

Health Area Focuses of the Month

May 2025

MENTAL HEALTH

Objective: To reduce health inequities in mental health access and care, and to decrease the prevalence of mental health challenges in Durham through community-driven support, resources, and referrals.



This month, our organization is proud to highlight our commitment to mental health—a critical priority for Durham County. Since March 2020, 40% of residents have reported a decline in their mental health, reflecting the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth in particular face significant challenges, including bullying, violence, and discrimination. In Durham, 34.4% of middle schoolers and 41.3% of high schoolers reported symptoms of depression, and over 10% in each group attempted suicide in the past year. While access to mental health care improved with the expansion of telehealth, disparities remain—especially for Black and LGBTQ+ individuals who often encounter barriers when seeking care. Mental health was identified as the third most important health issue by both residents and public health professionals, underscoring the community's shared concern and the need for continued focus in this area.

CHC'S CONTRIBUTIONS

COMING SOON

Referrals & Resources

CHC offers mental health education and connects individuals with trusted local providers—visit chealthc.org/mental-health to explore available resources.

Support Groups

Facilitated support groups covering a range of mental health topics to help foster connection and healing in our community, in partnership with Lincoln Community Health Center.

KEEP READING TO DISCOVER BOARD MEMBER DR. KAMALA UZZELL'S TOP 10 TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

**QUESTIONS?
CALL 919-470-8680**

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH: BREAKING THE SILENCE, BUILDING SUPPORT

Every May, Mental Health Awareness Month serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of mental well-being and the need to reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues.



Dr. Kamala Uzzell
Psychotherapist, CEO/Founder of Solay Counseling



According to Dr. Kamala Uzzell, too often, stigma and misunderstanding keep individuals from seeking the help they need. By fostering a culture of compassion and understanding, we can create safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences and get help without fear or shame.

Whether it's checking in with a friend, advocating for workplace mental health resources, or seeking support for yourself, every action counts. Together, we can break the silence—and build a community that truly supports mental health for all.

Take time this month to focus on your mental health and take the initiative to talk with others about the importance of prioritizing their mental health.

Prioritizing and promoting mental health is not just an individual responsibility—it's a collective one. Communities, employers, educators, and policymakers all play a part in creating environments where mental health is understood and supported.

This Mental Health Awareness Month, let's move beyond awareness to action. Let's foster a culture where mental health is prioritized, where asking for help is seen as a strength, and where everyone has access to the care they need.

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DR. UZZELL'S MENTAL HEALTH TIPS

1. Mental Health is Health

Mental health is just as important as physical health. We must take care of our brain just like we do the rest of our body. Mental health affects your thoughts, emotions, relationships, and over time, it can impact your physical well-being.

2. It's Okay to Not Be Okay

Everyone experiences stress, sadness, or anxiety at times. Acknowledging when you're struggling is the first step toward healing. Asking for help is healthy.

3. You Are Not Alone

Millions of people experience mental health challenges. Talking about it openly helps reduce stigma and builds a supportive community.

4. Self Care is Essential, Not Selfish

Taking care of your mental health through rest, relaxation, hobbies, and boundaries is necessary for long-term mental well-being.

5. Your Environment Matters

Toxic relationships, unhealthy work environments, or overwhelming surroundings can harm your mental health. It's okay to make changes to protect your peace and sanity.

6. Physical Health & Mental Health Are Connected

Regular exercise, nutritious food, hydration, and sufficient, quality sleep all contribute significantly to your mental clarity and emotional stability.

7. Mental Health Looks Different for Everyone

Symptoms and experiences vary widely. There's no "one-size-fits-all" approach—what works for one person might not work for another.

8. Help is Available

Therapy, support groups, medication, and community resources like CHC can make a big difference. Seeking professional help is a sign of strength.

9. Digital Habits Affect Mental Health

Social media, screen time, and online comparisons can impact your mood and self-esteem. Be mindful of what kind of, and how much, social media you consume.

10. Growth is Possible

Mental health struggles don't define you. With time, support, and the right coping tools and strategies, healing and personal growth are not only possible—they're likely.

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