



May: Month of Awareness of Mental Health

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Just as there is Cancer Awareness Month (Month of the Pink Ribbon), Month of Endometriosis, Down Syndrome and Autism, there is also Mental Health Awareness Month.

Mental health is defined as the state of balance between a person and their socio-cultural environment that guarantees their labor, intellectual and relationship participation to achieve a well-being and quality of life.

All people have mental health needs and not only those who have been diagnosed with poor mental health conditions. The main cause of disability is not cancer or chronic pain, although public health campaigns may make you think otherwise. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide. In addition, it remains in that place for many years.

Depression and anxiety disorders are common mental health problems that affect work capacity and productivity. More than 300 million people in the world suffer from depression, a disorder that is the main cause of disability, and more than 260 million have anxiety disorders.

Even more disturbing, despite the growing awareness, the rate of depression is not improving. Par-

ticularly in developing nations, people often do not receive treatment for the symptoms of depression.

Much of the discussion about mental health focuses on genetics, brain chemicals and other biological phenomena. It is true that mental illness is biological, but that does not mean that all cases of mental illness are hardwired.

The environment can affect the behavior of genes. Stressful and disadvantaged environments can alter the way in which genes behave, triggering mental illnesses. The environment in which people grow also teaches them to handle everything from daily stress to serious trauma.

Mental illness certainly has a biological component, but to believe that it is only a rigid and inevitable cable is to believe that the treatment does not work. That is not true. The treatment helps the brain relearn new ways of processing information, as it helps the person cope with difficult emotions, just as the environment affects the treatment has the effect of helping.

This month focuses on understanding mental health and improving social empathy, it is true that we should not limit ourselves only in the month of May, but it is certainly a good time to refocus our efforts.