

Department of Defense

Work-Life Programs

Health & Wellness



October 2023



October: National Depression and Mental Health Awareness and Screening Month

October is National Depression and Mental Health Awareness and Screening Month. This month serves as a reminder to schedule health care screenings related to mental health and related impacts on the body. Mental health issues can affect anyone at any time. Shame and fear often prevent individuals from seeking help with mental health conditions. The DOD urges everyone to do their part in ending this stigma. Mental health illnesses are real, common, and treatable. The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) states that approximately 50% of lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 14 and 75% begin by age 24. At the same time, the average delay between when symptoms first appear, and receiving medical care or intervention is approximately 11 years. Depression and other mental health conditions are treatable with a variety of available options. Getting screened is the first step towards feeling better. Screenings by a professional can lead to early detection and help to determine what treatment options are best for you.

Benefits of Mental Health Screenings:

- **Early Detection:** Screenings can help identify concerns early which can prevent the progression of symptoms and improve outcomes.
- **Increased Awareness:** Screenings help to raise awareness and reduce stigmas associated with mental health conditions.
- **Targeted Intervention:** Results from screenings can help professionals in developing treatment plans that are specific to your needs.
- **Improved Outcomes:** Appropriate referrals, interventions and support services can aid in treatment outcomes based on findings from screenings.
- **Population Health Monitoring:** Results from screenings assist professionals in identifying current mental health trends and developing appropriate strategies and interventions.
- **Empowerment and Self-Reflection:** Engaging in a mental health screening encourages self-reflection, promotes personal insight, and empowers individuals to take an active role in their mental well-being.
- **Professional Guidance:** Screenings conducted by trained professional offer guidance and support, ensuring individuals receive appropriate care.

Additional Resources:

- NAMI: <https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities/Improving-Health/Mental-Health-Screening>
- Silver Lake Psychology: <https://www.silverlakepsychology.com/mental-health-screening/>
- MHA: <https://www.mhanational.org/about-mha-screening>

For additional information, email the DCPAS Work-Life Branch at: dodhra.mcalex.dcpas.mbx.dod-worklife@mail.mil

