Hello friends;

May is Mental Health Awareness month – a good and important topic to be discussing. In my humble opinion, every day of every month is a good and important time to be aware of.

Did you know that many people believe that addiction is a choice and do not consider mental health issues to be a real medical condition? Did you know that one in five adults in America experience a mental illness? Anxiety disorders are the most common form of mental health issue with 18.1% of American’s living with one. However, 60% of adults with a mental illness did not receive help to address it. Why? Unfortunately, we still attach a painful stigma to these diagnoses. Our clients often share painful stories about being treated negatively and unfairly and feeling judged by their community. It is this stigma that creates shame, guilt and fear, which prevents millions of people from getting the treatment they need to start on the path to healing.

At the McCall Center for Behavioral Health, we treat our clients with the utmost respect and recognize the strength it takes for them to walk into our offices. We recognize and admire the courage and strength it takes to ask for help. The power of stigma can be overwhelming for those coping with mental illness or addiction. For a person struggling with both, the stigma that they encounter is unrelenting and often completely overpowering. We have also witnessed the power of that respect afforded people who have moved through that stigma. And the freedom and peace that comes with recovery.

Maria Coutant Skinner, Executive Director

McCall Center for Behavioral Health
prevention • recovery • community

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Mental Health Month
and talking about mental health. But, friends – we also need to think about HOW we talk about it.
You need only turn on the news. School shootings, terrorism, addiction, overdoses, rates of suicide, depression and anxiety on the rise. What’s going on?
When our nation has these discussions in an effort to understand, they’re often filled with blame and judgment and serve to amplify the collective pain. “The person must have been sick, crazy, psycho, mentally ill.” “They asked for it” “where are the parents?” “Why can’t they just get it together, I’ve had hard times/been depressed and I figured it out.” On and on we go.
We hear politicians debate how to best address these issues and sometimes people suggest more funding for mental health programs. But if what you’re hearing is that the problems in our world are all caused by people with a mental health diagnosis, how likely are you to avail yourself of these programs?
So, what can we do? As it turns out – a LOT! I’d like to encourage you to visit two websites: NAMI: the National Alliance on Mental Illness NAMI, and Cure Stigma for great suggestions about how to talk about mental health and cure stigma.
As always, thank you for being allies, advocates and force multipliers for the good and important work of McCall.

All my very best to you,
Maria