In the 1960’s, May was designated as National Mental Health Month in order to raise awareness about mental illness and related issues in the United States.

Although mild fears and anxieties are part of normal childhood, they are a serious concern when they begin to disrupt daily life. Anxiety disorders are the most common psychiatric disorders in childhood. These disorders include phobias, separation anxiety, generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, severe health anxiety (hypochondriasis), and social phobia. If left untreated anxiety disorders tend to continue into adulthood and place children at increased risk for other problems, including poor academic performance, depression, and drug dependence. For these reasons understanding the nature of anxiety problems, and how best to treat them, is very important.

As quoted in an article on the NIMH website: “Research shows that half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14. Scientists are discovering that changes in the body leading to mental illness may start much earlier, before any symptoms appear.”

While children and adults alike can suffer from different types of mental illness, manifestations of symptoms and behaviors can vary greatly between the two groups.

Social Anxiety — Feeling shy or uncomfortable in certain situations isn’t necessarily a sign of social anxiety. There are people who are outgoing and those who are naturally reserved. Social Anxiety includes fear, anxiety and avoidance that interferes with daily life.

Adults may have a fear of being judged or a concern about offending someone. These fears may manifest in physical symptoms such as blushing, shaking, sweating, confusion or a trembling voice.

Some everyday experiences that may be a source of anxiety include using a public restroom, eating in front of others, making eye contact, interacting with strangers, or returning items to a store.

Children may experience headaches, stomach pain, have temper tantrums or cry for no apparent reason. Other warning signs that may also indicate mental illness are mood or behavior changes, substance abuse and inflicting self injury.

Upcoming Wellness Programming

Thursday, May 21—Boehlert
Lunch & Learn with Mary Siniscarco
How to Maximize Your Brain Health

Thursday, May 28—Clark City Center
Lunch & Learn with Mary Siniscarco
How to Maximize Your Brain Health

Click to Register

How Not to Care What People Think About You (or care less)

Not saying that you should never care... just saying that there should be a balance and your behavior should not be based on what others think. Here are some suggestions that might lessen your worry:

Stop over-thinking. Much of the time when you think someone is judging you, they aren’t. If you think about it, it’s rather egotistical to
assume that everything is about us! Maybe they really aren’t thinking about how you look… This can also help you to not take things so personally. If you can believe that, it will lessen your worry.

**Put things into perspective.** Sometimes people who obsess about what others are thinking have a tendency to examine life under the microscope and so they can’t “see the forest for the trees”. Trying to look at the bigger picture allows you to see a particular incident as just one tiny piece of your life and so it won’t define how you feel.

**Be confident in yourself.** Smile and the world smiles with you. Instead of thinking how you might fail at something, turn it around… visualize yourself succeeding. You believe in you…and “they” will believe in you.

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**Generalized Anxiety Disorder**

Do you worry all the time? Do your worries lead into other worries? Does one thing make you think of another which leads to another and then another potential problem…?

Here are some tools you can keep on hand:

**Calm Your Breathing:** Breathe in deeply through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth. This can help reduce the physical symptoms of anxiety.

**Relax Your Muscles:** Try tensing some of your muscles and then relaxing them. This will help to reduce your overall physical feeling of stress.

**Learn to Become Comfortable with Uncertainty:** A major trigger for anxiety is uncertainty. Act “as if” you are comfortable with your decision instead of thinking “what if” I made the wrong choice. Again…don’t overthink it. Going to a new restaurant? Just imagine how enjoyable the meal will be, instead of worrying that you should have looked up reviews.

Anxiety BC.com

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**Some Types of Mental Health Problems**

Mental Illness can manifest in a variety of ways. Once diagnosed, help and treatment is widely available.

- Anxiety and Panic Attacks
- Bipolar Disorder
- Body Dysmorphic Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Dissociative Disorder
- Drugs—Street Drugs
- Eating Problems
- Hearing Voices
- Hypomania and Mania
- Loneliness
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Paranoia
- Personality Disorders
- Phobia
- Postnatal Depression
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Psychotic Experiences
- Schizoaffective Disorder
- Seasonal Affective Disorder

Many organizations and associations are working hard to remove the stigma of mental illness.

In February 2015 California hosted an international conference called **Together Against Stigma-Each Mind Matters.** The goals of this conference were to understand societal injustices, promote cultural responsiveness, expand global perspective, and learn innovative strategies.