ONEIDA

Taking Care of Your Mental Health

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Spring is the time of year when we think about getting back outdoors and taking care of the environment around us. It's also a great time of year to think about taking care of yourself. In fact, May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, dedicated to getting people to understand the important role that mental health plays in their overall health.

Unfortunately, for many people, taking care of themselves is last on a long list of "things to do." But you can't be at your best if you're not taking care of your mind and body. So, as you evaluate your mental health, consider the following simple changes that can have a big impact on your mental, and physical, health.

- **Keep active** - Regular exercise can help you concentrate, sleep and feel better. Exercise boosts your self-esteem and keeps your brain and other organs health. You don't have to join a gym to keep active. Take a walk down the street or on a nearby trail. You'll be amazed at how good it feels.

- **Eat well** - Your body needs a good mix of nutrients to stay health and function as you'd like. Foods that are good for your physical health are also important for your mental health. Fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers markets are a good place to start.

- **Drink sensibly** - Some people drink alcohol to deal with loneliness or anxiety, but the effect is only temporary. When the alcohol wears off, you actually feel worse. That's not a good way to deal with difficult feelings.

- **Take a break**- Sometimes you just need a change of scenery or to take time to step back from daily pressures. It may take just a few minutes away from your everyday routine to help you de-stress.

- **Do something you love** - What do you really love doing? What did you do in the past but haven't in some time? Beat the stress by taking some time for an activity you love to do. It can certainly boost your self-esteem.

- **Care for others** - Caring for someone else if important in maintaining relationships. It's also a great way to shift the focus away from stresses in your life. Reach out to friends you haven't seen or visit an elder to reconnect.

- **Talk about your feelings** - Talking about how you feel can certainly help your mental health, particularly when facing troubling times.

- **Ask for help** - If things are getting to be too much, it's time to reach out for help. Family members or friends can often provide practical help or be there to listen when you need to talk. But if it is still too much to handle and you're seeing your mental health impact your daily life, there are many mental health services available in our community, including Oneida Behavioral Health. We are here to help.

During this month of May, take some time to assess your own mental health. Maybe it's time for a little refocusing or maybe it's time to reach out to get back on track. No matter what, it's always a good idea to assess where you're at and what you can do to live an even better life.

For more information about Oneida Behavioral Health, visit https://oneida-nsn.gov/resources/behavioral-health/ or call (920) 490-3790.