

The FCDAC STRATEGIZER

Leading the way to a healthier
Forsyth County



October 2021 Volume 1 Issue 6

Receive the Newsletter

I LOVE FALL MOST OF ALL!

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR, TAMMY NICHOLSON



On October 6 at our FCDAC Monthly Council Meeting, Director Tammy announced she would be stepping down on October 29. "I am humbled and honored to have served this Council almost from the beginning, coming on as Director in February 2016, a few months after the Council's grant was awarded."

"This was a very difficult choice for me; one that brought many tears, but the pandemic has made me reassess postponing my calling any longer," she said. "I will be stepping down to accept a position in a faith-based organization that I have been involved with as a board member for many years."

Tammy urged the members to press forward with the Council's mission, stating, "From the beginning, our evaluators, Dr. Price and now Dr. Geary, and I have always encouraged and emphasized that this is YOUR Council. Staff, under the DFC model, are to empower members to take ownership and grow. That takes time to cultivate, but you, the members of this Council, have taken ownership over the years. I am so proud of all we have achieved so far, and know you will use this opportunity to become even stronger."

OCTOBER IS . . .



NOW MORE THAN EVER WE NEED TO SPOTLIGHT THE DANGERS OF
Rx AND OTC MEDICINE MISUSE!
AWARENESS, AWARENESS AWARENESS!!

Did you know that **twenty percent** of youth say they have taken a prescription drug without having a prescription for it themselves, and close to **four percent** report misusing over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine to get high?

How are we, as a Council, doing to increase awareness?

Educate yourself! Consider attending one of many conferences to increase your knowledge base and received the most current information. Consider attending:

- National Drug Rx and Heroin Summit held in Atlanta April 18-21, 2021.
- CADCA Mid-year Training Institute held in Orlando July 17-21.
- CADCA 32 Annual National Leadership Forum held in National Harbor, MD January 31-February 3, 2022.

Form strategies using the 7 Strategies for Effective Community Change! Our goals are to create strategies that empower youth to make healthy decisions, as well as create family, school, and community environments that promote and support healthy decision-making by youth.

Mental Illness Awareness Week

October 3-9

“Together for Mental Health”

Did you know:

- **1 in 5** American adults experiences some form of mental illness in any given year.
- **1 in every 20** adults is living with a serious mental health condition such as schizophrenia,

bipolar disorder, or long-term recurring major depression.*

Mental Illness

*according to [NAMI](#) (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

Because so many Americans are affected by **Mental Illness**, and because there is still a stigma, shame, and a lack of education about this widespread issue, **Mental Health Awareness Week**, is meant to bring attention to the widespread prevalence and increase our general awareness.

Here is the thing: Our minds are very sensitive. **Mental Health America's** website states, "There is no one cause of mental illness, but instead **multiple risk factors**. The greater the number of risk factors you have the more likely you are to develop a mental illness. Mental illness can have a gradual onset, but other times it doesn't appear until a stressful event happens, that triggers the illness." By increasing awareness in ourselves, we can recognize when increasing risk factors are present for ourselves or if we see it in others and can take steps to avert a mental health incident or crisis.

Mental Health America lists a few examples of common risk factors

- Genetics. Mental illness often runs in the family.
- Environment. Living in a stressful environment can make you more likely to develop a mental illness. Things like living in poverty or having an abusive family put a lot of stress on your brain and often trigger mental illness.
- Childhood trauma. Even if you're no longer in a stressful environment, things that happened to you as a child can have an impact later in life.
- Stressful events: like losing a loved one, or being in a car accident.
- Negative thoughts. Constantly putting yourself down or expecting the worst can get you stuck in a cycle of depression or anxiety.
- Unhealthy habits: like not getting enough sleep, or not eating.
- Drugs and alcohol: Abusing drugs and alcohol can trigger a mental illness. It can also make it harder to recover from mental illness. (States with legalized marijuana for medical and recreational use have seen increases in adolescent psychosis in data information collected in a [large systematic review and meta-analysis](#), see article in September's *Strategizer*)
- Brain chemistry. Mental illness involves an imbalance of natural chemicals in your brain and your body.

