



DRC

Newsletter

522 W Arbor Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-255-6402

May 2024 Issue

Hours @ DRC

Monday-Friday: 8a-4p



See me as a person, not a diagnosis

By Jessica Ward-King, B.Sc., Ph.D.

“You’re so brave.” “You’re such an inspiration!” “You’re so strong – such a fighter.”

We say these things to people living with illness and disability all the time, but have you ever thought about what they might be hearing?

Bravery is defined as “strength in the face of pain or grief”. And, perhaps to some people, a disability like mental illness is a very painful thought. But to someone like me who lives it every single day, facing my life’s challenges doesn’t feel like bravery or courage or even strength – it feels like life. When someone says, “you’re so brave” (as they do all the time) all I hear is that to them, my life is pitiful, and I feel diminished and reduced to my diagnosis. It makes me think of an after school special on “never giving up” (remember those cheesy posters from the eighties and nineties with a cat hanging on a rope? Yeah, that.)

But I get the sentiment. First of all, when I tell my story it is difficult to know what to say. I tell a harrowing tale of stigma and illness and people become lost for words. But the sentiment that they are trying to express – I think – is that me telling my story is brave. That owning my story is inspirational. That sharing my story illustrates strength. It is a much different message. It is not me as a person being reduced to a diagnosis, but me as a whole human being, encouraging others to look past the labels in my fight against the stigma of mental illness.

When I tell my story to audiences of strangers, I feel like telling my story is courageous. When I talk about my struggles with trusted friends and family it is really just me, wanting real connection and understanding – and that is vulnerability and trust rather than courage. And from those close relationships I want recognition of me as a person rather than my fight against stigma.

But if you are wondering what you *should* say when someone shares their story of living with their mental disability with you, I would recommend some kind of heartfelt variation of the following:

“Thank-you. Thank-you for sharing your story and helping me to understand a little bit more. Your story inspires me to look at my own biases and stigma surrounding living with illness or disability. It takes bravery to share this story in the face of systemic inequities and discrimination. Thank-you.”

It’s a nuance, but an important one. Keep on looking past the labels and crushing stigma.


→ WHERE TO START ←

five mental health tips for the week

Monday

Make a list of 5 things you're grateful for today. 

Tuesday

Practice positive affirmations. 


Wednesday

Start a conversation about mental health. 

Thursday

Stay hydrated! 

Friday

Take a break from screens (phone, computer, etc). 



→ WHERE TO START ←

things to say when you're not "fine"

I'm actually going through some stuff.

I'm having a day / It's been one of those days.

I'm on the struggle bus.

I'm feeling some kind of way.

Today is not my day.



Explore free Mental Health Month resources and learn more at mhanational.org/may.

→ WHERE TO START ←

four things affecting your mental health

1

Current events

A 2022 study found that 73% of Americans felt overwhelmed by the number of crises happening around the world.

2

Loneliness

Loneliness increases the risk of developing anxiety & depression, and can have an impact on lifespan.

3

Social drivers

These are the conditions in which you live, work, learn, and play (i.e. finances, education, community).

4

Technology

Constant access to social media can cause FOMO, depression, reduced self-esteem, and burnout.



→ WHERE TO START ←

May is Mental Health Month

WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

GET INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AT

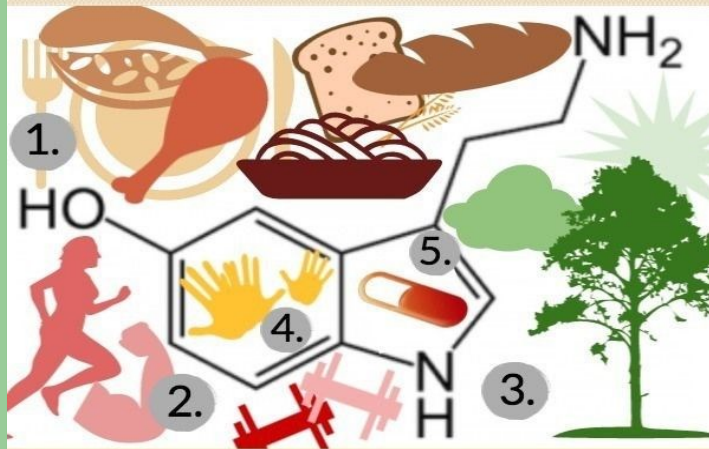
[MHANATIONAL.ORG/MAY](https://mhanational.org/may)



How To *increase* Serotonin Levels

Serotonin, aka, 5-hydroxytryptamine (5-HT) is a monoamine neurotransmitter.

