

INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN

Avery Health - Education and Consulting brings extensive experience and knowledge to help individuals and groups achieve positive health outcomes and implement equity.

Kathey Avery, founder and owner of Avery Health - Education and Consulting, has more than 35 years of experience in healthcare and community activism. She is dedicated to raising awareness about, and helping in the prevention of, chronic diseases and preventable cancers through patient and public education and personal accountability.

Contact Kathey Avery today at 828-768-2369 to schedule a talk or workshop. For more details, please visit www.AveryHEC.com



The mission of the **Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy** is to promote optimum health for all residents of Buncombe County and surrounding areas by addressing the social determinants of health and the inequities in access to affordable and preventive healthcare.

www.ifpha.org

Focus on Health Awareness

BY KATHEY AVERY, RN, BSN, CO-CHAIR

There are so many topics to focus on this month.

Stress Awareness

With so many sources of stress, it is difficult to find time to relax and disengage. This is why stress is one of the biggest health problems facing people today.

Emotional resilience refers to a person's ability to adapt to stressful situations or crises. More resilient people are able to "bounce back" and adapt to hard times without lasting difficulties. Less resilient people have a harder time with stress and life changes, both major and minor.

According to the American Psychological Association's latest stress survey, 66% of people regularly experience the physical symptoms of stress, and 63% experience psychological symptoms.

Chronic Stress

When someone is experiencing chronic stress, it begins to negatively affect their physical and mental health. The body's stress response was not made to be con-



tinuously engaged. Many people encounter stress from multiple sources, including work, money, health, and relationship worries, as well as media overload.

Chronic stress increases the risk of developing health problems such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and a weakened immune system. Chronic stress also affects a person's mental health. Many studies show a correlation between stress and the development of mood disorders such as anxiety disorders and depression.

Managing Your Stress

This is an opportunity to pay attention to your health and learn successful coping strategies for dealing with life stressors.

1 Check-In with Yourself

Checking-in with yourself gives you an opportunity to take a break and connect with yourself. (I suggest doing this everyday.)

You're essentially gathering valuable information while treating yourself like you would a dear friend.

This habit can be useful when a challenging emotion is beginning to manifest, or when you're experiencing unhelpful behavior. (I suggest using the pros and cons method with your behavior.)

Invest five minutes every now and then during your day to simply check-in. Here are some questions to consider:

- How am I doing?
- Am I experiencing difficult emotions or thoughts?
- Is my behavior unhelpful?
- Is there something I need that I can offer myself?

2 Enjoy Yourself

Doing things you enjoy is good for your emotional wellbeing.

Simple activities like watching sports with a friend, having a soak in the bath, or meeting up with friends for coffee can all improve your day.

Doing something you're good at, such as cooking or dancing, is a good way to enjoy yourself and have a sense of achievement.

Try to avoid things that seem enjoyable at the time but make you feel worse afterwards, such as drinking too much alcohol or eating junk food.

3 Boost Your Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the way you feel about yourself. The best way to improve your self-esteem is to treat yourself as you'd treat a valued friend, in a positive but honest way.

Notice when you're putting yourself down, such as thinking, "You're so stupid for not getting that job," and instead think, "Would I say that to my best friend?" You probably wouldn't.

Tell yourself something positive instead, such as, "You're a bright person, you'll get the next job."

Sources: *Understanding the Impact of Alcohol on Human Health and Well-Being*, niaaa.nih.gov; *50 Good Mental Health Habits*, bradhambrick.com; psychcentral.org; wellbeinginfo.org.



Autism Awareness

Autism is a developmental disorder with symptoms that appear within the first

three years of life. Its formal diagnostic name is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The word "spectrum" indicates that autism appears in different forms with varying levels of severity. That means each individual with autism experiences their own unique strengths, symptoms, and challenges.

What are the main types of autism?

There are five major types of autism which include Asperger's syndrome, Rett

syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, Kanner's syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorder. Although the term Asperger's syndrome was quite common before 2013, the term is actually no longer used by medical professionals.

ASD begins before the age of 3 years and can last throughout a person's life, although symptoms may improve over time. Some children show ASD symptoms within the first 12 months of life. In others, symptoms may not show up until 24 months of age or later.

Some children with ASD gain new skills and meet developmental milestones until around 18 to 24 months of age, and then they stop gaining new skills or lose the skills they once had.

Alcohol Awareness

Established in 1987, alcohol awareness month allows communities to focus on spreading awareness and reducing the stigma associated with alcohol addiction. Observance of this awareness campaign also highlights the need for education on the dangers of unsafe alcohol consumption.

April is National Autism Awareness Month, National Minority Health Month, Alcohol Awareness Month, and Stress Awareness Month

Happy Easter!

April 17 is Easter Sunday, which for Christians means we as humans have unconditional love.

We are reassured that Jesus's love will never leave us. It comforts us through our failures and provides joy on our great days.

This is spiritually, for Christians, a way to build faith and optimism. We can make it through life's trials, which, by looking at our world today, can bring us comfort.

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