Go here for more pertinent articles from [Mental Health America](#).

Focus for Mental Illness Awareness Week*

- Tuesday Oct. 5: National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding
- Thursday Oct. 7: National Depression Screening Day
- Saturday Oct. 9: NAMIWalks United Day of Hope
- Sunday Oct. 10: World Mental Health Day

Be aware, be vigilant, and know you are not alone and people overcome mental health challenges by developing and following a treatment plan and effective coping strategies.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION [GO HERE](#)

Awareness Week

CELEBRATE WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY and let everyone know that:

- Mental health is just as important as physical health
- Mental health deserves attention and care
- "You Are Not Alone"

#Together4MH

nami.org/miaw

RED RIBBON WEEK OCTOBER 23-31

RED RIBBON WEEK-October 23-31



Red Ribbon Week is the nation's oldest and largest drug prevention awareness program. It was established after the death of Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, who in 1985 was brutally tortured and murdered by drug traffickers he was investigating in Mexico. As a tribute to SA Camarena, high school friend Henry Lozano and Congressman Duncan Hunter created "Camarena Clubs" and the wearing of a red ribbon to show their opposition to drugs. In 1988, the National Family Partnership coordinated the first National Red Ribbon Week with President and Mrs. Reagan serving as honorary Chairpersons. Since then, the Red Ribbon

campaign has taken on national significance. Wearing red ribbons during the month of October continues to represent our pledge to live drug-free and honors the sacrifice of all who have lost their lives in the fight against drugs.

For more information about Red Ribbon Week, [CLICK HERE](#)

TAKE PART, TAKE THE RED RIBBON WEEK PLEDGE!

PARENTS' PLEDGE

- We will talk to our children about the dangers of drug abuse.
- We will set clear rules for our children about not using drugs.
- We will set a good example for our children by not using illegal drugs or medicine without a prescription, or abusing prescription drugs.
- We will monitor our children's behavior and enforce appropriate consequences so that our rules are respected.
- We will encourage family and friends to follow the same guidelines to keep children safe from substance abuse.
- I pledge to set guidelines to help children grow up safe, healthy, and drug-free.

STUDENTS' PLEDGE

- I pledge to stay in school and learn the things that I need to know.
- I pledge to make the world a better place for kids like me to grow.
- I pledge to keep my dreams alive and be all that I can be.
- I pledge to help others and to keep myself drug-free.

October is National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance that is potentially repeated. There are three types of bullying: Verbal (name-calling, threats), Social (leaving someone out of a group or play on purpose, spreading rumors, embarrassing someone in public), and Physical (hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, breaking, or taking someone's things).

Prevention: When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior, they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time. Parents, school staff, and other adults in the community can help kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy.

It is important to remember that **BOTH** the bullied and the bully may have serious and lasting problems.

For many resources on this topic, [CLICK HERE.](#)

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT BULLYING

Do you want an easy way to begin a conversation about bullying with a young person? Check out the video conversation starters [HERE.](#)

Don't Give Bullying an Audience

- Have you ever witnessed someone being bullied?
- How did it feel to watch?

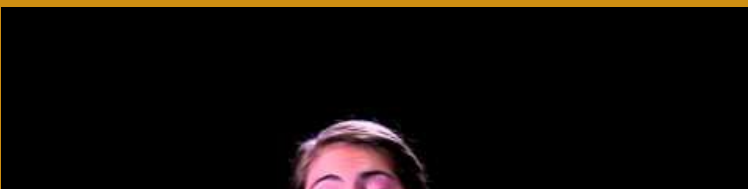


10 Ways Parents and Caregivers Can Help Kids Build Resilience*

Here are ways that parents and caregivers can help their children and family become more resilient. Some of these may take some effort but are worth it in the long run. If you are a parent or caregiver, you can:

1. Set family goals and have children play an important role in working towards them.
2. When your child is defensive or

aggressive, help them reflect on the situation to understand what is causing their behavior. Children may lack the skills to handle what's happening. They may need support. Help them build the





Witnessing bullying is upsetting and affects the **bystander**, too.

What would happen if you had the courage to step in?

