



Advocating for Mental Health Awareness: Begin in Your Own Backyard

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A study by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) cites that depression is the number one cause of disability worldwide. In America alone, one in five adults experiences a mental illness while one in 25 adults experiences a serious mental illness that limits major life activities.

[Mental disorders affect 20% of youth](#) aged 13 to 18.

These staggering numbers back up what several media platforms have been trying to say in the last few years: mental health is a real area of concern and it needs us to pay more attention.

With these statistics in mind, do you ever wonder why mental health continues to be portrayed as a taboo topic these days?

Deepening the Dialogue

In a 2013 TED talk, journalist Andrew Solomon discussed that people with mental illnesses find it hard to talk about their conditions. Society collectively still assumes that having a mental health condition shows weakness and character failure. This is one of the reasons why it is important now, more than ever, to participate in spreading the word and ending the stigma. Before anyone can seek proper treatment and [care for mental health conditions](#), people should feel safe within their communities to be able to share their story.

Raising Awareness

Every May, the world celebrates the Mental Awareness Month globally. This month is filled with different campaigns on different media platforms to raise funds and awareness. But as individuals, we can help spread the word by sharing knowledge within our immediate community.

1. Host a mental health screening event.
2. Have you personally struggled with mental illness? There are [ways to share your story](#).
3. Learn more about mental health disorders by reading more about it. Lots of scholarly articles and blogs are just available online.
4. Volunteer with local mental health awareness organizations.
5. Watch out for bullying at school or in the office, as this can lead to many difficulties including depression.
6. Learn what to do when someone threatens suicide.
7. Participate in local advocacy efforts to support and expand mental health legislation.
8. Encourage friends and family to eat healthy for mental health.
9. Don't hesitate to be part of the conversation.

Mental health disorders are very real. These disorders can happen to anyone but with proper diagnosis and treatment, anyone can become a survivor.