



Take Care of YOU

A Health and Wellness Bulletin | May 2023



Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Resources

- [Alaska Community Mental Health Centers \(by city\)](#)
- [988 National Mental Health Lifeline](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)

As we observe Mental Health Awareness month here at Hope, we should consider that there is a large portion of the population here in the United States that experience a diagnosable mental or behavioral health condition every year. Though the numbers vary slightly, the population of those in the United States who experience a diagnosable mental illness every year is consistently between 20-25% of the general population.

These conditions are often missed within the population of people who experience an intellectual or developmental disability. There are many reasons for why these conditions might be missed, though we want to be aware that there are frequently signs and symptoms that a mental/behavioral health problem may be occurring.

We want to be aware of any time there is a sustained unhelpful departure from baseline behavior. We aren't referring to having a bad day here or a difficult night sleeping there, but any substantial departure from baseline behavior that is sustained for 2 or more weeks. This could be avoiding attendance at a previously preferred community event, refusing previously preferred food, difficulties waking or getting out of bed, etc. The important thing for us as we support those who experience intellectual or developmental disabilities is to be aware that they may not always be able to verbally indicate when they are feeling worried, sad, angry, etc. and so we are often called upon to observe their patterns of behavior to give the cues needed that may indicate they are struggling with their mental health.

If you observe noticeable changes in the lives of the people we support, please reach out to Hope's Behavioral Health Clinic at 907-433-1732.

- Paul Ingram, Clinical Director of Hope Community Resources