- **Bystanders** have the potential to make a positive difference by becoming an **upstander**. An **upstander** is someone who sees what happens and intervenes, interrupts, or speaks up to stop the bullying.

What words could you say to diffuse the situation?

- Question the bullying behavior.
- Use humor to say something funny and redirect the conversation.
- Bystanders can intervene as a group to show there are several people who don't agree with the bullying.
- Walk with the person who is the target of bullying to help diffuse the negative interaction.
- Reach out to the person who was bullied. It makes a difference.

may need support. Help them build the skills they lack so they can respond in better ways in the future.

3. Practice role-playing how to handle different problems. This helps children develop ways of handling challenges.
4. Model an attitude of grit and optimism in the face of family challenges.
5. Work on solving problems together.
6. Teach your child how to manage stress. Participating in exercise or healthy cooking can be helpful.
7. Find someone (like a tutor, mentor, or school counselor) to help your child improve specific academic or life skills.
8. Volunteer together to help others in need.
9. Talk to your child about past challenges and how they helped you grow.
10. Help your child find practical solutions to problems as they come up.

With parent and caregiver support, a child's resilience can develop and help them cope when they are faced with difficult experiences, like bullying.

*Resource from the Stop Bullying Campaign.

[Go Here](#) for more prevention tips!

October Is Health Literacy Month!

What is Health Literacy? Studies consistently show that a significant number of people have problems reading, understanding, and acting on health information. This impacts personal health and healthcare resources.

Personal health literacy is when individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services for health-related decisions for themselves and others.

Health Literacy Month is Here!



Ways to build Awareness through Action

- Hospitals may host health literacy educational workshops for their employees or the general public.
- Senior centers often run prescription safety sessions.

How are you taking action to build awareness about health literacy?

Share with the community today!



#healthliteracymonth

healthliteracymonth.org

- A literacy program might sponsor a health literacy fair.
- A library can display samples of effective consumer health information.
- A school may publish a health literacy newsletter.
- Employers sometimes sponsor educational programs for employees focusing on wellness and disease prevention.

A Recap of the October's Council Meeting



DIRECTOR TAMMY'S UPDATE

- **Jones Memorial Golf Tournament:** Successful event! Special thanks to Councilmember Susan Tanner who chaired the Golf Committee and to

Chris Mason, Country Land Golf Course. Keith Bowen volunteered to chair the next event. He has organized Golf Tournament Fundraisers and is enthusiastic about building this event next year! Recognition and thanks to Counsel Member, Tom Cleveland's donation to this fundraiser. Because donations are still coming in, the accounting summary will be provided in November.

- Requesting **Sector Leader Agreements** be completed and returned to the director.
- **Suicide Summit**, September 9 Excellent and a Video is being produced and will be made available on the website and through the *Strategizer* in November.
- **November 3 Council Meeting** will host **General Price** from CADCA (see his extensive Bio below).
- Director Tammy announced she will be leaving the Council as of October 29.
- Bring **environmental scans** to **November 3rd** meeting with Dr. Price to share.
- **National Drug Rx and Heroin Summit** held in Atlanta on April 121, 2021. The Council will pay the registration and the attendee will provide the Council with a takeaway report.
- **CADCA Mid-year Training Institute** held in Orlando July 17-21. Again, we are looking for one adult to attend and one student. Attendees will then share before the Council.
- **CADCA 32nd Annual National Leadership Forum** held in National Harbor, MD January 31-February 3, 2022.

COMMITTEES AND PARTNERS UPDATES

ACEs Committee: Lou Ann Altshuler the Committee chair reported their meeting and their commitment and enthusiasm. They are coordinating with Sarah Pedarre's organization moving forward. She invites any other members with interest to join them.

Mike Cowan and Victoria Ray, Full Circle announced Victoria Ray will be stepping down as the Georgia Full Circle Coordinator and that Mike will be assuming that role as of November 1.

Lindsey Simpson, Red Ribbon Week reported that the schools were providing Red Ribbons to all schools K-8. Each school will approach this week in its own way and will provide plans and pictures of how the week was celebrated. Usually, the planners link the week to a theme they are currently

working on in their schools, so the week may look different in each school.

