

Spotlight Magellan Health: June is National PTSD Awareness Month!

Recognizing National Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month is crucial for raising public awareness about PTSD. This observance fosters understanding of symptoms, reduces stigma, and encourages those suffering to seek help. By promoting education and support, we can improve lives and support recovery efforts, ensuring that those affected receive the care they need. Magellan Health's Dr. Yasmee Benjamin, psychologist advisor, shares her thoughts on the importance of recognizing National PTSD Awareness Month, and what available resources there are to support the mental health of individuals living with PTSD.



What are some facts about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that individuals may not be aware of?

The triggering event or stressor that causes PTSD can look very different for everyone. However, for all those who struggle with PTSD, the symptoms are the same. This is important because sometimes individuals with PTSD don't know they have PTSD, or they will minimize their symptoms if they deem their trauma to be less severe in some way.

The symptoms of PTSD consist of re-experiencing the traumatic event in some way, avoidance, negative changes in thoughts and mood, and increased arousal or reactivity. To have a diagnosis of PTSD means these symptoms will cause significant distress in an individual's life and persist following the traumatic event. It is also important to recognize that PTSD can

negatively affect many aspects of a person's life, which makes living with PTSD very difficult and isolating. Relationships can suffer as well as performance in a work or school environment. But there is hope to manage PTSD with scientifically proven treatments, such as evidence-based therapies. I am a believer in these treatments because I have seen first-hand how they work to significantly decrease symptoms and help individuals get their lives back. These treatments include, but aren't limited to, Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure Therapy. I highly encourage anyone experiencing PTSD to discuss these and other PTSD treatment options with a clinician who is well-trained in them.

Why is it important to recognize National PTSD Awareness Month?

PTSD affects many different types of people of all ages and backgrounds. Given that this condition doesn't discriminate, it's important to understand PTSD and to be able to identify the signs and symptoms so we could be a support to those individuals with this condition. Social support is an important variable in any recovery process and can be a huge help for individuals living with PTSD to receive that understanding and empathy needed to help them.

What are some available resources for individuals with PTSD?

The [National Center for PTSD](#) provides helpful resources and psycho-educational materials to individuals with PTSD as well as their family and friends. Additionally, there are helpful books and workbooks that individuals can read to learn more about their symptoms as well as learn helpful skills to better manage or decrease PTSD symptoms.

What are some ways that individuals with PTSD can

take care of their mental health while navigating this condition?

PTSD does not have to feel like a lifetime sentence. With the right treatment, people can get their lives back. I highly encourage individuals with PTSD to find professionals who have the training and experience to effectively treat this condition. Additionally, I encourage individuals with PTSD to find a way to not only address their mental health, but also address their spiritual and physical health as well. PTSD affects the entire being.