

Recognize and Address Mental Health Symptoms Early

May is Mental Health Awareness Month: Use these tips as a refresher to help your patients

The average delay between symptom onset and treatment is 11 years. That means your patient may spend months or years experiencing mental health challenges before getting a diagnosis.

What can you do?

Mental health can be a part of more daily conversations with your patients. It is important that everyone has a shared understanding about mental health.

Remember to:

- Discuss the importance of mental health screenings with your patients.
- Use screening results to talk with your patients and begin to plan a course of action for addressing their mental health.
- Learn some of the common signs your patients may show if they need help with their mental health. They may share some of the following signs:
 - Isolation – They were more outgoing or positive, and lately they want to spend most of their time at home alone.
 - Losing interest – They are not as interested in things they used to like, including food, music, hobbies, friends, work or school.
 - Trouble focusing – They are having a difficult time concentrating to follow conversations.
 - Short temper – They are irritated or expressed that they may have lashed out at people they care about.



(continued)

Ideas on how to start the conversation with your patients

For some patients, it may be their first time talking and learning about mental health. Below are ideas on how you can start the dialogue:

- “Having concerns about your mental health is a common experience.”
- “It is never too early – or too late – to seek help.”
- “While you may not need the information today, I am sharing the basics to help you prepare if you ever need to talk about this with other providers, your family, or friends.”

Get more information from the following resources

myStrength at mystrength.com/go/healthnet/wellcareca is an evidence-based, behavioral health self-help resource that offers interactive, individually tailored applications. Through the personalized website and mobile application, members can get help with a number of conditions, including depression, anxiety, stress, substance use, pain management and insomnia.



Addressing mental health symptoms early is critically important for overall health.