



What is Mental Health?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It impacts how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

There are many factors that impact mental health, including:

- Biological factors, such as your genes, gender, or brain chemistry.
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse.
- Family history of mental health issues.

*Mental health challenges can be experienced on a wide scale and often change over the course of a person's life.

What is STIGMA?

Stigma is a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something.

Stigma, shame, and secrecy keep people from seeking the help they need.

The stigma associated with mental illness creates barriers to wellness. Because of the stigma of mental illness, people do not seek out treatment early, or sometimes ever. The damage this causes may affect their mental illness, their physical health, their family, friends, coworkers and community.



Ocean County's Mental Health Awareness Committee of Ocean County

Members include representatives from:

- Bright Harbor Healthcare
 - Department of Children & Families NJ
 - Family Support Organization Youth Partnership
 - Mental Health Association of NJ and Ocean County
 - NAMI Ocean County
 - Ocean County College
 - Ocean County Department of Human Services
 - Ocean Mental Health Services
 - Ocean Partnership for Children
 - Preferred Behavioral Health
 - RWJ Barnabas Health
 - Veterans Affairs
- As well as dedicated members of the community.*

Meetings are open to the public.

For information, please email the MHAC Lead:
Courtney Hartshorn, Ocean County
Department of Human Services
CHartshorn@co.ocean.nj.us

**This brochure aims to provide information regarding community resources. Resources listed are not evaluated nor do the provisions of information about a resource constitute endorsement. Omission of a resource does not signify disapproval.*



Ocean County Mental Health Awareness Committee Resource Guide

Mission — Ocean County Mental Health Awareness Committee is a county-wide coalition of concerned community members dedicated to removing the stigma associated with mental illness. Our mission is to educate Ocean County residents on mental illness by promoting awareness and advocacy.

Vision — Ocean County recognizes that all members of our community are endowed with strengths. Ocean County is a community that embraces the diversity of its residents and their contribution to a greater common good.



 [www.Facebook.com/StigmaHurts](https://www.facebook.com/StigmaHurts)

For additional resource guides, visit www.oceandhs.org

Mental Health Facts for Young Adults

- 1 out of every 5 young people suffers from some form of diagnosable mental illness. ²
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among people ages 15-24, and the second leading cause of death in college students ages 20-24. ¹
- Over 66% of young people with a substance use disorder have a co-occurring mental health problem. ²
- Over 2/3 of young people do not talk about or seek help for mental health problems. ⁴
- 44% of American college students reported feeling symptoms of depression. ⁵
- 4 out of every 5 young people that contemplate or attempt suicide exhibit clear warning signs. ³
- 80-90% of people that seek the necessary form of mental health treatment can function the way they used to. ²
- Stereotypes are one of the largest barriers preventing young people from seeking the help they need. ²
- An estimated 5 million young females suffer from eating disorders each year and eating disorders are the deadliest mental illness claiming more lives than any other illness. ³

All statistics have been provided by 1 NYU Child Study Center; 2 the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health; 3 the N.M.H.A.; 4 American Journal of Psychiatry 10/02; 5 the Wall Street Journal.



Ocean County Mental Health Resource Directory

ALWAYS REMEMBER

you are enough.

having a bad day is okay.

asking for help is strength.

you are loved & appreciated.

small steps are also progress.

show yourself compassion.



Help a Friend: Know the 10 Common Warning Signs

- 1 Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks.
- 2 Seriously trying to harm oneself or making plans to do so.
- 3 Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors.
- 4 Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason.
- 5 Not eating, losing weight or weight gain.
- 6 Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real.
- 7 Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol.
- 8 Drastic changed in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits.
- 9 Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still.
- 10 Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities.

You are not alone.

Talk to someone you trust. This could be a parent, family member, teacher, school counselor or another trusted adult. It can be scary to reach out for help, but it is often the first step to helping you heal, grow, and recover. Having a good support system and engaging with trustworthy people are key elements to successfully talking about your own mental health.

Mental Health Stigma is a barrier that prevents individuals from seeking the support they need. To create a society that values mental well-being, we must unite in our efforts to break down the barriers.

Here is how each of us can contribute:

1. **Education & Awareness** - By spreading knowledge, we empower ourselves and others to understand the complexities of mental health.
2. **Open Conversations** - By talking openly, we can normalize the experiences and challenges people face, helping them feel less isolated.
3. **Language Matters** - The words we choose can shape perceptions. Use language that respects and supports individuals dealing with mental health concerns, avoiding stigmatizing terms.
4. **Extend Empathy** - Offering a listening ear and showing empathy can be transformative. By validating others' feelings without judgement, we create a space where people feel safe to express themselves.
5. **Building Inclusivity** - Let's ensure workplaces, communities, and schools are inclusive and supportive of mental health needs.
6. **Leading by Example** - Sharing our own stories, if we are comfortable, can show that mental health challenges can affect anyone.
7. **Accessible Resources** - Advocating for accessible and affordable mental health resources is crucial. By making help available to all, we ensure that seeking support is feasible.
8. **Be the Change** - Small actions create ripples. Each effort we make contributes to dismantling stigma and creating a more compassionate world for everyone.

