

HEALTH MATTERS

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May is Mental Health Awareness Month. If you're struggling with depression, anxiety, or having trouble coping with the world around you, it's important to have a set of coping mechanisms to get through challenging times. Janet Jackowski, LCSW-R, CASAC-MC, VP, Behavioral Health and Social Services at Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital, offers some tips for dealing with mental health.

Have a written plan. "Written planning is really helpful for everyone,"

says Jackowski. A written plan can be a huge resource when you're overwhelmed and should contain a list of things that can help you. Make sure the written plan is realistic for you, and includes ideas and activities that will help you specifically, whether it be a simple hobby or calling someone you know and trust.

Mindfulness. It's important to accept the feelings you are experiencing. "Practice a radical acceptance of whatever your emotion is in that moment," explains Jackowski.

Jackowski notes that if those feelings begin to translate to depression or suicidality, it's important to contact someone immediately.

Walking. "It's a simple exercise, it's a doable exercise and something that can be done no matter if you walk across the room or go for a walk in the park. Move a muscle, change a thought. When you're moving, you're breathing more, which helps you practice mindfulness. Say to yourself, 'I'm taking a step.'"

Connect with a trusted person. If you have a trusted person in your life, reach out. Call them to check in.

Drink water or tea. "Something that's soothing is important," says Jackowski. "Have a snack – something that makes you feel good. Simple things can make such a difference."

Write your feelings down. Look at them and ask, "what am I seeing here? What's happening here?"

Nature. Being outdoors can be extremely helpful.

Therapy. Therapy is not only for those in crisis! "Therapy is ongoing. It's about maintaining wellness and having someone who can identify triggers, what might cause you to feel depressed or anxious."

Resources

Suicide & Crisis Hotline:
Text 988

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
800-273-8255 (1-800-SUICIDE)

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline
(en Español):
888-628-9454

Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital
Inpatient Psychiatric:
631-477-5265

**If you or someone you know
is experiencing suicidal
thoughts or feelings, dial 911
immediately.**