



Speaking Out

By: Mayor Marcia Leclerc

Every year, throughout the month of May, Americans participate in raising awareness on mental health around the country as part of the Mental Health Awareness Month. While the subject of mental health should be discussed all year round, the month of May serves as a reminder of the need to dissolve the existing stigma around the subject and educate the public on the importance of mental health awareness. While we have made great strides in addressing mental health illness, millions of Americans continue to struggle. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, about 450 million people worldwide are currently living with a mental health illness, while nearly two-thirds of people never seek treatment.

The National Alliance on Mental Health reports that 1 in 5 people will be affected by mental health illness in their lifetime. Even if we are not personally affected by these conditions, there is a chance that our friends or family members might be struggling. With that being said, I encourage you to take a moment and reflect on the importance of the life and wellbeing of your loved ones, your friends and neighbors, your relatives and acquaintances. Most importantly, it is crucial to educate ourselves and those around us on factors that may lead to the development of mental health illness.

While spring is a time of fresh beginnings and renewal, for those who struggle with mental health disorders, springtime is a particularly challenging time of year, as symptoms of depression and other signs of mental illness may be heightened. Individuals who experience mental health conditions tend to feel secluded from others as the subject is not easy to talk about. As they struggle through these difficult times, I urge you to demonstrate acceptance and reassure them that they are not alone.

There are a number of local and national resources available. Among those resources are InterCommunity Health Care that can be reached at 860-273-8255 and is located at 281 Main Street in East Hartford. Additionally, the National Alliance on Mental Illness can be reached 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or info@nami.org. Lastly, 211 helpline centers have a variety of resources as well.