



# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

*Prevention: Promoting  
Wellness and Averting Crisis  
through Prevention*

Created by Western Tidewater Community Services Board



# WELCOME!

My name is Charlene Cutting and it is an honor to be the Prevention Manager under the brand-new Wellness, Prevention and Recovery Division at Western Tidewater Community Services Board.

I am deeply passionate about people, wellness and its many dimensions. Through many powerful, harrowing and moving experiences, I have subsequently been driven to serve my community for nearly a decade; helping individuals to overcome adversity, stigma, barriers and glass ceilings.

Please join us, on the broad highway of wellness, stay connected and get involved. We'd love to hear from you.

Until then, be well, friends!

**Charlene Cutting**

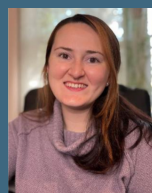
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# ABOUT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN VIRGINIA

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services plans, develops, directs, funds and monitors the delivery of comprehensive mental health services throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

All Virginians can access mental health services, as well as substance abuse recovery and intellectual and developmental disability services, through their local Community Services Board (CSB). CSBs provide treatment, support and community programs for all, regardless of ability to pay.

There is a CSB that serves every county and city in the state. At Western Tidewater Community Services Board (WTCSB), we serve the cities of Franklin and Suffolk in addition to the counties of Isle of Wight and Southampton. If you're not located in the WTCSB coverage area, you can [find your local CSB by clicking here](#).



# USING THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit contains ideas and resources for how to raise awareness around mental health. It includes key messages that can be used for social media posts, newsletter content, emails, and more.

Below are the three key messages of our Mental Health Awareness Month 2023 toolkit:

**Key Message 1** - Mental Health Matters

**Key Message 2** - Prevention Week (Sunday, May 7th - Saturday, May 13th)

**Key Message 3** - Getting Help

## HOW TO USE THE PROVIDED CONTENT

- Use these key messages to develop content for emails, newsletters, blog posts, and more.
- Share the provided social media posts. These can be shared on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or just about anywhere you can share image or text-based posts. Don't forget to add #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth to your posts so others can learn from what you're doing.
- Share the key messages and provided content with friends, colleagues, and other groups you're engaged with.
- Share these key messages through conversations, meetings, community events, and more. Every day brings another opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of mental health.

# KEY MESSAGE 1 - MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

## What is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to our overall psychological and emotional wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel and act. Our mental health also influences the choices we make, how we handle life's challenges, and our relationships with others.

## Mental health can be affected by:

- Life experiences, like trauma
- Biological factors, like brain chemistry
- Genetic factors, like a family history of mental illness

When we are mentally healthy, we feel good about ourselves and our lives. When we have poor mental health, we may experience feelings of sadness or anxiety, negative or intrusive thoughts, low self-esteem or other symptoms.

Having poor mental health is not the same as having a mental health condition (also known as a mental illness). We all have poor mental health from time to time. Struggling with your mental health doesn't necessarily mean you have a mental health condition, but when you experience changes in your thoughts and feelings that have a serious impact on your life and last for an extended period, like weeks or months, you are experiencing a mental health condition.

# KEY MESSAGE 1 - MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

## Why Mental Health Is Important

Mental health is important because it impacts every area of our lives - how we feel about ourselves and the lives we lead, our relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and romantic partners, and how we handle stress and other challenges.

## Maintaining Good Mental Health

Taking care of your mental health is an essential part of taking care of your overall health. Maintaining good mental health includes:

- Taking care of your physical health
- Managing stress
- Using positive coping skills
- Practicing gratitude and positive thinking

***"When individuals are mentally healthy, they are able to realize their own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and make positive contributions to their community."  
(World Health Organization, 2004)***

## ***Download & Share!***

Check your toolkit packet for a PDF to download and share: **Staying Mentally Healthy**

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

**1.** Most of us know what mental illness is, but what is mental health? It's more than just the absence of mental illness. Mental health is our overall psychological and emotional wellbeing and it impacts all parts of our lives. Read more about why taking care of our mental health is so important: <https://www.wtcsb.org/benefits-of-caring-for-our-mental-wellness/>

#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth #MentalHealthMatters  
#MentalHealthAwareness #VirginiaMentalHealth

**2.** Our mental health influences the choices we make, how we handle stress and other challenges, and our relationships. Simply put, good mental health = a good life. Maintaining good mental health can be as simple as getting some exercise, relieving stress with a favorite hobby or tv show, or talking out your problems with someone. What have you done this #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth to keep up with your mental health?

