



May 1, 2017

For almost 70 years, the month of May has been recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month to bring attention to the millions of Americans who have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder. Each year, roughly 1 in 5 Americans experience a mental health condition. However, 60% of adults and 50% of young people do not receive the treatment they need. Missourians' experience is not much different, including nearly 1,000 suicides in a single year.

Psychologists play a vital role in the research, prevention, and treatment of mental health conditions. As experts in human behavior, psychologists hold doctoral degrees and are uniquely qualified to help those struggling with mental illness through psychological assessment and psychotherapy. This month we not only wish to recognize the prevalence of mental illness, but to promote effective treatment and advocate for greater access to care. It is essential that Americans have the means of improving their mental health and quality of life.

Mental health treatment is effective. Research confirms that psychotherapy helps individuals learn the skills to overcome depression, anxiety, PTSD, and addictions, along with many other conditions. Psychotherapy can also help with the adjustment to life stressors such as stress, loss, grief, and relationship problems. Mental illness is not a sign of weakness, rather, a reality of so many individuals. Seeking treatment takes courage in the face of stigma.

The Missouri Psychological Association's mission is to promote human welfare in Missouri and we join other professional associations and patient advocacy groups in fighting the stigma associated with mental health. The Missouri Psychological Association advocates for greater access to mental health care and hopes the stigma of mental health becomes a thing of the past.

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