medina county board of developmental disabilities

- Health Services Message -

Stress Awareness Month is an annual event observed every April since 1992, dedicated to increasing public awareness about the causes and cures of stress. This year's theme for Stress Awareness Month 2025 is "Lead with Love." This theme encourages individuals to approach themselves and others with kindness, compassion, and acceptance, as a way to manage stress and promote mental well-being.

According to the American Institute of Stress, stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels anxious or threatened. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the proper care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

Common reactions to a stressful event can include:

- Disbelief, shock and numbness
- Feeling sad, frustrated and helpless
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Smoking or the use of alcohol or drugs

Stress affects more than just your mind. Long-term stress can prove to be more than just a mental issue. From headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious problems like stroke and heart disease can come as a result of stress. When you are placed in a stressful situation, specific stress hormones rush into your bloodstream leading to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels. This is helpful in emergency situations, but having this "rush" for extended periods of time can be dangerous and make you susceptible to the issues mentioned previously.

Stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Being able to recognize common symptoms of stress can help you manage them. Stress that's left unresolved can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

Here are some healthy basic ideas to help you cope with stress:

- Take care of yourself – eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, give yourself a break if you feel stressed.

- Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a family member, friend, doctor, pastor or counselor.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. These can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.
- Recognize when you need more help – know when to talk to a psychologist, social worker or counselor if things continue.

In a world where stress often thrives in the midst of conflict, tension, and division, it is important to remember that love is the universal force capable of shifting the narrative. Choosing love and kindness as the starting point, we can embrace empathy, prioritize understanding, and create positive change with every interaction we have. Even the smallest act of love can spark a powerful wave of positivity that can have a rippling effect.

Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we have the power to change. Try to recognize when you don't have control, and let it go. Avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change. Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control.

#LeadWithLove – Is a powerful call to action rooted in the principles of Unconditional Positive Regard. This theme encourages us to approach ourselves and others with kindness, compassion, and acceptance, no matter the challenges we face. Managing stress is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. Knowing how to manage stress can improve mental and physical well-being as well as minimize exacerbation of health-related issues.

If you have any questions or are in need of resources, please reach out to Pam Wheeler, Health Services Coordinator, at 330-725-7751 ext. 234 or pwheeler@mcbdd.org.

Pam Wheeler,
Health Services Coordinator

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