



**Belleville Area Cares  
Coalition**

**BELLEVILLE AREA CARES  
COALITION**

**AODA PREVENTION  
SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER**

**MAY 2023**

## **Mental Health Awareness Month**

Mental Health Month raises awareness of trauma and the impact it can have on the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of children, families, and communities. Mental health is essential for a person's overall health. Prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can recover from mental disorders and live full and productive lives.



Over the past 20 years, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and others within the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services and across the Federal Government, the public health community, and the general public have made efforts to increase the importance of understanding both prevention and treatment of mental health problems. These efforts have significantly improved the outlook for those affected by mental illnesses.

### **History**

Mental Health Awareness Month was first celebrated in 1949. It was commemorated by the Mental Health America Organization.

The Mental Health America Organization was founded by Clifford Whittingham Beers in 1908. Beers, who was born in 1876 in Connecticut, was one of five children in his family who all suffered from mental illness and psychological distress. Beers would spend time at mental institutions and it from there that he discovered that the mental health field had a notorious reputation for malpractice, maltreatment, and immense bias.



Upon his release, Beers was resolved to expose the maltreatment of people with mental illnesses and to reform care. In 1908, he published his autobiography, *A Mind That Found Itself*, which roused the nation to the plight of people with mental illnesses and set a reform movement into motion.

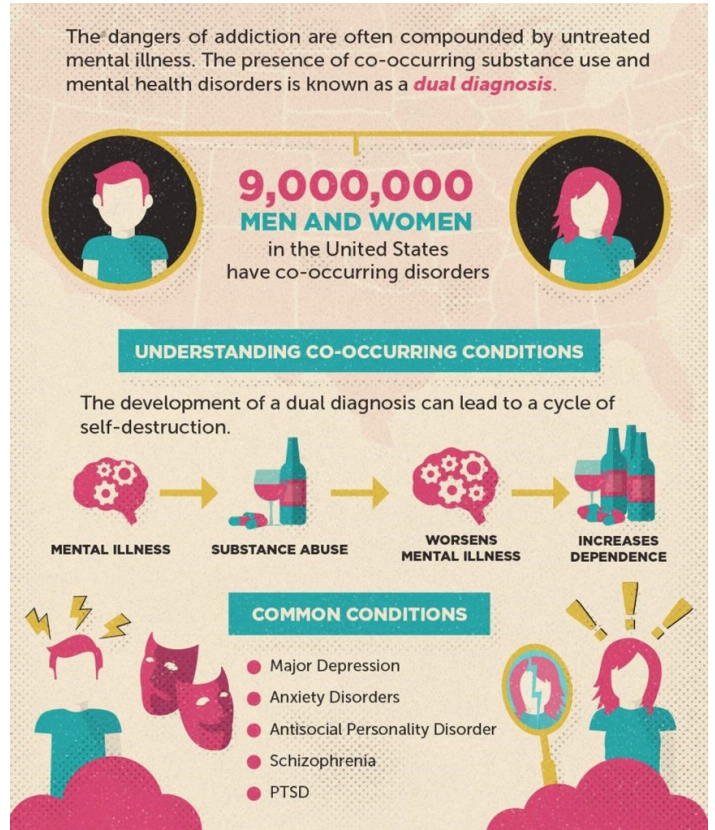
On February 19, 1909, Beers, along with philosopher William James and psychiatrist Adolf Meyer, embraced that future by creating the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, later the National Mental Health Association and what we know today as the Mental Health America.

# Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Nearly 9 million people have a co-occurring disorder according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Co-Occurring disorders can occur for a number of reasons, such as:

