



May is Mental Health Month

# Mental health is as important as physical health

Total wellbeing means that you feel fulfilled in all aspects of your life. Your mental health is a big part of your wellbeing. It is important to be aware of the signs or symptoms of mental stress so you can seek help or recognize when someone you care about may need help.

## 5 reasons why it is important to pay attention to your mental health and wellbeing

- 1. Mental illness is more common than you think.** Mental illness does not discriminate, it affects people of all ages, genders and ethnicities. One in five U.S. adults experience mental illness, 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness and 17% of youth aged 6–17 experience a mental health condition. Unfortunately, too many don't seek help.
- 2. Mental illness affects your physical health.** Your brain is part of your body. Mental and physical health are connected. In fact, mental illness can be the root of many physical symptoms. For example, if you are suffering from insomnia, heart palpitations or fatigue, your doctor may want to rule out depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions as a potential cause.
- 3. Diseases or injuries can increase your risk.** Just as mental illness can cause physical symptoms in your body, physical diseases, like cancer, multiple sclerosis, diabetes and trauma such as head injuries, can raise your risk of mental illness. It is important that you are honest about your experiences when speaking with your doctor.
- 4. It runs in families.** Mental illnesses tend to run in families due to both genetic factors and family cultural issues. Remember to include things like depression, bipolar disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in your family health history along with information about heart disease, cancer and other conditions.
- 5. Early detection makes a difference.** Like medical conditions, getting diagnosed early generally leads to better outcomes. Getting the help you need can prevent symptoms of mental illness from getting worse and causing negative effects on your life, including strained relationships and difficulty managing work and finances.

Visit your member website for more information.