

# Recognize and Address Mental Health Symptoms Early

## MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH: USE THESE TIPS AS A REFRESHER TO HELP YOUR PATIENTS

*The average delay between symptom onset and treatment is 11 years. That means your patient may spend months or years experiencing mental health challenges before getting a diagnosis.*

### What can you do?

Mental health can be a part of routine conversation with your patients at each visit. It is important that everyone has a shared understanding about mental health.

Remember to:

- Discuss the importance of mental health screenings with your patients.
- Use screening results to talk with your patients and begin to plan a course of action for addressing their mental health.
- Learn some of the common signs your patients may show if they need help with their mental health. They may share some of the following signs:
  - Isolation – They were more outgoing or positive, and lately they want to spend most of their time at home alone.
  - Losing interest – They are not as interested in things they used to like, including food, music, hobbies, friends, work or school.
  - Trouble focusing – They are having a difficult time concentrating to follow conversations.
  - Short temper – They are irritated or expressed that they may have lashed out at people they care about.



### Ideas on how to start the conversation with your patients

For some patients, it may be their first time talking and learning about mental health. Below are ideas on how you can start the dialogue:

- “Having concerns about your mental health is a common experience.”
- “It is never too early or too late to seek help.”
- “While you may not need the information today, I am sharing the basics to help you prepare if you ever need to talk about this with other providers, your family, or friends.”

## Mental health resources for CA Wellcare members

Share the following resources with your patients to help them feel better.

- myStrength – Is an evidence-based, behavioral health self-help resource that offers interactive, individually tailored applications. Through the personalized website and mobile application, members can get help with a number of conditions, including depression, anxiety, stress, substance use, pain management and insomnia. Members can sign up for mystrength at <https://mystrength.com/go/healthnet/wellcareca>.
- Findhelp – Findhelp at [healthnet.findhelp.com](http://healthnet.findhelp.com) is a social service and referral platform that is used to identify local resources to support members. It is a nationwide database that offers no-cost and reduced-cost direct services. Findhelp offers various resources that include mental health services, health education, medical care and more.

## Suicide prevention

For immediate help, call 911 or 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline). The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources.

## Mental health resources for CA Wellcare providers and staff

Organization	Website
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)	<a href="http://www.nami.org">www.nami.org</a>
Mental Health America (MHA)	<a href="http://www.mhanational.org">www.mhanational.org</a>
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Behavioral Health Equity Resources	<a href="http://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/resources">www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/resources</a>