

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

PROCLAMATION NO. 2021-035

Proclaiming May 2021 as Mental Health Month in Multnomah County, Oregon.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. Supporting mental health in our community is an essential part of our overall wellness. All people, including those experiencing mental health challenges, are valuable to our community and deserve to be safe, healthy, live with dignity, and thrive.
- b. Throughout the pandemic, people of all ages who had never experienced mental health challenges found themselves struggling for the first time. In the past year, the number of people experiencing mental health challenges jumped from 20% to 44%. Multnomah County responded to the pandemic by maintaining in-person services wherever possible, increasing telehealth support, including an expanded role for the Call Center. Now more than ever, it is critical to reduce the stigma around mental health challenges that commonly prevents individuals from seeking help.
- c. Black, Indigenous and other People of Color are disproportionately affected by mental health challenges. Lack of access to racially specific treatment and other consequences of current and historical trauma can lead to higher rates of persistent symptoms and disability. Multnomah County is committed to supporting organizations providing racially specific treatment and increasing outreach to BIPOC community members.
- d. Treatment for mental health issues is as important as care for our physical health. In fact, mental health conditions can cause or worsen other health problems and can also contribute to homelessness, employment difficulties, relationship issues, and financial problems. Fortunately, there are practical tools that everyone can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency. There is hope. Help is available, and people can -- and do -- recover.
- e. Anyone experiencing mental health concerns deserves access to high-quality, individualized services that are racially specific, affordable, and include peer-support. Multnomah County provides mental health services that meet people where they are and support their goals for recovery, at every stage of life.
- f. Multnomah County is committed to raising awareness about the early signs of mental illness, which may include changes in social behavior, changes in mood or emotions, eating or sleeping habits, substance use, difficulty coping with problems and engaging in daily activities.
- g. Just like with physical health, early intervention and prevention for mental health can sometimes help prevent mental illness, lessen the severity, and increase the opportunities for recovery. Early and effective treatment for people experiencing mental health challenges result in better care, better outcomes and lower costs.
- h. Multnomah County offers mental health education and suicide prevention trainings to better equip members of our community to recognize a developing mental health concern or crisis in ourselves and others, to engage with the person, to connect the person to resources and

to act effectively until professional help is available. These trainings help people, including ourselves, get the help they need and save lives.

- i. Multnomah County will continue to collaborate with criminal justice, public safety and community treatment providers to identify inequities and reduce incarceration among people experiencing mental illness. Multnomah County recognizes that many institutions and organizations themselves can cause trauma, and will do all that it can to ensure that people suffering from mental health challenges do not experience added institutional trauma.
- j. Multnomah County will continue to collaborate with housing funders and providers to support and expand appropriate, low barrier, affordable long term housing for persons who live with persistent mental health challenges, recognizing that housing is health.
- k. Multnomah County will continue to work with peers and individuals with lived experience toward building an inclusive, accepting, and thoughtful community where individuals with mental health challenges are not stigmatized, and are valued and treated with the respect, dignity and compassion to which we all are entitled.
- l. Multnomah County is committed to supporting the development and renewal of resilience in all people. People who live with mental health challenges are not always viewed as resilient. Multnomah County sees their resilience and affirms their perseverance, experience, wisdom and voice.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:

The month of May 2021 is proclaimed to be Mental Health Month in Multnomah County, Oregon. We invite all residents of Multnomah County to observe this month with a commitment to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health and the steps our citizens can take to assure mental wellness and build resilience for all individuals in our community.

ADOPTED this 27th day of May, 2021.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Deborah Kafoury, Chair

REVIEWED:

JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By _____

Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Julie Dodge, Interim Behavioral Health Division Director