appropriate and effective treatment. This observance is now recognized by a number of organizations across the US and around the world, with events such as OCD Screening Days, lectures, conferences, fundraisers, online Q&As, and more.

1 in 100 adults and up to 1 in 200 children likely have OCD. This disorder can be debilitating, but there is treatment that can help. Unfortunately, it can take up to 14–17 years from the first onset of symptoms for people to get access to effective treatment due to obstacles such as stigma and a lack of awareness about mental health and OCD in particular.

People often confuse Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) for personal quirks of choice or preference, but it is far more serious than many realize. The key is in the word “Disorder” which is defined ‘psychological pattern associated with distress or disability.’ Most people who choose to have set behaviors like having their home tidy or certain order for their CD collection do so out of preference and choice which leads to some form of satisfaction, but which is NOT OCD. People affected by OCD find their behavior (the compulsions) dictated through distress caused by the relentless obsessive thoughts and anxiety which frequently leads to periods of disablement, rather than some kind of satisfaction.

For additional information, download the fact sheets at <https://iocdf.org/brochures-and-fact-sheets/>

SOURCES:

- <https://iocdf.org/programs/ocdweek/#host>
- <http://www.thatsocd.info/>

Red Ribbon Week

In response to the 1985 murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena, angered parents and youth in communities across the country began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of the killing and destruction cause by drugs in America. In honor of Camarena's memory and his battle against illegal drugs, friends and neighbors began to wear red badges of satin. Parents, sick of the destruction of alcohol and other drugs, had begun forming coalitions. Some of these new coalitions took Camarena as their model and embraced his belief that one person can make a difference. These coalitions also adopted the symbol of Camarena's memory, the red ribbon.

In 1988, The National Family Partnership (NFP) sponsored the first National Red Ribbon Celebration. Today, the Red Ribbon serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities. Since that time, the campaign has reached millions of U.S. children and families. The NFP and its network of individuals and organizations continue to deliver his message of hope to millions of people every year through the National Red Ribbon Campaign.

To learn more about Red Ribbon Week, download the fact sheet at http://redribbon.org/2013_RR_Fact_Sheet.pdf or visit the resources listed below:

SOURCE:

<http://redribbon.org>

National Depression Screening Day

WHAT: The annual National Depression Screening Day (NDS) is dedicated to raising awareness and screening people for depression and related mood and anxiety disorders. NDS is the nation's oldest voluntary, community-based screening program that gives access to validated screening questionnaires and provides referral information for treatment.

WHERE: Individuals can locate a mental health screening site or take an online screening by visiting www.HelpYourselfHelpOthers.org

WHEN: NDS is held on the Thursday of the first full week in October, but screenings may be available in your area as early as the beginning of September.

HOW: Thousands of organizations nationwide register to host a NDS event each year in an effort to provide information about mood and anxiety disorders and offer screenings—in-person or online—to their community. These organizations include hospitals, community centers, social service agencies, government organizations, older adult facilities, colleges, secondary schools and military installations. After completing a screening, those who score positive receive referral information to local agencies that offer further evaluation and treatment if needed.

WHY: Depression screening is effective. Results from a 2009 independent research study by the University of Connecticut, commissioned by Screening for Mental Health, states that depression screenings are effective in connecting at-risk individuals with treatment. The study showed that 55% of participants, who completed an online depression screening and who agreed to participate in a follow-up survey, sought depression treatment within three months of the screening.

SOURCES:

- <http://mentalhealthscreening.org/about>
- <http://mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/community/ndsd.aspx>
- <http://mentalhealthscreening.org/media/fact-sheet-national-depression-screening-day-october-9-2014>

November Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observances take place during the month of November:

- *International Survivors of Suicide Day*
- *World Kindness Day*
- *Great American Smokeout*

Resources and links correlating with each observance can be found on the pages that follow.

International Survivors of Suicide Day

In 1999, Senator Harry Reid, a survivor of his father's 1972 suicide, introduced a new resolution into the US Senate. With its passage, the US Congress designated the Saturday before American Thanksgiving "National Survivors of Suicide Day," a day on which friends and family of those who have died by suicide can join together for healing and support.

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is the one day a year when people affected by suicide loss gather around the world at events in their local communities to find comfort and gain understanding as they share stories of healing and hope.

For many loss survivors, attending a Survivor Day event is the first time they realize they are not alone. Simply hearing stories from people at all stages of healing can be helpful.

Understanding Suicide

With 41,149 taking Americans their own lives in 2013, suicide is currently the country's 10th leading cause of death. Uncovering the reason for an individual suicide death is complex and challenging. What we know from research is that 90% of people who die by suicide have a potentially treatable mental disorder at the time of their death—a disorder that often has gone unrecognized and untreated.

Non-fatal suicidal behavior further swells the emotional and economic costs associated with suicide. An estimated 1 million suicide attempts occur each year, many requiring medical attention.

