



Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that one in five American adults will experience mental illness in their lifetime? Millions of Americans experience mental illness in any given year, but many do not know how common mental illness is because it is stigmatized. This May, join the Barry-Eaton District Health Department in observing Mental Health Awareness Month to fight stigma and promote mental health.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, stigma is when someone, or even yourself, views a person in a negative way. This can lead to feelings of shame or judgment. So how does stigma play into mental health and why does it matter?

People experiencing mental health conditions can face barriers to treatment such as the cost of care or structural barriers like limited access to transportation. On average, people with mental illnesses experience an 11 year delay between first experiencing symptoms and starting treatment. Stigma makes this even harder. People living with mental health conditions often experience rejection, bullying, and even discrimination. These can cause people to feel shameful and isolated, which makes managing mental health even more difficult.

Interested in learning more about stigma and how you can stand up to stigma? Visit <https://www.nami.org/stigmfree>. In the meantime, here are some things you can do in 2019 to help reduce stigma:

- **Educate yourself- learn more.**
- **Spread the word.**
- **Be kind- recognize that each person is fighting their own battle.**
- **Take action.**

For more information about Mental Health Awareness Month, visit <https://www.nami.org/mentalhealthmonth>. To learn more about mental health in general, visit <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More> and <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>. For resources such as a treatment locator and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment>.

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