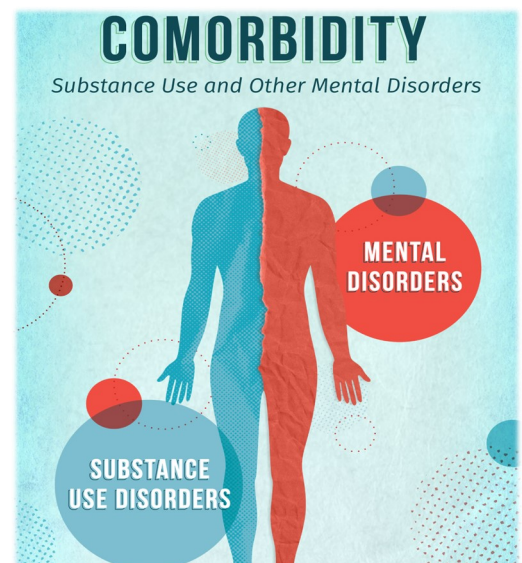
- Common risk factors can contribute to both mental illness and substance use disorders. Research has suggested that there are many genes within certain individuals that can contribute to the risk of developing both a substance use disorder and a mental illness.
  - Genes can also influence how a person responds to a drug—whether using the drug makes them feel good
  - Environmental factors, such as stress or trauma, can cause genetic changes that are passed down through generations and may contribute to the development of mental illnesses or a substance use disorder.
- Mental illnesses can contribute to drug use and substance use disorders. Some mental health conditions have been identified as risk factors for developing a substance use disorder.
  - For example, some research suggests that people with mental illnesses may use drugs and alcohol as a form of self-medication. While some drugs may help with symptoms related to mental health, they can sometimes make the symptoms worse.
- Substance use may change the brain in ways that make a person more likely to develop a mental illness.



## Is drug addiction a mental illness?

Yes. Addiction changes the brain in fundamental ways. It changes a person's normal needs and desires and replaces them with new priorities connected with seeking and using a drug. This could result in compulsive behaviors that weaken the ability to control impulses, despite the negative consequences.

When it comes to mental health and substance, it is often times both can co-occur at the same time. This is called comorbidity. Comorbidity is when a person has two or more disorders at the same time or one after the other. It is important to note that it can be difficult to determine which one caused the other or which one came first.



# Activities to Improve your Mental Health

- Get plenty of sleep.
  - Adults should get as close to 8 hours of sleep per night as they can. Although every individual's body differs, sleep is essential for learning and improving daily productivity.
- Stop to enjoy small aspects of the day.
  - Enjoying the small things may seem cliché, but it is vital to personal contentment. Try taking a walk on your break at work to appreciate the beauty in nature.
- Use a stress ball or some other stress reliever.
  - The way we handle stress directly affects our health. A common method to deal with stress is a stress ball. Just squeeze the frustrations away!
- Perform a random act of kindness.
  - Helping others by volunteering or simply doing one random act of kindness can improve self-esteem. Self-esteem improves mental wellness in a variety of ways, including a self-empowering sense of social connectivity. Volunteerism contributes to lessening loneliness and depression.
- Exercise.
  - Exercise contributes to cardiovascular health. Improved cardiovascular health leads to better emotional stability and reduced anxiety.
- Deep breathing exercises.
  - Relaxation involving deep breathing exercises can lower your heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate. These exercises subsequently allow your body and mind to recharge.
- Yoga.
  - Yoga is a fantastic tool for reducing anxiety and depression. However, some forms of yoga may be too strenuous for some yoga in general offers great mental and physical wellness benefits.
- Pet a dog.
  - Therapy dogs have become a common method for improving the state of your emotions. Dogs provide emotional support by providing companionship to individuals. Simply petting a dog every day can improve one's mental health.



Although these activities do not serve as a “cure” for mental health disorders, they are helpful and vital for maintaining good mental health. Always remember that some mental issues can be serious. Always seek help from your physician or a professional if necessary.

Belleville is a small community southwest of Madison in Dane and Green Counties. Belleville is a special place to visit because of its natural beauty, recreational activities and friendly people and atmosphere. Belleville is a great community for families seeking a solid educational system along with the natural amenities of the community.

The Belleville Area Cares Coalition came into existence following a town hall meeting in April of 2014.



**We are comprised of local representatives from schools, businesses, churches, village administration as well as parents, and youth—all working together to promote healthy lifestyles**

**More information can be found at : <https://www.bellevillewicare.org/>**

#### **BACC Mission Statement**

***“The mission of Belleville’s Area Cares Coalition is to promote a healthy community for youth and young adults, free of alcohol and other drug abuse.”***

***The Belleville Area Cares Coalition works to develop, implement and support environmental strategies to reduce substance abuse.***

***We believe by working together, we can nurture social and environmental changes to make the Belleville area a safer and healthier place, brightening the future of our children, youth and families.***

#### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

The BAAC asks you to give the gift of time. Make a difference in the lives of our youth and our community by

1. Working with us in providing support for planning, project management and awareness campaigns
2. Helping with coalition events, conferences, workshops, and fairs held throughout the year.
3. Being a voice for change in our community, it is time to come together and be that force for change in the Belleville area.