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Mental health awareness emphasizes physical fitness, children's mental health

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By Bethany Davis, Reporter / Anchor CONNECT

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - May is Mental Health Awareness Month to recognize and spread the word that mental health is something that affects everyone.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health is raising awareness about the connection between physical health and mental health, through the theme Fitness #4Mind4Body. The Department is focused this month on how a healthy lifestyle may help prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health problems. It can also help people recover from these conditions.

Commissioner Lynn Beshear said, "Every day we work to decrease stigma surrounding mental illness and to tell the stories of challenge and recovery. By celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month, we can continue to shine a light on the efforts made by local communities and the resources that are available for those in need.

This month's theme of Fitness #4Mind4Body is very important because maintaining a healthy body assists a person in achieving a positive state of mind."

Also, May 7 through the 13 is Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, emphasizing the importance of an integrated approach to caring for the mental health needs of children, youth, and young adults who have experienced trauma, as well as their families.

According to new research released by Nationwide Children's Hospital, 87 percent of Americans surveyed agreed that more mental health support for children and adolescents needs to be available. According to the centers for disease control and prevention, about one in five children had had a seriously debilitating mental disorder.

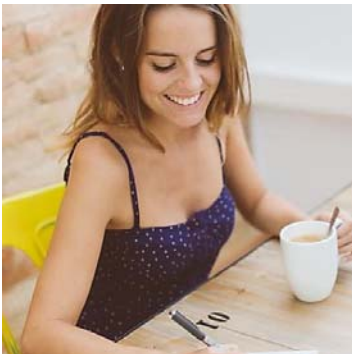
The Alabama Department of Mental Health reports that after children and youth are enrolled in the system of care services, they show measurable improvements in their behavioral and emotional health and in their academic performance.

Mental Health Month was started 69 years ago by the Alabama Department of Mental Health's partner, Mental Health America, to raise awareness about conditions and the importance of good mental health for everyone.

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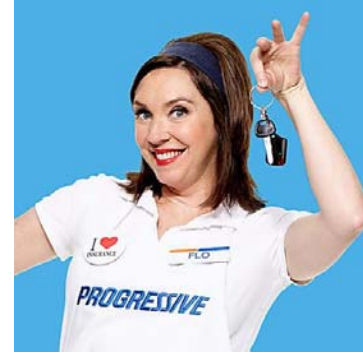
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