KAYLA BERGERON, GUEST SPEAKER



Kayla Bergeron is currently the Program Director at **The Connection Forsyth**; she is a Certified Peer Specialist-Addictive Disorder. Formerly she worked as Director of the Public Affairs for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. She was serving this role on September 11, 2001, and was on the 68th floor of the North Tower on that tragic day.

Kayla is pictured in this actual photo guiding others down the North Tower stairwell.

Kayla's Story

Kayla Bergeron worked in the North Tower of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, as Director of the Public Affairs for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. She was at her desk on the 68th floor when the building lurched forward 10 feet. Immediately she initiated the much-practiced emergency protocols and dispatched her team to set up the command center. The ensuing effort to evacuate down the only passable stairwell took an hour. It was made nearly impossible due to the resulting challenges faced during and after the collapse of the South Tower, which caused the twisting of the North Tower. Miraculously a rescuer appeared and guided them safely out of the building.

In 2014, she spoke at the National 9/11 Memorial and Museum opening in New York City.

Kayla said about her 9/11 experience of survival and subsequently succumbing to substance abuse, she was unaware of her Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and coped with it poorly. She related the resulting mental health crisis she experienced from the undiagnosed Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder, and her spiral down into abuse of alcohol. This resulted in two DUI convictions. Those DUI convictions, a rock bottom experience, to be sure, were also the means to begin recovery through **Forsyth County's Care Court**. She credits the program with saving her life. It was rigorous and comprehensive. Kayla now can claim four and one-half years free from any mind-altering substance. Additionally, she credits the **Equine Therapy** she received, which centers on relationship building. The horse she encountered is amazingly perceptive about reading human emotions, and there was and is healing in this relationship as it developed between Kayla and Lilly (the horse).

Kayla is currently the Program Director at **The Connection Forsyth**; she is a Certified Peer Specialist-Addictive Disorder. The Connection Forsyth will launch a pilot program, "**Families in Recovery**," hosting a **two-day workshop on November 6 and 7**. Substance abuse causes destructive havoc in families. This workshop will address the importance of building communication skills and healthier relationships.

NOVEMBER 3RD GUEST SPEAKER

GENERAL BARRYE L. PRICE PH.D

President & CEO



Barrye L. Price is a 1985 Distinguished Military Graduate of the University of Houston's College of Business Administration. He earned a Master of Arts Degree in History in 1994 from Texas A&M University. In 1997, he became the first African-American to obtain a doctorate from the Department of History in the 140-year history of Texas A&M University. He also earned a Master of Science Degree in National Security Strategy from the National Defense University in 2004.

He served within the U.S. Army for 31 years with duty both domestically and abroad. Career highlights includes: Commander of the 5th Replacement Company, Fort Polk, La.; Regimental Adjutant for the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in both Doha, Kuwait, and Fulda, Germany; Assistant Professor of Military History at the United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.; Assistant Chief of Staff, G1, 13th Corps Support Command, Fort Hood, Texas; White House Fellow and Special Assistant to the Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington, D.C.; Battalion Commander, 4th Personnel Services Battalion, Fort Carson, Colo.; Executive Officer and Military Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (Human Resources) Pentagon, Washington, D.C.; Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G1, Army Materiel Command, Fort Belvoir, Va.; Commander, Eastern Sector, United States Military Entrance Processing Command; Director, J1, United Forces-Iraq; the Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army Cadet Command at Fort Knox, KY, the Director of Human Resources Policy Directorate, Army G1 Pentagon, Washington, D.C. and Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 Army Forces Command in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

His Board service includes Board of Directors for the National PTA (2014-2016); Army Emergency Relief (2013-2016); School Board City of North Chicago (2006-2009); Dean's Advisory Board Bauer College of Business, University of Houston (2001-2006); At-Larger Member Houston Alumni Organization (2004-2006). He also served on the President and First Lady's Task Force on "Raising Responsible and Resourceful Teenagers" in 2000; served on President Clinton's "Mississippi Delta Task Force," which sought to revitalize the 207-county, seven-state region that comprises the Mississippi River flood plain from 1999 through 2000. He is the author of the 2001 volume: *Against All Enemies Foreign and Domestic: A Study of Urban Unrest and Federal Intervention Within the United States*; and the 2016 volume: *Life on the Other Side of You*.