#MentalHealthMatters #MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealth

**3.** Did you know that physical health is really important when it comes to our mental health? What we eat, how much exercise we get, and how much quality sleep we get can have a major impact on our thoughts and feelings. In fact, insomnia has been linked to an increase in suicidal thoughts in individuals who have depression or another mental health condition. Most insomnia is short-term and can be treated with sleep hygiene interventions like a hot bath, herbal tea, avoiding screens before bed, or making sure your sleep environment is dark and comfortable. Read more about treating sleep problems at NAMI.org.

<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Common-with-Mental-Illness/Sleep-Disorders>

#MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#MentalHealth #MentalHealthMatters



# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

**4.** 21% of adults in the U.S. have a mental health condition and 46% will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition at some point in their life. Whether you know it or not, someone in your life is affected by their mental health. It's up to us to stay informed and to spread the message that mental health affects us all – and it's something we should all care about. <https://www.wtcsb.org/why-is-mental-health-awareness-important/>  
#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth #MentalHealthAwareness  
#MentalHealth #MentalHealthMatters

**5.** Practicing gratitude isn't always easy, especially when things seem extra hard, but it's worth it. Research has shown that just acknowledging something you're thankful for - even if it's just your morning cup of coffee - has been proven to rewire your brain so that you think more positively - and become happier. What are you grateful for today?  
#Gratitude #PositiveThinking #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthMatters

Hashtags: #MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#VirginiaMentalHealth #MentalHealth #MentalHealthMatters

**When sharing our content, links, or branded images, please use #wtcsb and/or #westerntidewater and tag us:**

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/western\\_tidewater\\_cs/](https://www.instagram.com/western_tidewater_cs/)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WTCSB>

# KEY MESSAGE 2 - PREVENTION WEEK

During National Prevention Week (Sunday, May 7th - Saturday, May 13th), we're focusing on raising awareness of mental health issues and substance abuse, as well as prevention programs and how they help.

## What is Prevention?

Prevention is any intervention intended to minimize or avoid problems before they arise. Mental health and substance abuse prevention programs include emotional intelligence and anti-drug programs in schools, mental health education for adults and children, and periods dedicated to raising awareness - like Prevention Week and Mental Health Awareness Month.

## Why Prevention Matters

Mental and substance use disorders impact our communities and people in many ways and, as the mental health crisis in the U.S. continues, prevention is more important than ever.

In the United States:

- Mental and substance use disorders are among the top conditions that cause disability in the United States. As of 2020, 29% of Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries (2.4 million people) received benefits because of a mental health condition - more than the individuals who can't work due to injuries, cancer, or diseases of the circulatory and nervous system, combined.
- Mental and substance use disorders also lead to increased rates of homelessness, incarceration, and loss of income for individuals.

# KEY MESSAGE 2 - PREVENTION WEEK

The cost of untreated mental and substance use disorders is high, for both our society as a whole, and for individuals.

## Prevention Begins in the Community

We see prevention as the process of proactively cultivating positive cultures, leading to a better future for individuals, families, and society as a whole. To create that future, we must challenge some of the ways that we view, discuss, and activate prevention. Everyone who is part of a community is an active participant in creating that community's culture, and we invite you to do just that by getting involved with prevention right here in your community.

## What We're Doing To Help

At Western Tidewater Community Services Board, we passionately strive to support, connect, improve, and assist individual, family and community wellness, and prevention is a critical part of that.

We're proud to offer several prevention programs through our Wellness, Prevention and Recovery Division. Find out more about our [Prevention Services](#) on our website or in the PDF download in your packet titled: WTCSB Prevention Programs,

We also offer a local crisis line that's available anytime, 24/7, for anyone in need. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, or any mental health crisis, call 757-656-7755 or 988 to talk to a trained counselor right away.

***Download  
& Share!***

Check your toolkit packet for a PDF to download and share: WTCSB Prevention Programs

# PREVENTION WEEK SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

- 1.** This #NationalPreventionWeek, we encourage you to get involved by sharing your prevention story. How do you help to prevent substance abuse or mental health issues in your household or community? Share your story on social media with #MyPreventionStory. Find out more ways you or your organization can participate at <https://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week/my-prevention-story>.
- 2.** As the mental health crisis in the U.S. continues, prevention is more important than ever. Mental and substance disorders are among the top conditions that cause disability in the U.S. and are also linked to increased rates of homelessness, incarceration and loss of income for individuals. The cost of untreated mental and substance use disorders is high, for both our society as a whole, and for individuals - but we can offset these costs with prevention programs. #PreventionMatters #NationalPreventionWeek
- 3.** Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs often involve violence, abuse, neglect, mental illness, substance abuse, or incarceration, but they can be any experience that has an adverse effect on a child. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence and adulthood and can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential - but ACEs are preventable! Learn more about ACEs and how they can be prevented: <https://www.wtcsb.org/adverse-childhood-experiences/> #NationalPreventionWeek #PreventionMatters #AdverseChildhoodExperiences

