



THE WHALE WATCH

"Looking Out for Yourself and Others"

September 2019; Issue 5

In This Issue:

Stress and Distress

Warning Signs/Risk Factors

Improving Your Mental Well-Being

How Can I help?



ARE YOU *Stressed* OR IN *Distress?*



WomenLivingWell.org

How do you tell the difference
between stress and distressed?

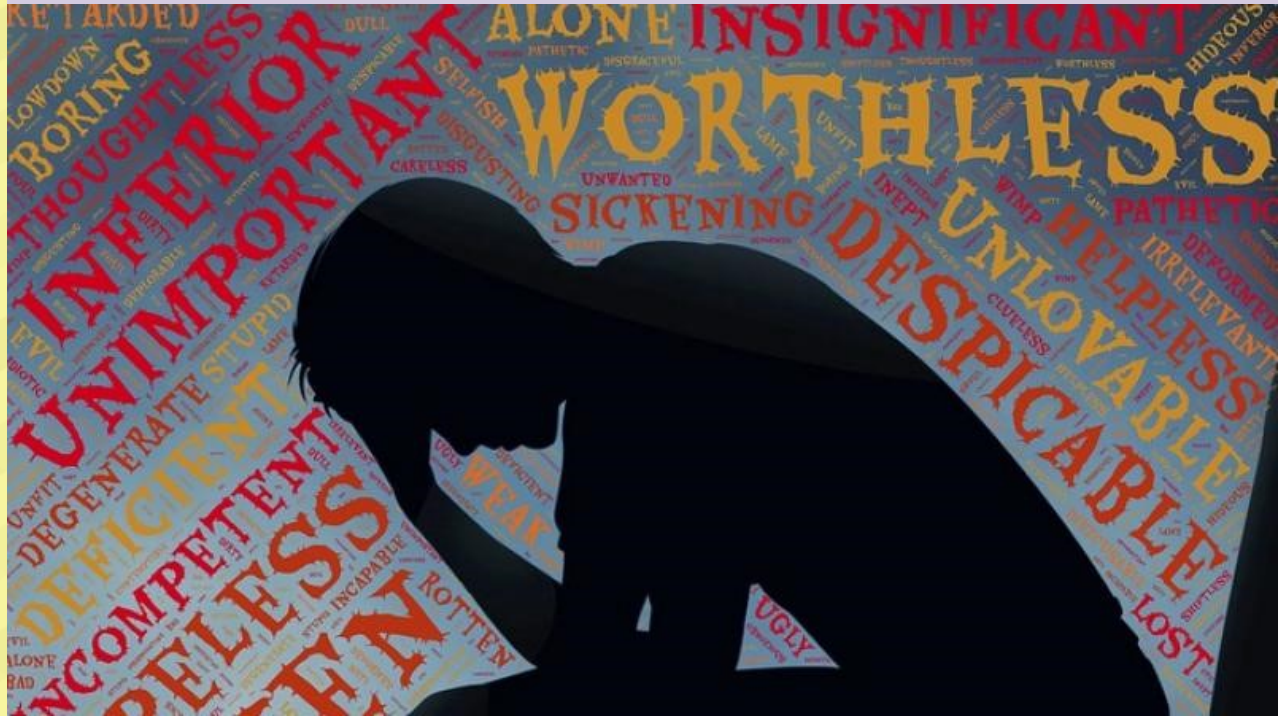
We All Experience Stress

Stress is the emotional or physical tension we feel in response to a stressor. **Stress** can be positive, and in small doses it can help increase productivity or avoid danger. **Distress**, on the other hand, is more severe and is the result of extreme symptoms of anxiety, sorrow or pain and often causes impairments in functioning.

So, think of it this way, -when **stressed** you have ways of coping with the stressors; but when **distressed**, coping is extremely difficult, and performance often decreases. **Distress** can lead to mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, physical health problems, or even suicide.

According to the CDC, in 2017 suicide was the second leading cause of death for individual ages 15 to 34 and the fourth leading cause of death for individuals ages 35-54 for the national population. Research has found that medical students are at equal or higher risk for burnout, depression, substance abuse and, that around

11% of medical students report having thoughts of suicide. According to other research, approximately 25% of pharmacy students scored high severity in depression, anxiety, academic distress, and eating concerns.



So, how do we address these concerns?

Warning Signs:

- Thoughts or comments such as:
 - *"It doesn't matter anymore"*
 - *"I wish I wasn't here"*
 - *"I don't think anyone would care if I were gone"*
- Increased drug or alcohol use
- Increased aggression/irritability towards self or others
- Withdrawal from typical activities and friends/family
- Mood swings
- Decrease in daily functioning
- Psychosis or paranoia
- Saying goodbye to loved ones
- Giving away of prized possessions and/or getting affairs in order
- Purchasing weapons or saving pills
- Poor self-care

Risk Factors:

- History of suicidal behaviors personally or in the family
- Drug or alcohol use
- Access to firearms
- Chronic or serious medical condition
- History of trauma or abuse
- Excessive stress
- Recent tragedy or loss
- Gender~Men are four times more likely to die by suicide. More attempts are made by women

A green speech bubble with a white outline and a drop shadow, containing the text "I'm here for you. How can I help?" in white. The bubble is positioned at the top center of the page.

“ I’m here for you.
How can I help? ”

How Can I Help?

Steps to take to lead others to get help

- Talk openly and ask questions. “Are you feeling OK? I’m worried about you.” “Are you having thoughts about taking your life?”
- Ask the person simple and direct questions, such as “who can I call for help?” Encourage them to contact family, a friend, doctor, mental health professional or seek assistance through:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line 741-741

BeThere Campaign

- If person is in danger of hurting themselves, remove all means necessary (weapons, pills, etc.) Don’t leave them alone
- Express concern and support. Remain calm and do not argue or raise your voice
- Most of all, be patient



Ways to Improve Your Mental Health and Well-Being

Give yourself a break

Everyone deserves a break. No one can keep going 24/7 without risking burnout

Use positive affirmations

You are amazing! Tell yourself that. What are your strengths?

Focus on the present

Being in the here and now keeps you focused. Dwelling is more harmful than good, and it can keep us from taking steps forward

Exercise

Basic and simple enough but being healthy is both physical and mental. It doesn't take much to take a walk

Eat healthy

Aim to fuel your body with nutritious food. Ever notice a difference when you eat healthy versus unhealthy foods?

Talk to someone

It can be family, friend, or a professional. Your support network is there for a reason

Practice good sleep hygiene

Good sleep can mean all the difference

Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services

Located in Suite A-200 next to the library

Contact us: M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

330-325-6757

[Visit our website](#)