

Mental Health Monday: Continuum of Mental Health and 8 Dimensions of Wellness

Bill Pollack

This is Show Me Today, the Voice of Missouri. Thanks for tuning in. I'm Bill Pollack. We bring back Rachel Jones, a licensed professional counselor and the manager of trauma informed treatment at the Department of Mental Health. Welcome back, Rachel. Nice to talk with you again.

Rachel Jones

Thank you. It's been nice being on your show.

Bill Pollack

You're not going to make me go through any of breathing exercises again or positive affirmation, are you? You're not going to put me on the spot again?

Rachel Jones

I don't know. Have you been practicing them?

Bill Pollack

I have been practicing. It's helped. Yes, it has helped. My cynical ways are changing. All right, well, let's talk about May and Mental Health Awareness Month here on Show Me Today. But I want to talk a little bit. Can you explain Show-Me Hope and what the goal is and what it does?

Rachel Jones

For sure. Show-Me Hope is the Department of Mental Health, we have a Missouri crisis counseling program and it's called Show-Me Hope. But this program is really designed for when the state goes through natural or man-made disasters, this is a program that helps all of the citizens in the state be able to get access to mental health support and resources in their local areas.

So it's really designed to help communities recover from disaster and know what's available to them and understand what the normal phases of disaster are and what the typical reactions are for people. But, through this program we get to do a lot of innovative and fun creative ways of just teaching people about mental health and wellness and what the resources are.

Bill Pollack

Rachel Jones joining us on Mental Health Monday here on Show Me Today. Most people think that mental health is an illness. Is it an illness?

Rachel Jones

No, it's just mental health that your brain if everybody's got a brain that got mental health, just like if you've got a body, you've got physical health, it's just neutral. But you can have positive mental health or, negative mental health. You can be in good mental health or poor mental health. You can have wellness or you can have illness. There's a whole continuum. But in general, mental health is just talking about the health of your brain.

Bill Pollack

And I guess the goal is you want to avoid the swings, right? I mean, you don't want to be too low, but is there a negative effect of being too high?

Rachel Jones

I think being on any extreme can be dangerous because if you're too high, all the time, often that might mean that you're avoiding some of the negative feelings and things that you've got going on in your life. You're trying to mask that and cover it. So yeah, you know, most of us are somewhere in the middle, right?

We're just trying to manage day to day the stressors and, and keep an even well balanced mental health. Just keep ourselves on this continuum where there's an equilibrium and there's a balance. Knowing some days will be harder than others. Some situations are going to be harder than others. And, you know, there's very standard life stressors that are going to make somebody feel depressed and low and sad or angry and fearful for a period of time, but they're able to recover from that and feel well and balanced again.

So that's the goal: Is managing regular life stressors, feeling your feelings, acknowledging what they are, being okay with that, but always trying to move back to the wellness side of the continuum.

Bill Pollack

Can you talk about the eight dimensions of wellness?

Rachel Jones

Sure. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, we call that SAMHSA. They develop the eight dimensions of wellness some time ago. And it's really looking at these eight domains of functioning in our lives that all of us have going on that are interconnected. So, when one part is a little off or we're ignoring it or we don't have the time to focus on it, it starts to influence these other domains. So, the domains are your emotional health, your financial health, your social, spiritual and occupational health. Also your physical health, intellectual and environmental health. So, you can find information about the eight dimensions of wellness with a simple internet search. But you can go to SAMHSA. They've also got this really great guide that you can download for free, and it's basically a step-by-step guide for you to develop a wellness plan for your life that looks at all of those eight dimensions to really help people balance that. Because when you're aware of those dimensions and what your strengths are and what things are, you probably need to adjust a little bit for each of them. Your life just starts to line up and it's much more balanced and easier to manage things.

Bill Pollack

What was that website you said?

Rachel Jones

Yeah. If you go to, the SAMHSA website is SAMHSA .gov. But you can do a pretty easy internet search eight dimensions of wellness and you'll find SAMHSA's wellness wheel. They've got some nice graphics and just explain the explanation for what each of those domains are.

Bill Pollack

Rachel Jones, a licensed professional counselor and the manager of Trauma Informed Treatment at the Department of Mental Health, joining us on our Mental Health Monday segment. I've heard you talk about, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I gathered like the key to better mental health is building resilience. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Rachel Jones

Yeah. Resilience is your ability to bounce back or bounce forward when you've got stress and setback. So some people are naturally a little more resilient. They can overcome hardship a little easier. Other people have to learn some resilience skills or they used to have them and they've kind of moved away from them, and now they need to brush them off a bit and practice them again. Or in some cases, life changes and you need to kind of come up with some new resilience skills. So basically when you're trying to figure out how do I bounce back from stuff, how do I recover and maybe even do better? And thrive afterwards? Then you're looking at some of the elements in your life that really help you with that. So one of them is self-awareness. How aware am I of my own mental health and my emotions and feelings? How aware am I with my breathing and my positive affirmations? What's my support system like? And are they actually supportive? Sometimes our support systems are not people that are positive. They're causing some of our problems. So can I surround myself with nurturing positive relationships that are safe, that I can trust, and that I get some value from that help me in hardship. Are there positive strengths and traits that I recognize about myself that I can use? Do I use humor as a way to dissolve some of the tension and stress, and reflect and look at situations as opportunities instead of "this situation I will never be able to recover from"? So those are some of the things that start to make up this recipe of resilience, if you will.

It's going to look a little different for people, but practicing resilience muscles, is something that people typically have to do a little bit every day. And in some cases, depending on your life circumstance, you may really need to ask for some other professionals or try some new strategies that you've never had to try before, just so you can get through a particular hardship and be able to thrive afterwards.

Bill Pollack

Rachel Jones, joining us on Mental Health Monday here on Show Me Today. Where can people go for more help to get help online or to call?

Rachel Jones

Yeah, I would say you can visit the Department of Mental Health website. DMH.MO.GOV. We have a lot of resources there. We also have the National Alliance for Mental Illness. So NAMI and we have one in Missouri, so Missouri, NAMI is a great resource. We have the Missouri Institute of Mental Health, MIMH. They're also a good resource. And of course we encourage people to go to our MoShowMeHope.org website. Our crisis counseling program with DMH because it's got a lot of nice links to other supports, things that you can read about wellness and balance and mental health and how to cope with stress.

Bill Pollack

You guys do a great job. Thank you so much for helping Missourians. Rachel Jones, always, appreciate you coming on and joining us.

Rachel Jones

Thank you for the opportunity. And thank you for just making time and space on your show for mental health. It's such an important topic and discussion, and a lot of people just don't even know how to start the conversation. So I do appreciate you making this part of your programing.

Bill Pollack

Yeah, absolutely. Yep. Glad to have you on and hopefully we'll talk soon. That's Rachel Jones. We'll be back with more on Show Me Today, the Voice of Missouri.