

Mental Health Awareness Month

By Dr. Margaret Rea

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. During the month of **May**, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the rest of the country are bringing awareness to mental health to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for equal care. This year NAMI is focusing on fighting stigma. *“One in 5 Americans is affected by mental health conditions. Stigma is toxic to their mental health because it creates an environment of shame, fear and silence that prevents many people from seeking help and treatment. The perception of mental illness won’t change unless we act to change it.”*
<https://www.nami.org/mentalhealthmonth>

Mental Health Month is a reminder for all of us to pause and reflect on the emotional well-being of ourselves, those we care about, and our patients. Destigmatizing mental health is essential so that those of us impacted by mental health concerns receive the help we need to flourish in our lives.

Mental Health Awareness Month is a perfect time to call your attention to the **Each Aggie Matters** program at UC Davis. Please take a moment to check out the link to the campus program. The site offers an opportunity to learn about mental health issues, find out about resources for yourself, family or friends as well as pledge support to help remove stigma around mental health issues. <http://eachaggiematters.ucdavis.edu/>

NAMI encourages all of us to take the pledge against stigma:

Step 1. Learn about Mental Health Issues: Everyone knows a little about mental health issues, but knowing the facts about mental health conditions can help you educate others and reject stigmatizing stereotypes. Mental

health issues are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Understanding mental health isn't only about being able to identify symptoms and having a name for these conditions but dispelling many false ideas about mental health conditions as well.

Step 2. See the Person, Not the Condition: 1 in 5 Americans lives with a mental health condition, and they all have their own story, path and journey that says more about them than their diagnoses. Whether you live with mental health condition or are a friend, family member, caregiver or medical professional, getting to know a person and treating them with kindness and empathy means far more than just knowing what they are going through.

Step 3. Take Action on Mental Health Issues: Our mental health care systems have been in crisis for far too long and often keep treatment and recovery out of the hands of many who need it. We can take action now as we push for better legislation and policies to improve lives for everyone. By lending your support you can show that this cause is important to you and desperately needed for millions of Americans.

<http://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/What-Can-I-Do>

Finally, it can feel overwhelming to reach out to others when you have concerns about their well-being. Some of us worry we will say the wrong thing, or make the person feel uncomfortable. Consider, however, that asking reflects that you care and that your concern might indeed be what supports the person in getting the care they need. Find helpful tips from NAMI to use in those difficult conversations at the [Student Wellness Website](#).

Wellness Events

Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/index.html>

UC Living Fit Forever

http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml

UC Davis Health Farmers Market is Back!

May 9th
Ed Bldg Outdoor Quad

UC Walks-Annual system wide UC Walks!

May 17th at 12:15 pm & 12:30 pm
Ed Bldg Outdoor Quad
Bring walking shoes
T-shirts will be provided to the first 300 participants
Two 30-minute walks will take place at 12:15 p.m. and at 12:30 pm.

Mindful Self Compassion

This 8-week class is held every Friday from May 4 through June 22 and includes a half-day retreat on June 3.

http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cppn/classes/mindful_self-compassion.html

Wellness Tip: How to Support Your Well-being

The wellness tip for this month is taking a slightly different direction by asking you to take time to reflect on how you are doing with regard to your emotional health. Please consider visiting the Each Aggie Matters site to review the signs and symptoms of different mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression as a way to identify if you might benefit from making some changes to protect your well-being.

<http://eachaggiematters.ucdavis.edu/educate/#.WQKK1BPvDA>

As a professional health science student, you are learning about ways to promote your patients' well-being. Some of those same resources can be helpful for you. The UC Davis Student Health and Counseling Services has organized a selection of apps, free podcasts, books and other materials to support your well-being as

a student. They are found at <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/self-help-library>.

Reflect on whether you could benefit from support for your mental well-being. Medical students can access counseling services at medschoolcounseling@ucdavis.edu and nursing students at hs-sonwellness@ucdavis.edu.

Psychiatric services can be accessed by contacting Dr. Christine Osterhout at costerhout@ucdavis.edu.

Students can also always contact Student Health Counseling Services on the Davis Campus at (530)752-2349 for appointments and for urgent issues 24/7. In addition, if you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned about a fellow student, please call the (530) 752-2349 at Student Health or Sacramento Suicide Prevention at (916) 368-3111.



I encourage all students, staff and faculty to consider contributing thoughts about wellness whether it be a recipe, a wellness strategy or a reflection on what promotes well-being. Sharing thoughts is a way to build community and help each other stay well. Please see the contribution from Dr. Harvath below.

Monthly Recipe from the UC Davis Community

This month's recipe comes from Dr. Terri Harvath, PhD, RN, FAAN, Executive Associate Dean & Clinical Professor and Director of the Family Caregiving Institute at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. Dr. Harvath grew up in a large family (she has nine siblings) and meals were an important time to gather to discuss the events of the day and debate current political issues. For budgetary reasons, meals tended to be heavy on inexpensive carbs (e.g., potatoes and rice) and vegetables were often cooked to the wilting stage. Since moving to the Sacramento area, Dr. Harvath has enjoyed the easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables and has tried recipes that have a seasonal focus. This Panzanella salad is great to serve as a main entree or as an adjunct to fish or chicken. It is also amenable to infinite variation based on what is fresh at the farmers' market!

You can find the recipe [here](#).



Wellness App: Pacifica

Stress, anxiety, and depression can get in the way of you living your life. Pacifica gives you psychologist-designed tools to address them based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, mindfulness meditation, relaxation, and mood/health tracking. Stress, anxiety, and depression can be caused by an ongoing cycle of negative thoughts. Thoughts cause physical feelings and emotions which cause actions. Pacifica helps break this cycle using tools that target each of its components. Day-by-day, you'll learn to manage stress, anxiety and depression at your own pace. The app includes: Relaxation and Mindfulness audio tools; guided self-help paths (CBT and Mindfulness); a mood tracker; journaling; daily challenges, goal tracking and a health tracker. <http://www.thinkpacificacom/>
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pacifica-for-stress-anxiety/id922968861?mt=8>

