

## May Tool Kit: Mental Health Awareness

California Nursing Students' Association  
May 2020 | Community Health

# Mental Health Awareness



In this toolkit:

1. Anxiety
2. Depression
3. Substance Use Disorder
4. Resources

# Anxiety



- Anxiety is our body's natural response to stress and can alert us to dangers or make us more attentive.
- Symptoms of anxiety include:
  - feeling nervous, restless, tense
  - having a sense of impending doom or panic
  - increased heart rate, breathing rapidly.
  - trembling, sweating
  - difficulty concentrating
  - trouble sleeping
  - gastrointestinal problems

# Anxiety



- Occasional anxiety is normal. However, an anxiety disorder is characterized by intense, excessive persistent worry about everyday situations that interfere with daily activities.
- You should see a professional if:
  - Your anxiety is interfering with your work, relationships, and everyday life.
  - Your anxiety is difficult to control
  - You suspect your anxiety could be linked to another health condition
  - You have suicidal thoughts or behaviors

# Anxiety

- Anxiety treatment options:
  - Psychotherapy
  - Medications
    - Anti-anxiety medications
    - Antidepressants
    - Beta-Blockers
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - Stress management techniques and healthy coping
    - Meditation
    - Support groups
    - Avoid caffeine
- It can take time to find the right medication and dose, be patient in this process and open with your physician.

# Depression



- Depression is a mood disorder that can affect activities of daily living.
- Signs and Symptoms
  - persistent sadness, anxiety, or "empty" mood
  - feelings of hopelessness or helplessness
  - irritability
  - extreme fatigue, moving/talking more slowly
  - difficulty concentrating
  - difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
  - appetite and/or weight changes
  - Suicidal thoughts or attempts
- Diagnosis requires that symptoms are present for at least 2 weeks

# Depression

- Risk Factors
  - Family history
  - Major life changes, stress, trauma
  - Some illnesses or medications
- Treatment Options
  - Medications
    - Antidepressants
  - Psychotherapy
  - Electroconvulsive Therapy
  - Self Care
    - exercise
    - avoid isolating self
    - set realistic goals for self and treatment
    - educate self
- It can take time for medications to work, and to find the right medication and dose for you. Be patient in this process, communicate with your provider, and do not stop medications suddenly.

take care  
of your mind

# Substance Use Disorder



- Substance use disorder, or drug addiction, is a mental health disorder that affects a person's brain and behavior.
- It leads to an inability to control the use of a drug or medication.
- Addiction can start with recreational drugs or prescribed medications, like opioids.

# Substance Use Disorder

## Symptoms

- Feeling you must use the drug regularly
- Needing more of the drug to get the same effect
- Maintaining a supply of the drug
- Spending money on the drug, even if you can't afford it
- Not meeting obligations & responsibilities
- Continuing to use the drug, and you know it's causing problems in your life
- Doing things to get the drug that you normally wouldn't do, such as stealing
- Failing in your attempts to stop using the drug
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms when you attempt to stop taking the drug



# Substance Use Disorder

When to see a doctor or seek help

- You can't stop using a drug
- You continue using the drug despite the harm it causes
- Your drug use has led to unsafe behavior,
- You think you may be having withdrawal symptoms after stopping drug use

Seek emergency medical attention if you have taken a drug and

- May have overdosed
- Shows changes in consciousness
- Have trouble breathing
- Have seizures or convulsions
- Have signs of a possible heart attack, such as chest pain or pressure
- Have any other concerning physical or psychological reaction to use of the drug



## **May is Mental Health Awareness Month**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) fights to end the stigma surrounding mental health by providing support and educating the public about mental health issues.

NAMI's "You are Not Alone" campaign features people's lived experiences to fight the stigma and inspire people to educate others.

Find out more at [nami.org](http://nami.org)

## References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anxiety/symptoms-causes/syc-20350961>

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/anxiety-disorders/what-are-anxiety-disorders>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/drug-addiction/symptoms-causes/syc-20365112>

<https://www.nami.org/home>