



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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During Mental Illness Awareness Week, SCDMH urges South Carolinians to assess their needs, reach out for support

Columbia, SC – October 6 through 12, 2024, is Mental Illness Awareness Week in the United States. In the wake of Hurricane Helene, the [South Carolina Department of Mental Health](https://www.scdmh.org) is urging the public to assess the effects of the storm and its aftermath on their mental health and reach out for support as we rebuild.

“In times of uncertainty and upheaval, it is vital that we root ourselves in resilience and connection,” said SCDMH Director of Public Education Jennifer Butler. “Despite the hardships and losses so many of us have experienced over the past week, the resource of human connection continues to be plentiful in our state.”

“Mental Illness Awareness Week encourages communities to raise awareness of mental health needs and resources, fight the stigma too often associated with mental illness, reach out for support where it is needed, and learn how to support others who may be in need of help,” she continued. “These goals are especially important as South Carolinians repair their communities and their lives. We must hold on to hope and to one another!”

“People who are struggling with their mental health may experience a range of feelings, including confusion, anxiety, fear, vulnerability, anger, guilt, hopelessness, and helplessness; but they do not have to face these emotions alone,” she said. “We need to be present and aware, listen to those around us, encourage those in need to seek help, and remind them they matter. We can all help by learning how to recognize that a neighbor or loved one needs help, knowing the available resources, and reminding one another that it is perfectly normal to need support and ask for it. It’s also important for each of us to seek support for ourselves when we need it.”

Learn more about available mental health screeners, supports, services, and the no-cost Hopeful Minds platform on the South Carolina Department of Mental Health’s website, here: <https://www.scdmh.org/resources/>.

The first full week of October marks Mental Illness Awareness Week. Established in 1990 by the U.S. Congress, the commemoration seeks to raise awareness about mental illness and its effects on individuals and families. Each year, nearly 50 million Americans will experience a mental disorder. During this week, mental health professionals, patients, families, and advocates throughout the nation offer public information and

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education programs on mental illness and spread the message mental illnesses are as important as physical illnesses, treatment is available, and it works.

The [SCDMH's](#) mission is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses. The Department provides clinical services to approximately 100,000 patients each year, about 30,000 of whom are children. As South Carolina's public mental health system, SCDMH provides outpatient mental health care through a network of 16 community mental health centers and associated clinics serving all 46 counties and inpatient psychiatric treatment in three state hospitals.

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