

DROP-IN ARTICLE

This past year presented so many different challenges and obstacles that tested our strength and resiliency. The global pandemic forced us to cope with situations we never even imagined, and a lot of us struggled with our mental health as a result. The good news is that there are tools and resources available that can support the well-being of individuals and communities.

Now, more than ever, we need to combat the stigma surrounding mental health concerns. That's why this Mental Health Month Arkansas Health & Wellness is highlighting #Tools2Thrive - what individuals can do throughout their daily lives to prioritize mental health, build resiliency, and continue to cope with the obstacles of COVID-19.

Throughout the pandemic, many people who had never experienced mental health challenges found themselves struggling for the first time. During the month of May, we are focusing on different topics that can help process the events of the past year and the feelings that surround them, while also building up skills and supports that extend beyond COVID-19.

We know that the past year forced many to accept tough situations that they had little to no control over. If you found that it impacted your mental health, you aren't alone. In fact, of the almost half a million individuals that took the anxiety screening at [MHAScreening.org](https://mhascreening.org), 79% showed symptoms of moderate to severe anxiety. However, there are practical tools that can help improve your mental health. We are focused on managing anger and frustration, recognizing when trauma may be affecting your mental health, challenging negative thinking patterns, and making time to take care of yourself.

It's important to remember that working on your mental health and finding tools that help you thrive takes time. Change won't happen overnight. Instead, by focusing on small changes, you can move through the stressors of the past year and develop long-term strategies to support yourself on an ongoing basis.

A great starting point for anyone who is ready to start prioritizing their mental health is to take a mental health screening at [MHAScreening.org](https://mhascreening.org). It's a quick, free, and confidential way for someone to assess their mental health and begin finding hope and healing.

Ultimately, during this month of May, [ORGANIZATION] wants to remind everyone that mental illnesses are real, and recovery is possible. By developing your own #Tools2Thrive, it is possible to find balance between life's ups and downs and continue to cope with the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

For more information, visit www.mhanational.org/may.