His military awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, three Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, five Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Commendation Medal, two Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Overseas Service Medal, Outstanding Volunteer Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Staff Badge, and the Airborne and Air Assault Badges.

YOUTH

WHISPER

Vinayak Menon told the *Stategizer*, "I am involved with the **Whisper Movement** at Lambert High School. The movement is a student-led effort to tackle mental health issues and promote student interactions."

● GRASSROOTS



Whisper is not just another club. Whisper is a mindset that anyone and everyone can take on and bring anywhere in their daily life. A mindset where you are not just being concerned with yourself, but you're on the lookout for other people. Our desire is to search to find the most effective methods of healthy

- GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT
- STUDENT-LED
- CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE BUILDING COMMUNITY TO CHANGE THE CULTURE BY BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT EACH OTHER.

communication and to share this knowledge and these skills with the next generation so that they may live their lives with the ability to relate to one another with respect, support, and love.

The Method

- Develop messaging that resonates
- Raise up activators, train and walk with them
- Kick off for 40-days
- Weekly school-wide activities for 6 weeks

The Results

- Help launch thousands of conversations
- Communicate effectively to thousands of students the opportunity to receive help and hope
- Change social climate of schools
- Equip students on how to activate change no matter where they are.

For more information about the Whisper Movement [CLICK HERE](#)

LOCAL NEWS



Congratulations to VINAYAK MENON, FCDAC YOUTH SECTOR LEADER, CHOSEN FOR U.S. DEBATE TEAM!

Vinayak Menon is the Youth Sector Leader for the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council and a junior at Lambert High School. He has been actively involved with the FCDAC for the past three years and represented his district at multiple CADCA national conventions. He is also a community contributor for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and advocates for substance prevention on behalf of youth. Outside of prevention work, Vinayak is an officer in his school's speech and debate team, being selected in 2021 for the U.S. Debate Team, and is part of the Georgia Future Business

Vinayak Menon was selected by the National Speech and Debate Association as a member of the U.S. Debate Team. It was reported in the September 27, 2021 edition of the *Forsyth County News* by reporter, Sabrina Kerns, that Menon, a Lambert High School junior, "officially joined the team this past month, meaning he will soon be competing in international competitions while representing the U.S. along with the other high school students."

"[I'm really looking forward to] those international competitions because I usually do debate on the national circuit, so I'm competing against Americans from places like New York," Menon said. "But I'm really excited and looking forward to competing with people who are not from the United States and hearing their perspectives and their opinions. That's just something you don't get to engage with that much, and that will be a really unique opportunity," Vinayak said in the article.

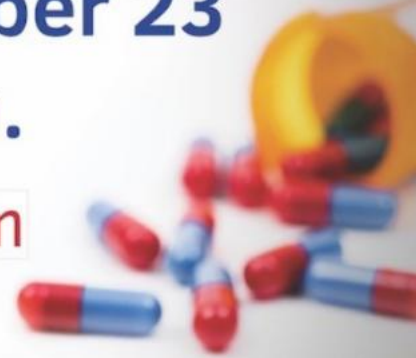
STATE NEWS

OCTOBER 23-Rx Drug Take Back Day!



Saturday, October 23
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

DEATakeBack.com



APRIL 2021 SUCCESSFUL TAKE BACK DAY!

According to *Get Smart About Drugs*, a DEA website, the April 2021 Take Back Day event brought in 839,543 lbs. (420 tons) of medication nationally. In Forsyth County, we brought in 206 pounds!

The DEA's next National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is October 23, 2021 – 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. across the state! Georgia citizens have 2 options on how to participate in the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. The 2 options are:

- Use a "Drive Up Location" on October 23rd between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. To locate a DEA National Take Back Initiative "Drive Up Location" please click on this link -

[DEA TAKE BACK DAY.](#)

- Your second option is to use one of the more than 230 Drug Drop Boxes across the state in your local law enforcement or pharmacy maintained drug drop box.

