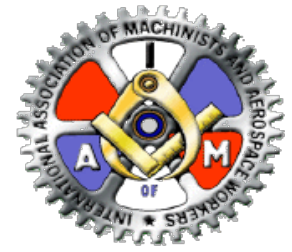




HELPING HANDS



May is Mental Illness Awareness Month

(excerpts from SAMHSA.gov)

Mental illnesses are conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood or behavior, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia. Such conditions may be occasional (acute) or long-lasting (chronic) and affect how you relate to others and function each day.

What is mental health?



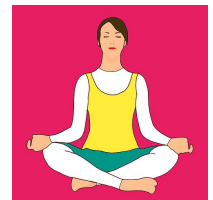
Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, poor mental health and mental illness are not the same things. A person can experience poor mental health and not be diagnosed with a mental illness. A person diagnosed with a mental illness can also experience periods of [physical, mental, and social well-being](#).

Why is mental health important for overall health?

Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health. Mental illness, especially depression, increases the risk for many types of physical health problems, particularly long-lasting conditions like, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Similarly, the presence of chronic physical conditions can increase the risk for mental illness.

Can your mental health change over time?

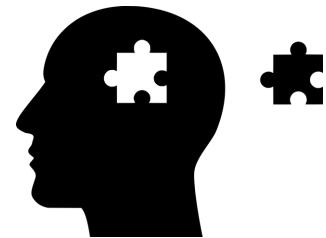
Yes, it's important to remember that a person's mental health can change over time, depending on many factors. When the demands placed on a person exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health could be impacted. For example, if someone [is working long hours](#), [caring for an ill relative](#) or experiencing economic hardship they may experience poor mental health.



What causes mental illness?

There is no single cause for mental illness. A number of factors can contribute to risk for mental illness, such as

- [Early adverse life experiences](#), such as trauma or a history of abuse (for example, child abuse, sexual assault, witnessing violence, etc.).
- Experiences related to other [ongoing \(chronic\) medical condition](#), such as [cancer](#) or diabetes.
- [Biological factors, such as genes](#) or chemical imbalances in the brain.
- Use of alcohol or recreational drugs.
- [Having few friends](#).
- Feeling of loneliness or isolation.



Mental Illness Resources

(excerpts from mayoclinic.org)

- Get treatment. Even though you may be reluctant to admit you need treatment, treatment can provide relief by identifying what's wrong and reducing symptoms that interfere with your work and personal life.
- Don't let stigma create self-doubt and shame. Stigma doesn't just come from others. You may mistakenly believe that your condition is a sign of personal weakness or that you should be able to control it without help. Seeking counseling, educating yourself about your condition and connecting with others who have mental illness can help you gain self-esteem and overcome destructive self-judgment.
- Don't isolate yourself. If you have a mental illness, you may be reluctant to tell anyone about it. Your family, friends, clergy or members of your community can offer you support if they know about your needs. Reach out to people you trust for the compassion, support and understanding you need.
- Don't equate yourself with your illness. You are not an illness. So instead of saying "I'm bipolar," say "I have bipolar disorder." Instead of calling yourself "a schizophrenic," say "I have schizophrenia."
- Join a support group. Some local and national groups, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), offer local programs and programs on the internet. There are also many state and federal agencies/programs that offer support for people with mental illness. Look on USA.gov. for more.
- Speak out against mental illness stigma. Consider expressing your opinions at events, in letters to the editor or on the internet. It can help instill courage in others facing similar challenges and educate the public about mental illness.



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Sources for Reliable Outbreak Related Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) <http://www.cdc.gov>

World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Americas
World Health Organization
525 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-974-3000
<http://www.who.int/en>

GOIAM.org

Up to date information about the latest developments of the Corona virus situation

IAM141.org

Current Information for IAM District 141 members and their families