

**April is Stress Awareness Month**

April is National Stress Awareness Month, a time to increase public awareness about the causes, treatments and health risks of stress.

Faith communities provide a natural setting where individuals experiencing stress and other mental health issues can find support. For example, spiritual beliefs and practices can help people experience greater hope. Prayer and meditation can help people feel at peace. A faith community can provide a faith framework that can help people understand and cope with difficult life events.

Faith communities also can play a support role by:

 Promoting awareness of stress and other mental health issues through educational forums and other events.

 Inviting local mental health experts to speak at your faith community.

 Identifying opportunities to support people with stress and mental illness.

 Building a safe and supportive environment where people can openly talk about stress, trauma and other mental health issues.

 Training members to identify the signs of stress, depression and suicide and refer people to resources.

 Encouraging and expressing empathy in your faith community. Convey a message of compassion and acceptance.

 ***Prayer****: Open our hearts. Help us to share the light of love with those living with stress, anxiety and other mental health issues.*

**To learn more, visit www.** **mentalhealthamerica.net**

