

PEER PERSPECTIVE



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

I've been contemplating what to write for this month's peer perspective newsletter. I thought I could write about stigma, overcoming barriers, trauma-informed care with providers, connections of physical health and mental health.... The list goes on and on. So, I decided to do something a little different. Go back to the basics.

I went to the NAMI website to do a little research and find out what their theme is for this month. "In every story, there's strength". This is a very humbling theme. Every voice has strength in it. Every person is recognized, and every person has the power within to overcome their challenges. I've experienced this firsthand within my mental health wellness journey, but sometimes we need reminders that we put a lot of work into our wellness journey, and it's not always easy, but it has many twists and turns.

I also decided to explore the CMMHC theme, "Turn Awareness into Action," further and engage in some self-reflection. This hit me hard. It's easy for me to recognize when mental health symptoms are increasing, but it's the action part that gets me. Sometimes life is too busy, too hard, or too much to handle to put forth the necessary action. This is where my failure takes hold. I realize that when I don't do something about my symptoms right away, they get worse, and it is harder for me to pull myself out of the hole. With that being said, I hope I can help others by encouraging you to take consistent action in your life. Know what your safety plan is and know who your natural supports are. Be forthcoming with your mental health providers about what has been happening in your life. It is also important to recognize your successes, steps in the right direction, and all the work that you put into your wellness.

Be kind to yourself and others,

LeeAnn Fielding, MHP, CPSS
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We are the evidence; we hold the hope.