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Greene County



Greene County Public Health

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Press Release

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Be Brave And Talk About Mental Health

May is Mental Health Month

GREENE COUNTY, OH – May is National Mental Health Month, and Greene County Public Health is encouraging community members to talk about mental health in public and private conversations to combat stigma through a public awareness campaign titled, “Be Brave. Talk About Mental Health.” The campaign provides education and tools for talking safely about mental health, while using examples from public figures and fictional pop-culture characters sharing their stories.

Mental health problems are common, affecting at least one in every five people in the United States annually and every person at least once in their lives, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Self-stigma, or personally held negative attitudes and beliefs about those living with mental health conditions, is often cited as one of the largest barriers to seeking mental health treatment or support. Stigma often comes from a lack of understanding or fear of mental health problems—but it can negatively impact those who experience them, such as prejudice or discrimination.

Studies show that when people with mental health disorders or problems describe their challenges and stories of success, it can reduce public and self-stigma by creating a sense of self-empowerment and boosting self-esteem.

“It’s not enough to acknowledge that talking about mental health with friends and family is good; we must acknowledge that failing to talk about mental health risks perpetuating the concept that mental health is shameful and needs to be concealed,” said Melissa Howell, Health Commissioner at Greene County Public Health.

Access to mental health care is a particular concern this year as the United States reacts to multiple crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread racial and political discord. A study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 41% of people experienced depression and anxiety in 2020, up from 11% in 2019. And it is well-documented that the negative psychological effects of a disaster persist longer than the physical health effects.

Ultimately, while policies are needed to create longstanding mental health support infrastructure, programs and pathways to care to address these problems, policies are often shaped by public sentiment and perception.

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Reducing stigma and welcoming mental health into the public dialogue can help pave the way toward connecting people with mental health support when they need it before mental health problems become more serious.

This Mental Health Month, Greene County Public Health invites all members of the public to be brave against stigma and talk about mental health openly with friends, family members and coworkers. Recognizing that discussions about mental health may be sensitive for some, tips on how to talk safely about mental health, examples of public figures who have shared their mental health stories and more support resources are available through the 'Be Brave' digital toolkit. Download the toolkit at www.mhrb.org/bravementalhealth.

For more information about mental health and substance use resources in Greene County, please visit www.mhrb.org.

For questions, please contact Greene County Public Health at 937-374-5600 or visit the website at www.gcph.info.

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