PLEASE be aware that the DEA website **DOES NOT** list all the Drug Drop Boxes across the state therefore to locate the nearest Drug Drop Box location click

[Prescription Drug Disposal](#)

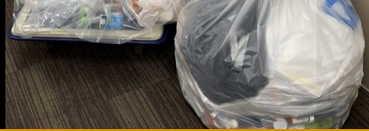
Additional event location:

Forsyth County Sheriff's

**206 POUNDS
OF UNUSED
PRESCRIPTION
DRUGS COLLECTED**



DEA NATIONAL
TAKEBACK



A TAKE BACK BOX LOOKS LIKE THIS.....



Forsyth County Sheriff's Office
South Precinct
2985 Ronald Regan Blvd.,
Cumming GA 30041

LET'S BEAT APRIL'S NUMBERS!

NATIONAL NEWS



'One Pill Can Kill' DEA CAMPAIGN

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than **93,000 people died from a drug overdose in the United States in 2020**. Synthetic opioids like **fentanyl**, the primary driver of this record increase, are frequently found in counterfeit pills.

In response to this crisis, the DEA announced on September 27, 2021, their campaign "One Pill Can Kill" to warn the American public of the alarming increase in the lethality and availability of fake prescription pills containing fentanyl and methamphetamine. "International and domestic criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills, falsely marketing them as legitimate prescription pills, and killing unsuspecting Americans. These counterfeit pills are easy to purchase, widely available, and often contain deadly doses of fentanyl. Pills purchased outside of a licensed pharmacy are illegal, dangerous, and potentially lethal. This alert does not apply to legitimate pharmaceutical medications prescribed by medical professionals and dispensed by pharmacists. DEA and its law enforcement partners are seizing deadly fake pills at record rates. **More than 9.5 million counterfeit pills were seized so far this year**, which is more than the last two years combined. Officials report a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit pills containing at least two milligrams of fentanyl, which is considered a deadly dose. The number of DEA-seized counterfeit pills with fentanyl has jumped nearly 430 percent since 2019, a staggering increase. DEA laboratory testing further reveals that today, two out of every five pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose. Additionally, methamphetamine is increasingly being pressed into counterfeit pills," according to the DEA press release.

For more about the "One Pill Kills" Campaign [CLICK HERE.](#)



COUNTERFEIT PILLS FACT SHEET

FAKE PRESCRIPTION PILLS • WIDELY AVAILABLE • INCREASINGLY LETHAL

CRIMINAL DRUG NETWORKS ARE FLOODING THE U.S. WITH DEADLY FAKE PILLS

- Criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills and falsely marketing them as legitimate prescription pills to deceive the American public.
- Counterfeit pills are easy to purchase, widely available, often contain fentanyl or methamphetamine, and can be deadly.
- Fake prescription pills are easily accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms—making them available to anyone with a smartphone, including teens and young adults.
- Many counterfeit pills are made to look like prescription opioids such as oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), and alprazolam (Xanax®); or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall®).



Authentic oxycodone M30 tablets



*Counterfeit oxycodone M30 tablets containing fentanyl

COUNTERFEIT PILLS OFTEN CONTAIN FENTANYL AND ARE MORE LETHAL THAN EVER BEFORE

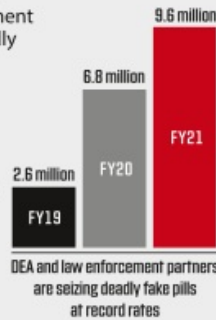
- The number of DEA-seized counterfeit pills with fentanyl has jumped nearly 430 percent since 2019.
- Officials report a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit pills containing at least 2 mg of fentanyl, which is considered a deadly dose.
- Drug traffickers are using fake pills to exploit the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse. CDC reports more than 93,000 people died last year of an overdose in the U.S., the highest ever recorded.
- Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid most commonly found in counterfeit pills, is the primary driver in this alarming increase in overdose deaths.



DEA lab testing reveals that 2 out of every 5 pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose.

COUNTERFEIT PILLS ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE ACROSS EVERY STATE IN THE COUNTRY

- DEA and its law enforcement partners are seizing deadly fake pills at record rates.
- More than 9.5 million counterfeit pills were seized so far this year, which is more than the last two years combined.
- Counterfeit pills have been identified in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.



