



Team members,

We have come through a year of unprecedented times, but COVID-19 is not gone and we need to continue to take care of ourselves, families and friends.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, which provides a timely reminder that mental health is essential and that those living with mental health issues are deserving of care, understanding, compassion, as well as an opportunity to find a path to hope, healing, recovery and life fulfillment.

Everyone is impacted by mental illness in some way, whether they personally struggle or know someone who does. Approximately one in five Missourians will face mental illness in any given year. Talking about it can help those struggling realize they are not alone on their journey to recovery.

This week, May 3-8, is Children's Mental Health Week. On Thursday, May 6th the Department of Mental Health Children's Team asks you to join a movement to emphasize the importance of children's mental health. At 1:30 pm youth, families, providers and community partners will join together virtually to ring bells for hope in support of children and youth with mental health issues. Join the celebration and be sure to use [#Ring4Hope](#).

There are several resources available for individuals who may need mental health assistance. Feel free to share them:

- The Department of Mental Health's Show Me Hope program provides a free, confidential, multilingual helpline available 24/7 for anyone experiencing emotional difficulties due to the pandemic. Text or call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990. Find out more at [MOShowMeHope.org](https://www.mohowehope.org).
- Weekly DMH CARES (Communicating and Reaching Employees Supportively) episodes are live, interactive wellness webinars presented from 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the following dates: May 18 and June 1 & 15. [Register](#) to participate and

learn mental health/wellness tips, stress management exercises, resilience education, and disaster recovery resources.

- DMH website resources:
 - <https://dmh.mo.gov/disaster-services/covid-19-information>
 - <https://dmh.mo.gov/disaster-services/self-care>
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - State team members may participate in the EAP made available through the Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan by calling ComPsych at **800-808-2261**. The EAP entitles an employee and any member of the employee's household up to six free visits per episode for personal areas of concern such as: health problems, marital problems, family problems, financial problems, substance use problems, legal issues, stress, grief and loss, and emotional disturbances. Learn more at <https://www.guidanceresources.com/groWeb/login/login.xhtml>.

During this month, I encourage you to stay connected, get and provide support, and raise awareness of the importance of mental health. DMH will always make our State colleagues a priority. No one should feel alone or be without the help they need.

Thanks,

Mark Stringer, Director

Department of Mental Health