In simple terms, it is known to be the Happiness hormone.



1. Eat Right

Lean protein, fruits, and veggies can help boost serotonin levels. Don't cut carbs out, bread and pasta can actually help. Just avoid the fast track to happiness by having too much sweets.

2. Get Moving

Exercise is a natural "mood" stimulator. Even just 15 minutes a day will release these feel good hormones (serotonin) and make you happy and calm.

3. Get Outside

Who doesn't love fresh air? It's called take a breather for a reason. Plus, light exposure has been proven to increase serotonin levels too.

4. Get a Massage

It's the perfect way to unwind and relax. Plus, nothing beats the healing power of the human touch. Aside from that, it will even help you sleep better, which also ups your serotonin levels too.

5. Take 5-HTP

5-HTP supplements are sure to increase the production of serotonin. Aside from that, it also helps you lose and manage weight and is really good for the skin. You will certainly be smiling in no time!

Symptoms of Serotonin Deficiency:

Anxiety
Impatience
Fatigue
Cognitive impairment
Negative thoughts
Agitation
Mania/obsession

Mood swings
Strong sugar cravings
Indifference
Excessive worrying
Insomnia
Sadness
SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)

www.beyouthful.net



VIRTUAL BPD Support Group Meetings!



When: EVERY Friday night at 6pm (Central time)

(Any questions about the meeting time/time zones, you can text me at (414)949-1408!)

Where: Zoom meeting ID 831 5148 0509, or, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83151480509>

Questions You May Have

Q: Is there a fee to join the group?
A: No! We believe mental health help should be free. There will never be a fee.

Q: Does the group meet for a set period of time?
A: Nope. The meetings start at 6pm (Central time) and go until everyone feels they have had enough time to talk or share.

Q: What is a typical meeting like?
A: If there are enough participants, we will do half education/half sharing. We will pick a different topic each week!

Q: Do I HAVE to talk during the meeting or have my video on?
A: No, you don't have to have your camera on and no, you don't have to talk. Feel free to just listen until you feel comfortable enough to share.



ASKING
for
HELP
is OK

Support Groups for Recovery

Free & Online

WEDNESDAYS
5-6:30PM EST

REGISTER HERE:
<https://grouppeersupport.org/event>

 **GPS** GROUP PEER SUPPORT

info@grouppeersupport.org



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



To honor Mental Health Awareness Month, the DRC will be holding a week long celebration...

Monday
HAT DAY



It is a day to wear an exciting hat and spread awareness of those suffering a mental health disorder.

Tuesday
HAWAIIAN DAY



A day to wear our favorite Hawaiian clothes to celebrate spring and bring awareness to mental health disorders.

Wednesday
WEAR GREEN



Green is the color for mental health awareness because it symbolizes hope and resilience. The color is associated with life, renewal, nature, and energy, and is thought to have healing properties. It's also the color of balance, growth, and harmony. Green is used in mental health awareness campaigns to encourage people to speak out, get help, and take action—all of which are important steps in the journey to recovery.

Thursday
CRAZY HAIR DAY



Another day to have fun and bring awareness of mental health. Did you know there is a connection between your hair and mental health? Studies have shown that stress—emotional and physical—is a massive power of destruction, and can affect something so small as the hair follicles on our head to our overall health.

Friday
SPORTS DAY



Involvement in sports can improve serious mental disorders. Exercise can help if you have a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia. It improves some symptoms of schizophrenia, including loss of motivation and thinking difficulties, but is less effective with other symptoms like hallucinations.



