



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Suburban YMCA Addresses Issues for Mental Health Awareness Month

There are many things we can do to positively impact mental wellness, including having a conversation about it.

Northbrook, IL: May 2022 – In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month in May, the North Suburban YMCA is encouraging community members to join the conversation about mental health.

Mental health is how we think, feel and act. The NSYMCA recognizes that everyone has mental health, and it is an important part of one's physical health and social-emotional wellbeing, as well as a core component of one's identity.

Addressing mental health issues has emerged as an NSYMCA priority initiative. The Y recently expanded its Y.E.S. (YMCA Educational Series) programming to include workshops related to mental health, youth and families, as well as diversity, equity, inclusion and LGBTQ+ topics. Responding to the mental health crisis due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, Y staff members also became certified Mental Health First Aid Responders through the Josselyn Center.

"We can all play a role in supporting each other's mental health – at the Y and in our communities," said Kathy Fielding, CEO of the North Suburban YMCA. "The first step is to start talking in our communities about what mental health really is."

To help the Y get the conversation going about mental health this month, the Y is asking the community to share these facts with friends and family:

- **FACT:** We all have mental health, not just those who live with a mental illness. Everyone faces challenges in their life that can impact our mental health.
- **FACT:** There are many things we can do each day to positively impact our mental health. A few examples include:
 - moving, fueling and resting our bodies
 - being mindful of how we're feeling and what's going on around us
 - connecting with others, and
 - asking for help when needed
- **FACT:** In addition to biological and environmental factors, mental health is influenced by health inequities that can be attributed to systemic racism, the social determinants of health, and exposure to trauma. Ys and community organizations can support mental health by addressing barriers that prevent marginalized communities from having access to the support they need.
- **FACT:** Mental health and physical health are interconnected, and both can impact your overall wellbeing. For example, research shows that exercise can alleviate long-term depression.
- **FACT:** Positive mental health can be supported in community settings, like the Y, in addition to traditional clinical settings. The Y supports the mental health of individuals and communities in all of the work we do to help people reach their full potential—whether that's practicing yoga, joining a group exercise class, supporting youth in the Y's summer camps, helping people achieve their best physical health, or providing newcomer immigrants access to services.
- **FACT:** We all can support the mental health of our community through bringing empathy, compassion and kindness to our interactions with others. Something as simple as intentionally asking "how are you?" and encouraging honest answers can provide us an opportunity to normalize mental health and help others when they need it.

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health, know that help is available. Visit the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for a list of resources. For immediate help 24-hours a day, call 800-273-8255 or text TALK to 741741. For more information on the North Suburban YMCA, visit nsymca.org.

About the North Suburban YMCA

The North Suburban YMCA services Northbrook and 14 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help its residents become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org.

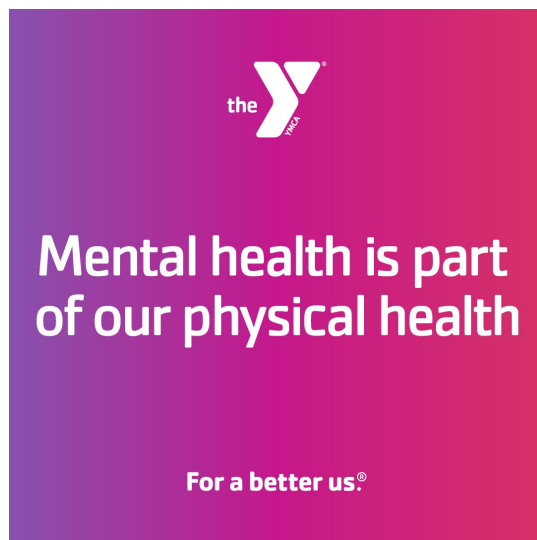


PHOTO CAPTION: *In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month in May, the NSYMCA is encouraging the community to learn more about mental wellness.*

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