

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

how are you... for real?



Stress, anxiety, loneliness, and hopelessness are all natural feelings. Amidst the current global pandemic, it may feel like these feelings come up more often and are more intense. Below you will find a few ideas on what you can do to manage your emotions and strengthen your mental health:

**Know that it's okay to feel.** Societal pressure often tries to dictate how we express or feel emotion. This is not healthy or helpful. Feeling is a part of the human experience. Let it happen.

**Don't ignore your feelings.** Bottling your feelings, without addressing them, can intensify your feelings and possibly bring on additional negative feelings or even actions that are harmful. Try to address your feelings as soon as possible.

**Talk about what you are feeling.** Find someone you trust and share your feelings. Kindly be upfront if you need their advice and to share their experiences, or if you just need them to listen.

**Try journaling.** Each night, write down a few feelings you had over the course of the day and what may have caused them. It doesn't need to be a "Dear Diary" kind of thing. Just a few sentences or bullet points to help you become comfortable with identifying and expressing your emotions.

**See a mental health professional.** If you are taking steps to be more in touch with your feelings, but they begin to impact your daily function and routine and don't seem to be subsiding, it's time to seek help. Your health, happiness and life deserve it.

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