Peer Support Hub

Peer Support Groups should provide a safe nonjudgmental space to share experiences; reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation; encourages taking control of ones own recovery and well being; and helps build a support system and coping skills box.

DRC Peer Support Group Times:

Monday's:

3pm Peer Support: Check in's, sharing experiences and discussing our recovery journey.

Tuesday's

8:30am Peer Support: Check in's, sharing experiences and discussing our recovery journey

Wednesday's

2pm Talking Circle with Roberta

May 3rd ; All Members Round Table and Lunch– Members meeting to discuss upcoming events, making decisions on next months activities etc.

Peer support happens informally all day every day here at the Recovery Center. It can happen during morning coffee at the table, playing cards, or individually.

IF there is a peer support group you are interested in and would be willing to lead, please let us know. Peer to Peer Groups are great!

Heather and Roberta will be starting groups in the Dacotah Foundations facilities. We are excited to extend peer support to other places. We look forward to seeing everyone soon!

BIG NEWS!! Roberta is working on having a virtual peer support as well on Zoom. Please contact her for more details.

Fun at DRC



NORTH DAKOTA
BRAIN INJURY
NETWORK

May 6th @ 2:30pm

Andrea Sailer, will be here at
DRC for Brain Injury Screening
and referrals.

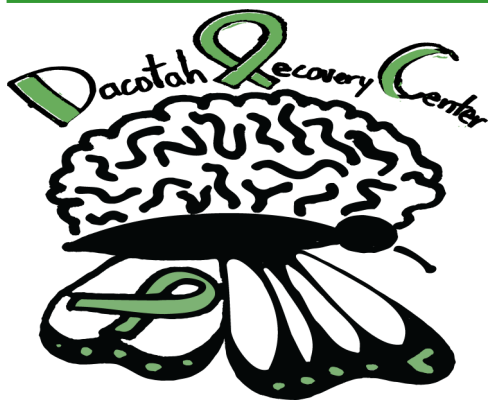
*Member's Meeting is on
May 3rd @1pm. Lots of
great discussions
regarding upcoming
events at the DRC. Be part
of the conversation!*

SOMETHING NEW AND EXCITING:

*Roberta and Heather will be starting
to go to the Dacotah Foundation
Facilities to provide a group for the
residents!! Sahnish will be starting
May 1st from 3:30p-4:30p.*

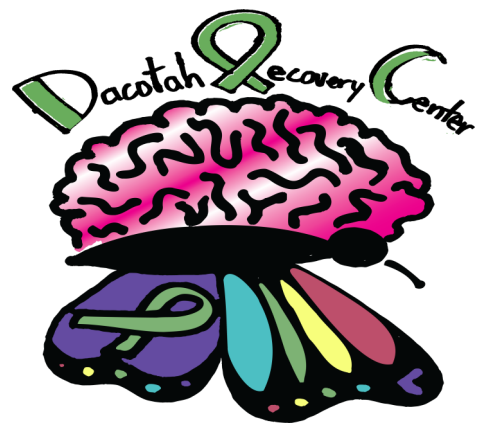
May is Mental Health
Awareness Month

May 13-17 we will be
having our awareness
week. Each day of that
week will be a little
different! Enjoy!



Dacotah Recovery Center

Looking at shirt orders with
our logo! Who is interest-
ed!! Please let us know at
the Member's meeting!





ALL MEMBERS ROUND TABLE

Member's meeting will be held on April 5th starting with lunch at 1pm and meeting to follow. Topics will be:

A. DRC Business

1. Advisory Committee discussion

B. Activities, Educational Topics and Peer Support

C. Other Business




Please come out to vote! Remember as a member it is not only your right to vote, it is one of the responsibilities as a member. Be your own advocate!



Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Memorial Day 2023 will occur on Monday, May 29.

Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades. Unofficially, it marks the beginning of the summer season.



Memorial Day is May 27th. DRC will be closed to honor
this holiday.