- Drug trafficking is also inextricably linked with violence.
- This year alone, DEA seized more than 2,700 firearms in connection with drug trafficking investigations—a 30 percent increase since 2019.

THE ONLY SAFE MEDICATIONS ARE ONES THAT COME FROM LICENSED AND ACCREDITED MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

- DEA warns that pills purchased outside of a licensed pharmacy are illegal, dangerous, and potentially lethal.



For more information about counterfeit pills, go to www.DEA.gov/onepill

Data as of September 2021

The Drug Enforcement Administration ensures the safety and health of the American public by fighting against violent criminal drug networks and foreign cartels trafficking in illicit drugs. To accomplish that mission, the Drug Enforcement Administration employs approximately 10,000 men and women throughout the world – Special Agents, diversion investigators, intelligence analysts, and chemists – across 239 domestic offices in 23 U.S. divisions and 91 foreign offices in 68 countries.

SAMHSA Awards \$17.8 Million for Mental Health Awareness Training

"The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released 145 grant awards totaling \$17.8 million to help communities increase mental health awareness among individuals

who interact with people who are experiencing or exhibiting symptoms of a mental health disorder and refer them to appropriate services. Each grant recipient will receive up to \$125,000 for the first year of this five-year grant program," according to the September 9, 2021 press statement.

"The Mental Health Awareness Training grant program will train school personnel, emergency first responders, law enforcement, veterans, armed services members and their families to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders, particularly serious mental illness and/or serious emotional disturbances, to respond safely and appropriately. Participants will also learn about the available resources in their community that they might share with those individuals with whom they interact," the article said.

READ MORE ABOUT THESE AWARDS [HERE](#)

SAMHSA Awards \$123 Million in Grants to Combat the Nation's Overdose Epidemic

Six grant awards adding up to \$123 Million were made on Monday, September 13, 2021, by The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The six grantees programs will use the grants over several years to provide multifaceted support to communities and health care providers as the nation continue to combat the overdose epidemic.

"According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the 12 months ending January 2021 recorded **more than 94,000 fatal overdoses**, an almost **31 percent increase** over those recorded in the 12 months ending January 2020," the article stated.

To read about the six grantees and the type of treatments being funded [CLICK HERE.](#)

FYI

STRESS MANAGEMENT

STRESS. Everyone experiences stress; you are not alone! In fact, I think we can all agree that we are **living in unprecedented times** in 2021. Every institution, every person **IN THE WORLD** has been affected at the same time by the **COVID Pandemic**. Regardless of how you view the **worldwide reaction**, and some say overreaction by world governments and leaders, over the last year, we can agree, our lives have changed dramatically. When **stress** is frequent, intense, and **lasts for long durations** it puts the body under a strain that renders it unable to function. We are seeing large segments of the population under such duress. This issue of the *Strategizer* highlights the fact that mental illness is a disease like a physical illness and everyone is susceptible given the host of risk factors in people's lives. **If there was ever a time to make a personalized plan to avoid and or how we can best cope with stress, it is NOW!**

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** has some wonderful resources for all of us- the general population, caregivers/parents, and many of our readers, our Healthcare Professionals.

Our dear Healthcare Professionals:

Check out these resources and keep the phone numbers at close hand. We know professionals often put themselves, their needs, and their health last. **WE NEED YOU TO STAY HEALTHY PLEASE!** NAMI's website

provides a section called: **Your Journey** There you will find articles about stress tailored to your own self-identified role. Roles can overlap!

- Frontline Professional
- Health Care Professionals
- Public Safety Professionals
- Stories from Your Peers
- Individuals with Mental Illness

- Family Members and Caregivers
- Kids, Teens and Young Adults
- Veterans & Active Duty
- Identity and Cultural Dimensions



**HOW
STRESS
AFFECTS
US**

**WHEN ARE YOU MOST
SUSCEPTIBLE?**

People are **most susceptible to stress** when they are:

- Not getting enough sleep
- Not having a network of support
- Experiencing a major life change such as



We know

Stress affects your entire body, mentally as well as physically. Some common signs include:

- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Jaw pain
- Changes in appetite
- Frequent mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling overwhelmed

- Experiencing a major life change such as moving, the death of a loved one, starting a new job, having a child or getting married
- Experiencing poor physical health
- Not eating well

When experiencing long-term stress, your brain is exposed to **increased levels of a hormone called cortisol**. This exposure weakens your immune system, making it easier for you to get sick.

