

MAKE MENTAL HEALTH A PRIORITY

PRE-LAW SOCIETY AT VCU



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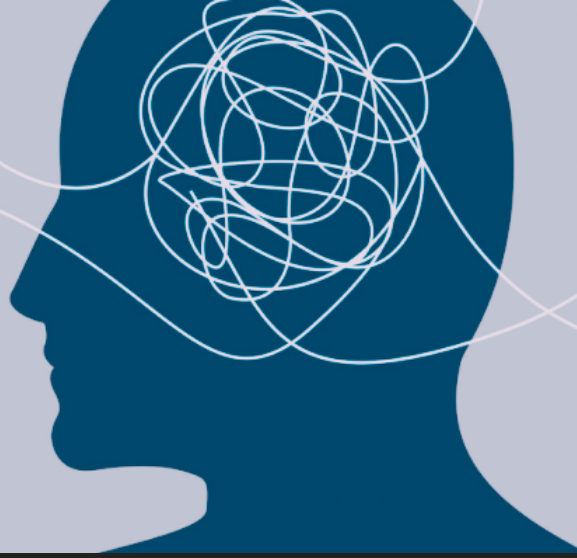
Trigger Warning: This article discusses mental health. Reader discretion is advised. If you are a VCU student and are experiencing a mental health emergency, call 804-828-6200 to speak to a mental health professional at anytime.

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. The first National Mental Health Awareness Month was celebrated in 1949. It was created in order to bring awareness to the mental health of Americans, show the importance of wellness and mental health, and celebrate those in recovery from mental health issues.

Especially in the last year, since the global pandemic, we have been hearing the terms "mental health" and "awareness" quite frequently. But what do they actually mean? Mental health includes the health of our well being socially, emotionally, and physically. According to the Global Wellness Institute, wellness consists of an "active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health".

As students and aspiring members of the legal field, we constantly find ourselves in high stress environments. However, we have career aspirations that also require being in unique, high stress situations throughout the entirety of our careers. This of course comes across as a daunting responsibility for anyone to take upon themselves. This is exactly why it is imperative to establish effective mental health habits before we even set foot on a law school's campus. This way, we are more prepared to handle stress and better equipped to reach out for help when we need it.

"If you are experiencing these concerns, you are not alone. For those struggling with mental health at VCU, there are free services and resources offered through University Counseling Services and the Well."



We must acknowledge that mental health struggles are not limited to a single person or profession. They are pervasive. Many people suffer from these struggles. Mental health concerns are common enough in the legal profession that the American Bar Association offers mental health resources for both lawyers and law students. If you are experiencing these concerns, you are not alone. For those affected by mental health at VCU, there are free services and resources offered through University Counseling Services and The Well.

The Well offers students with information about mindfulness and wellness practices. They offer both in-person and virtual mindfulness workshops through Recreational Sports to manage stress and build resilience. They also offer a quick guide to mindfulness that is easy to follow even without having been through the workshop or having any previous experience with mindfulness. Additionally, they offer weekly guided meditations on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. You can schedule an appointment for mindful meditation here.

University Counseling Services is another great resource for VCU students when it comes to mental health. They are located in the Monroe Park Campus' Student Commons. University Counseling Services offers several different approaches to mental health and wellness. They offer therapy for individuals, groups, and even those in relationships. They also offer walk-in appointments for those experiencing abrupt mental health trouble. Additionally, they offer skills groups. These groups are designed to help students who are dealing with a particular mental health concern by building the skills that help them cope in healthier ways. Another service that the University Counseling Service Offers is support groups. Currently, there are six different support groups running that deal with issues ranging from COVID-19, to dealing with the effects of racism towards communities of color. If you are interested about any of the services offered by the University Counseling Center, check out their website. You can register for any University Counseling Service here.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, call 804-828-6200. They will connect you with a Crisis Counselor at the University Counseling Service.

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