# PREVENTION WEEK SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

**4.** Prevention begins in the community. Everyone who is part of a community is an active participant in creating its culture. We invite you to do just that by getting involved with prevention right here in your own community. Here are a few ideas from SAMHSA on how to get started: <https://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week/about/get-involved>

#NationalPreventionWeek #PreventionMatters

**5.** Did you know that, on average, more than 3 people die each day from an opioid overdose in Virginia? As deaths due to opioid overdose continue to rise, prevention measures are more important than ever. How can you help? The best way is to be prepared to save someone's life if you see them experiencing an overdose. Western Tidewater CSB offers a training for overdose and naloxone: <https://www.wtcsb.org/revive-opioid-overdose-and-naloxone-education/>

#NationalPreventionWeek #PreventionMatters #Naloxone  
#OpioidCrisis

Hashtags: #MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#VirginiaMentalHealth #MentalHealth #Prevention #NationalPreventionWeek  
#MyPreventionStory #PreventionMatters

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Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/western\\_tidewater\\_csb/](https://www.instagram.com/western_tidewater_csb/)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WTCSB>

# KEY MESSAGE 3 - GETTING HELP

You know better than anyone when something is wrong. If you're struggling with your mental health or substance abuse, don't be afraid to ask for the help you need. What kind of help or how much help you ask for is entirely up to you. It's often best to start with the people already in your life - family and friends, your primary care doctor, maybe a spiritual leader or mentor. Talking out your feelings with others can help you to better understand and manage those emotions.

You can also find compassionate care and valuable resources through your local mental health organization or community behavioral health center. In Virginia, affordable behavioral health care is always accessible, regardless of ability to pay, through your local community services board.

If you need more than just talking it out with a friend or family member, that's ok! If your mental health is keeping you from functioning well in your day-to-day life, or is keeping you from enjoying your life, professional mental health help can make a big difference. Not sure if you need professional care? That's ok, too. It never hurts to give it a try, if there's a possibility it can help you get back to feeling good again.

Support and resources are always available for you, and you are allowed to ask for help. You are deserving of help.

# GETTING HELP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

1. If you're struggling with your mental health or substance abuse, don't be afraid to ask for the help you need. What kind of help or how much help you ask for is entirely up to you. Even just talking things out with a friend or family member, a mentor, teacher or other important person in your life can help you to better understand and manage your emotions.

#MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#VirginiaMentalHealth #MentalHealth #SubstanceAbuse  
#Addiction #Recovery #AskForHelp

2. In Virginia, affordable behavioral health care is always accessible, regardless of ability to pay, through your local community services board. If you're struggling with your mental health or substance abuse, you'll find compassionate care and valuable resources at your CSB. If you live in Franklin, Suffolk or the counties of Isle of Wight or Southampton, Western Tidewater Community Services Board is your local single-point-of-access for mental health and substance abuse services and supports. Call 757-758-5106 or make an appointment online for same-day access.

<https://www.wtcsb.org/first-time-visits/>

#MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#VirginiaMentalHealth #MentalHealth #SubstanceAbuse  
#Addiction #Recovery #AskForHelp

3. There's still a major stigma around talking about our mental health. Many people find it difficult to talk to others about their struggles. You may think that you don't need help or that your life isn't so bad, compared to others. But, no matter how insignificant you think your problems are, if your wellbeing is being affected, don't be afraid to ask for help. You are allowed to ask for help. You are deserving of help.

#MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#VirginiaMentalHealth #MentalHealth #AskForHelp

# GETTING HELP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

4. Every 11 minutes someone in the United States loses their life to suicide. With Virginia's network of Community Services Boards and Behavioral Health Authorities, help is never far away.

<https://dbhds.virginia.gov/community-services-boards-csbs/>  
#MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#VirginiaMentalHealth #MentalHealth #SubstanceAbuse  
#Addiction #Recovery #AskForHelp

5. When someone is experiencing substance abuse, they may make choices they otherwise wouldn't make, especially when it comes to anything that could come between them and their addiction. This often leads to problems at work or school, strained relationships with family or friends, or other personal problems. But it's important to remember that it's not the individual's fault. Showing compassion to someone who's struggling with substance abuse may be what puts them on the path to recovery.

#MentalHealthAwareness #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth  
#VirginiaMentalHealth #MentalHealth #SubstanceAbuse  
#Addiction #Recovery

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WTCSB>





# RESOURCES

<https://www.wtcsb.org/resources/>

<https://region-five.org/resources/>

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

<https://dbhds.virginia.gov/behavioral-health/mental-health-services/>

<https://dbhds.virginia.gov/community-services-boards-csbs/>

# HELPLINES

WTCSB Crisis Line - (757) 925-2484

Region Five Crisis Line - (757) 656-7755

National Helpline - dial or text 988