

## MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

### Live Your Life Well

**With increasing economic troubles** piled on to the stress of work and family demands, more and more Americans are suffering. Fifty eight % of Americans reported struggling in their lives at the end of 2008, an increase of more than 22 million Americans who reported struggling earlier in the year.

Here, from Mental Health America are 10 specific, research-based tools that can combat stress and promote health and well-being. Review the 10 tools to see which one suits you. Then check out the suggestions for applying them to your life.

#### Connect with Others

*Humans are social animals. We tend to do much better when we feel supported, valued and understood. Here are some ways to build connections*

- Join a Book Club, hiking club or other group.
- Enroll in a class.
- Boost existing connections. Commit to a certain amount of time with your loved ones each week

#### Stay Positive

*Thinking negatively can drag down your mood and your health. But don't let that worry you. Experts say you can learn to be less gloomy*

- Don't assume the worst.
- Keep a gratitude journal. Record anything that makes you smile.
- Remember your achievements.

#### Get physically active

*Our bodies were built to move, especially when they are pumping out stress-induced hormones.*

- Put exercise on your calendar.
- Work out with a friend.
- Really run your errands. Walk faster every time you walk

#### Help Others

*If you help your neighbor, it's good for her, but it's good for you too.*

- Volunteer with a community organization.
- Volunteer a smile.
- Tell someone what you admire about them.

#### Get enough rest

*Sleep may seem like a waste when there is so much to do, but you're more likely to succeed at your tasks if you get enough rest.*

- De-caffeinate yourself.
- De-stress yourself. Turn off daytime worries by finishing any next day preparations about an hour before bed.
- Avoid Frustration. If you cannot fall asleep after 15 minutes, get up until you feel more tired

#### Create joy and satisfaction

*Go ahead, kick up your heels or just kick back. Feeling good is good for you.*

- Pop in a humor CD.
- Do something you loved as a kid.
- Identify the high points of your day.

#### Eat well

*Our bodies and our brains need good fuel to function well.*

*Eat regularly. Skipping meals can make your blood sugar drop and make you feel irritable*

- Snack well. Resist junk food
- Strive for balance. Your brain needs a variety of nutrients to perform functions that affect your mood and your thinking.

#### Take care of your spirit

*Taking care of your spirit means connecting to whatever you consider meaningful and holy, whether that is God, nature, art or something deep within yourself.*

- Pray or focus on your notion of God
- Talk with others who share similar spiritual beliefs
- Read inspiring texts for insights that can enrich your life.

#### Deal better with hard times

*Most of us will face some particularly tough times in our lives, like a loss or divorce. Having ways to cope with these challenges can protect your health and well-being.*

- Tackle problems. Instead of worrying, make a list of possible solutions. Pick one and break it into manageable chunks
- Get support.
- Write it out.

#### Get professional help if you need it

*If the problems in your life are stopping you from functioning well or feeling good, professional help can make a big difference.*

*Find names of mental health care providers. Ask your doctor, friends or clergy.*

- Prepare a list of questions for a possible provider, like "What experience do you have treating my issue?" and "Do you use a particular approach?"
- Determine your coverage, if you have insurance.
- If not, you can ask Behavior Management Systems about free or lower-cost services.

## FEEL BETTER!

More than 80 percent of people who are treated for depression improve.

You can be well - vibrant, strong, alert and productive

You can feel well – comfortable, confident, gratified and grateful

*You can Live Your Life Well*

