

MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER)



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP
MAY 2020 MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT

May was first designated mental health awareness month 71 years ago in 1949 by Mental Health America (MHA). This year their theme is **Tools2Thrive**. While 1 in 5 people will experience mental illness in their lifetime, everyone faces challenges that can impact their mental health. There are practical tools that everyone can use to improve their mental health and increase resilience regardless of the situation they are dealing with. These tools include recognizing emotions and taking responsibility for your feelings, finding the positives even in adversity or loss, connecting with others, eliminating unhealthy influences and creating healthy routines to take care of yourself. It is important for both adults and children to recognize emotions and understand their feelings. When school aged children are taught about emotions for only 20-30 minutes/week, both their social behavior and school performance improve!

Tips for Recognizing Emotions and Owning your Feelings:

- **Allow yourself to feel** – Sometimes social pressures encourage people to shut down their emotions through sayings such as “Big Girls Don’t Cry” or “Man Up”. These ideas are harmful. Everyone has emotions and you have every right to feel them.
- **Don’t ignore how you’re feeling** – When we try to push feeling aside without addressing them, they get stronger, and we are more likely to explode, lash out or overreact at some point in the future.
- **Talk it out** – Find someone you can trust to talk to about how you are feeling. You may find others have experienced similar emotions.
- **Build your emotional vocabulary** – The English language has over 300 words for emotions(a few examples are included below)! Write down as many feeling words as you can think of and a time you felt that way.
- **Try Journaling** - Each night write down at least three feelings you had during the day and what caused them. The idea is to help you be comfortable practicing expressing and identifying emotions.
- **Consider the Strength of your feelings** – Thinking about the intensity of your emotions in relation to the situation may help you realize what you thought you were feeling at first could better described with another word.
- **See a mental health professional** – A licensed counselor or a therapist can help you sort through and deal with your feelings if you are having difficulty.

Some Examples of Comfortable Feelings

Happy
Confident
Proud
Excited
Relaxed
Thankful
Friendly
Hopeful
Interested
Surprised
Calm

Some Examples of Uncomfortable Feelings

Furious
Anxious
Lonely
Disappointed
Hopeless
Overwhelmed
Withdrawn
Helpless
Embarrassed
Sad
Ashamed

Excerpted from: <https://www.mhanational.org>