

Healthy Living

Warning signs of mental health issues

The significance of measures to protect mental health has garnered renewed attention in recent years. As that shift has taken place, measures to safeguard mental health have become vital components of the health and wellness routines of people from all walks of life.

Education is an important component of mental health care. While mental health issues were once stigmatized, education has helped to raise awareness about mental illness and how common it is among people of all ages, countries, and socioeconomic backgrounds. One of the first steps to educate oneself or others about mental health is to learn the warning signs and symptoms that someone might be dealing with mental illness. The National Alliance on Mental Illness notes each illness has its own symptoms, but there are some common indicators that characterize various conditions. According to the NAMI, signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents may include:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confusion when thinking or difficulty concentrating and learning
- Extreme changes in mood, including uncontrollable highs or feelings of euphoria
- Feelings of irritability or anger that are prolonged or strong
- Reluctance to engage with friends and avoidance of social activities
- Difficulty understanding or relating to other people
- Alterations in sleeping habits or feeling tired or lacking energy
- Changes in eating habits, such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality. These difficulties may be marked by delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality.
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality, a lack of insight known as anosognosia

- Excessive consumption of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes, such as headaches, stomach aches, and vague and ongoing aches and pains
- Thoughts about suicide
- An inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress

- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance
- Parents should know that even young, school-aged children can experience mental health issues or illness. The symptoms of such conditions in young children may manifest behaviorally, which the NAMI notes occurs because kids are still learning how to identify

and talk about their thoughts and emotions. Young children dealing with mental health issues may exhibit these symptoms:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety. Children may exhibit these symptoms by fighting to avoid going to bed or school.
- Hyperactive behavior

- Frequent nightmares
 - Frequent disobedience or aggression
 - Frequent temper tantrums
- The World Health Organization estimates that more than one billion people across the globe are living with mental health conditions. More information about mental illness can be found at nami.org.

Why it pays to take time off from work

Paid time off is a perk offered by most employers that enables workers to enjoy time away from work while still getting paid. Although the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics says approximately 90 percent of private industry receives paid time off, a Glassdoor study found only 23 percent of Americans take all of their available vacation time. And of those who took vacation, 54 percent reported working while away.

The pressures of deadlines,

demanding workplaces and the need to get ahead can lead to a lot of unused vacation time. This can be a mistake, as there are many benefits to taking time away from work.

- Recharge your batteries. Taking time off from work enables you to avoid mental and physical burnout. Psychology Today says you may gain new perspectives on workplace stressors and put plans in place to mitigate stress while on vacation.
- Fuel creativity. Downtime activates creative

thinking, which can spark innovation and more. Studies from Stanford and the University of California have shown people are 60 percent more creative after walking or taking short breaks compared to those who are at their desks all the time. Vacations can expand mental horizons.

- Increase productivity. Even though it sounds counterintuitive, working less can lead to getting more done. Companies that encourage time off often see higher engagement, increased innovation and lower burnout rates.
- Increase self-awareness of your value. Apart from avoiding burnout and being more productive, an important reason to take time

off is because you've earned it. It is one way to set boundaries with an employer. If you don't take your vacation time, an employer may expect more and more from you.

- Strengthen relationships. When you're always in a work-inspired go, go, go mindset, it is easy to lose sight of what really matters. Taking time off enables you to connect with loved ones and engage in activities that bring you joy.

Taking advantage of paid time off from work can improve your mental and physical health and even benefit your career.

Welcome

MICHAEL FIGART, DO

INTERNIST AND PULMONARY MEDICINE SPECIALIST

Committed to caring for Huntingdon

Whether it's a routine check-up or managing a long-term condition, Dr. Figart believes in listening to his patients and working together to create a plan that fits their unique needs. With a focus on accessible, high-quality healthcare, he's here to help you and your family stay healthy and thrive.

Dr. Figart, born and raised in Hollidaysburg and educated at Juniata College, is proud to serve the community he has always called home. He says: "My goal is to deliver the highest level of care while maintaining a personal connection that helps patients feel heard and understood."

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Your health deserves care you can count on, close to home. Call us at 814.234.6106 to schedule an appointment with Dr. Figart today.



MOUNT NITTANY HEALTH

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LIFE SOUNDS BETTER WHEN YOU'RE CONNECTED

Good communication is about more than just hearing words. It's about:

- ✓ Feeling included in conversations
- ✓ Staying connected with family and friends
- ✓ Participating confidently at work or in social settings
- ✓ Supporting brain health and emotional well-being
- ✓ Avoiding frustration and misunderstandings

When hearing or speech becomes difficult, even small communication breakdowns can lead to isolation, stress, or withdrawal. **When communication improves, everything improves. Contact us to schedule your appointment today.**



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