Understanding the warning signs below is the first step in tackling this epidemic:

- Talking about feeling trapped, having no reason to live, or being a burden to others
- Displaying depression, rage, irritability, anxiety, or loss of interest in activities
- Engaging in the following behaviors:
 - Increased use of alcohol or drugs
 - Acting recklessly
 - Withdrawing from activities
 - Isolating from family and friends
 - Sleeping too much or too little
 - Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
 - Giving away prized possessions
 - Aggression

In an emergency, contact the Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). For additional help, please refer to the list below of professional organizations that can provide information or referrals:

- **American Psychiatric Association**
Website: www.psych.org
Phone: 1-888-357-7924 and press 0
- **American Psychological Association**
Website: www.apa.org
Phone: 1-800-964-2000
- **National Association of Social Workers**
Website: www.naswdc.org
- **Department of Veterans Affairs**
Website: www.mentalhealth.va.gov/gethelp.asp
- **U.S. Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**
Website: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

SOURCE:

<http://www.afsp.org/>

World Kindness Day

World Kindness Day is a day that encourages individuals to overlook boundaries, race and religion and put effort into showing others kindness through words and actions. According to modern psychology, altruistic acts increase our own happiness in a profound way. Recognizing kindness events in schools and youth groups helps address the bullying and cyber bullying problems which currently plague children and teens. The Kind Acts Foundation's website (www.kindacts.org) offers educators and parents a free and easy way to create a certificate to reward a child for an act of kindness. Additional resources can be found by visiting the following websites:

- <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-resources>
- <http://www.cute-calendar.com/event/world-kindness-day/10513-world.html>

SOURCE:

<http://www.doonething.org/calendar/kindnessday.htm>

Great American Smokeout

The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit. By quitting, even for one day, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life and reduce their risk of developing cancer and other health problems.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the US, yet about 42 million Americans still smoke cigarettes. As of 2012, there were also 13.4 million cigar smokers in the US, and 2.3 million who smoke tobacco in pipes. All forms are dangerous and addictive.

Five steps can help:

- 1) Set a quit date. Choose the Great American Smoke out or another quit day within the next 2 weeks.
- 2) Tell your family and friends you plan to quit. Share your quit date with the important people in your life and ask for support. A daily e-mail, text message, or phone call can help you stay on course and provide moral support. Plan a smoke free lunch date or game night to distract yourself.
- 3) Anticipate and plan for challenges. The urge to smoke is short, usually only 3 to 5 minutes. Although, these moments can feel intense. Before your quit day, write down healthy ways to cope. Even one puff can feed a craving and make it stronger. Healthy choices include drinking water, taking a walk, listening to music, playing a game, and calling or texting a friend.
- 4) Remove cigarettes and other tobacco from your home, car, and workplace. Throw away your cigarettes, matches, lighters, and ashtrays. Clean and freshen your car, home, and workplace. Old cigarette odors can cause cravings.
- 5) Talk to your pharmacist, doctor, or quit line coach about quit options. Nicotine patches, gum, or other approved quit medicines may help with cravings

For additional information and resources, please visit:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/features/greatamericansmokeout/>
- <http://www.quitsmoking.com/content/the-great-american-smokeout>
- <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/285833.php>

SOURCE:

<http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout/>

December Wellness & Prevention Observances

The following wellness and prevention observance take place during the month of December:

- *National Impaired Driving Prevention Month*

Resources and links correlating with this observance can be found on the pages that follow.

National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

According to MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), the month of December is one of the busiest on the nation's roadways, and also one of the most dangerous. With the holidays taking place during December, there is an increase in social events that involve alcohol. Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows that this results in an increase in DUIs and fatal drunk-driving crashes around the holidays.

During December 2012, 830 people lost their lives in crashes involving a drunk driver. That's why December has been designated National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness about the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. In issuing his proclamation, President Obama urges every American to "dedicate ourselves to driving safely and responsibly, and to promoting these behaviors among our family and friends." No one thinks that their holiday celebration will end in tragedy. But for those who include alcohol in their celebrations and then get behind the wheel, this is too often the case.

MADD's Tips For A Safe Holiday Season

- *Make sure to always plan ahead for a safe way home, especially if your plans involve alcohol. Even one too many drinks increases the risk of a crash—it's just not worth it. If you've been drinking use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member or use public transportation.*
- *The more alcohol you consume, the more impaired you become. To learn how your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) affects your ability to drive, visit http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/bac.html*
- *Just because you made the right decision to drive sober, others on the road may not have. Always buckle up, drive with caution, and don't hesitate to call 911 to report a suspected drunk driver. It is your business. Getting drunk drivers off the roads saves lives.*
- *If someone you know is drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel. Your actions may save someone's life. For more tips on how to prevent someone from driving drunk, visit <http://www.madd.org/drunken-driving/how-you-can-help/tips-how-to-prevent-someone.html>*

If you or a loved one has been affected by drunk driving, MADD is here to help.
VICTIM/SURVIVOR 24-Hour Help Line: 877.MADD.HELP

SOURCE:

<http://www.madd.org>