May is Mental Health Month

Many of us pay attention to our physical ailments but we often forget about our overall wellness including our mental health. Mental health involves our emotional, psychological, and social well-being which affects how we feel, think and act. If you're struggling with a mental illness, know that you're not alone.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 Americans are affected by a mental health disorder. Because of the stigma associated, many people are left untreated. There are many steps you can take to improve your overall wellness. Recovery is a reality.

Does My Lifestyle Affect My Mental Health?

Several factors contribute to mental health conditions; some are unavoidable but there are lifestyle choices that can help prevent mental health issues and promote overall wellness.

- **Connecting with others.** We are social beings. We crave the feeling of being supported, valued and connected.

- **Maintaining a healthy diet.** A balance of lean meats, fruits, and vegetables can boost your energy, mood and overall well-being.

- **Routine exercise is not only good for the body but for the mind.** Exercise boosts endorphins which reduce stress and improves mood.

- **Get a good night's rest!** Sleep is fundamental to a healthy mind and body.

- **Speak to a professional.** You don't have to be in crisis to seek help. Speaking to someone can help cope with feelings, problem solve and change behavior patterns that may contribute to symptoms. Sometimes, we just have to talk it out.

KNOW THE FACTS

Experts recommend 7 to 9 hours of sleep for adults. Sleep and mood are closely connected.

Mental illness affects school performance, employment, and increases the chance of cardiovascular disease.

Nearly 57% of adults with a mental illness didn't receive mental health services in the previous year.

Do you or does someone you know struggle with a mental health disorder?

Need help? Dial 988, the New York State Office of Mental Health, or text "Got5" to 741-741.

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