

HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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May is Mental Health Month

Owning Your Feelings — Tips for Success

Allow yourself to feel. Sometimes there are societal pressures that encourage people to shut down their emotions, often expressed through statements like, “Big girls don’t cry,” or “Man up.” These outdated ideas are harmful, not helpful. Everyone has emotions — they are part of the human experience — and you have every right to feel them, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic status, race, political affiliation or religion.

Don’t ignore how you’re feeling. Most of us have heard the term “bottling up your feelings” before. When we try to push feelings aside without addressing them, they build strength and make us more likely to “explode” at some point in the future. It may not always be appropriate to process your emotions at the moment you are feeling them, but try to do so as soon as you can.

Talk it out. Find someone you trust that you can talk to about how you’re feeling. You may find that people are eager to share about similar experiences they’ve had or times that they have felt the way that you are feeling. This can be helpful, but if you’re really only interested in having someone listen, it’s okay to tell them that.

Build your emotional vocabulary. When asked about our feelings, most people will usually use words like bad, sad, mad, good, or fine. But at the root of “good, bad, sad, mad, or fine” are many words that better describe how we feel. Try building your emotional vocabulary by writing down as many “feeling” words as you can think of and think of a time that you felt that way.

Try journaling. Each night write down at least 3 feelings you had over the course of the day and what caused them. It doesn’t need to be a “Dear Diary” kind of thing. Just a few sentences or bullet points to help you practice being comfortable with identifying and expressing your emotions.

Consider the strength of your feelings. By thinking about how intense your emotions are, you may realize that what you thought you were feeling at first could better be described by another word. For instance, sometimes a person might say they are stressed when what they are really experiencing is something less severe like annoyance, alternatively anger might really be a stronger, deeper feeling like betrayal.

See a mental health professional. If you are taking steps to be more in touch with your feelings, but are having trouble dealing with them, mental health providers like counselors and therapists have been trained to help. Some free or low cost options are also available. Your employer might have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that offers a limited number of free counseling sessions, and your Human Resources department can help you access this resource. If you don’t have an EAP through work, the leaders of religious organizations like churches, synagogues and mosques often have experience with counseling.

MAY IS 2
MENTAL 0
HEALTH 2
MONTH 0

TAKING A SCREEN IS
AN EASY WAY TO
CHECK IN ON YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH.



HELP US REACH OUR
GOAL OF A
#MILLIONINMAY.



VISIT
MHASCREENING.ORG



Make your mental health a priority!



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National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Asthma causes swelling of the airways. This results in narrowing of the airways that carry air from the nose and mouth to the lungs. Allergens or irritating things entering the lungs trigger asthma symptoms. Symptoms include trouble breathing, wheezing, coughing and tightness in the chest. Asthma can be deadly. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be managed with **proper prevention** of asthma attacks and treatment.

People with asthma have inflamed airways which are sensitive to things which may not bother other people. **These things are “triggers.”** Asthma triggers vary from person to person. Some people react to only a few while others react to many. Avoid your triggers!

Common **allergens** that cause allergic asthma include:

- Dust mites
- Cockroach
- Pollen
- Molds
- Pet dander
- Rodents

Irritants in the environment can also bring on an asthma episode. Although people are not allergic to these items, they can bother inflamed, sensitive airways:

- Smoke from cigarettes
- Air pollution such as smog, ozone and others
- Wood fires
- Strong fumes, vapors or odors (such as paint, gasoline, perfumes and scented soaps)
- Charcoal grills
- Dust and particles in the air
- Chemicals

Certain conditions can also compound the symptoms of asthma. These include:

- Allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis (ABPA)
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Food Allergies
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Obesity
- Nasal Polyps
- Pregnancy
- Respiratory Infections
- Rhinitis



Prevent attacks...avoid the triggers!

