Mental Health Month

For the month of May, Employee Health and Wellbeing is joining the national movement to raise awareness on mental health. Fit for life is focusing on mental health and the importance of reducing the stigma around mental health challenges, because oftentimes that stigma prevents individuals from seeking help. Spend some time this month focusing on your mental health and how you can enhance it. Follow along with our monthly calendar to find programs, tools and resources to support your mental wellbeing. Keep in mind that it is important to focus on your mental health on a daily basis, not just during the month of May and that resources are available all year.

Mental Wellbeing & Exercise:
One way to enhance your mental health is through regular exercise and movement. People who exercise regularly tend to do so because it gives them an enormous sense of wellbeing. They feel more energetic throughout the day, sleep better at night, have sharper memories, and feel more relaxed and positive about themselves and their lives. This change in the body is due to the release of endorphins, powerful chemicals in your brain that energize your spirits and make you feel good when you are exercising. It is also powerful medicine for many common mental health challenges, as it can serve as a distraction, allowing you to find some quiet time to break out of the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression. Finding and maintaining this sense of wellbeing became Jenn Palacio's motivation to exercise daily. Jenn, one of our very own Zumba, Pilates Tone, and Barre instructors, exudes a contagious vivacity and a genuine concern for the wellbeing of every single one of her students. But Jenn’s enthusiasm for teaching comes from a more somber time in her life. Not many people know of the struggles she has had to overcome to gain the bubbling confidence she has today. Check out Jenn Palacio’s full story on The Connection Between Mental Wellbeing and Exercise.

Here are a few examples of movement that you can do on a daily basis to improve your mental health:
Go Outside: The benefits of outdoor fitness are endless! Taking your regular workout outside is a natural mood booster that also challenges your body. Sunlight can help reduce depression and anxiety by naturally increasing serotonin, a hormone that influences your mood. Exercise also releases endorphins, another feel-good hormone that improves mood and alleviates pain. For more outdoor fitness benefits, check out Employee Health and Wellbeing Going-Green Outdoor Fitness Blog.

Take an Active Break: Get up and get moving throughout the day! A relaxing break will help you reset your mood, thereby encouraging positive wellbeing and stress reduction. Instead of browsing the internet, take a five-minute walk outside. If you have time in between zoom meetings, take a walk around the block or around the house. Are you feeling particularly optimistic? Take one of your scheduled meetings while walking around.

Group Fitness: Joining group fitness classes can provide you with mental health benefits in addition to physical health benefits. It allows us to reap the benefits of exercise while still connecting with others. It also fosters social support, which is important for good mental health. Check out the various group fitness classes that EHW offers live and on-demand recordings of.

Resources:
- ComPsych®, UD Employee Assistance Program: 877-527-4742
- National Crisis Text Line: Text “Home” to 741741
- Mental Health Resource Guide
- EHW Mental Health Resources