Stress can contribute to worsening symptoms of your mental illness. Knowing what situations cause it is the first step in coping with this very common experience.

Ways to Reduce Stress

Developing a **personalized approach** to reducing stress can help you manage your mental health condition and improve your quality of life. Once you've learned what your triggers are, experiment with **copng strategies**. Some common ones include:

- **Accept your needs.** Recognize what your triggers are. What situations make you feel physically and mentally agitated? Once you know this, you can avoid them when it's reasonable to, and cope when you can't.
- **Manage your time.** **Prioritizing your activities** can help you use your time well. Making a day-to-day schedule helps ensure you don't feel overwhelmed by everyday tasks and deadlines.
- **Practice relaxation.** Deep breathing, prayer/meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation are good ways to calm yourself. Taking a break to refocus can have benefits beyond the immediate moment.
- **Exercise daily.** Schedule time to walk outside, bike, or join a dance class. Daily exercise naturally produces stress-relieving hormones.
- **Set aside time for yourself.** Schedule something that makes you feel good. It might be reading a book, go to the movies, or take your dog for a walk.
- **Eat well.** **Eating unprocessed foods**, like whole grains, vegetables, and fresh fruit is the foundation for a healthy body and mind. Eating well can also help stabilize your mood.
- **Get enough sleep.** Symptoms of some mental health conditions, like mania in bipolar disorder, can be triggered by getting too little sleep.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** They don't actually reduce stress: in fact, they often worsen it. If you're struggling with substance abuse, educate yourself and **get help**.
- **Talk to someone.** Whether to friends, family, a counselor, or a support group, airing out and talking can help. Consider attending a [NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group](#).



Getting Help

If the steps you've taken aren't working, it may be time to share them with your mental health professional. He or she can help you pinpoint specific events that trigger you and help you create an action plan to change them.

To read the series of articles in their entirety [CLICK HERE](#)

WHEN IT IS MORE SERIOUS



LIVING WITH

WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

According to NAMI, "1 in every 20

adults is living with a serious mental health condition such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or long-term recurring major depression. Unlike diabetes or cancer there is no medical test that can provide a diagnosis of mental illness, but **getting a diagnosis** is a useful step in receiving effective treatment and improving your quality of life."

Why a Diagnosis Matters is discussed in the NAMI article, "Understanding your Diagnosis." It states, "A medical professional determines a diagnosis by interviewing you about your history of symptoms. Doctors use their experience to determine how your set of symptoms fit into what we know about mental health."

"A diagnosis is only as good as the treatment it leads to. Whether or not you feel confident in your diagnosis, it's important to reevaluate occasionally," the article pointed out.

"A mental health professional makes the best diagnosis possible with the information they have. **Over time, as you work together, he or she will observe you, listen to you, and gather new information to help refine your diagnosis.** Your diagnosis is the beginning of an investigation into how to make your life better," the article said.

For the complete article [Go Here.](#)



"Trying to tell the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy," according to the NAMI article, "Warning Signs and Symptoms."

Each illness has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior, or personality ("lack of insight" or anosognosia)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains")
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- Intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

Knowing warning signs can help let you know if you need to speak to a professional. Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help.

Reach out to your health insurance, primary care doctor, or state/county mental health authority for more resources.

Contact the [NAMI HelpLine](#) to find out what services and supports are available in your community.

On the Calendar

OCTOBER

- October 5 National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding
- October 10 World Mental Health Day
- October 23 DEA Drug Take-Back Day
- October 23-31 Red Ribbon Week
- October 28 LightsOnAfterschool is the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs

NOVEMBER

- November 3 CADCA President and CEO, General Price, Guest Speaker FCDAC Monthly Meeting
- November 25 Thanksgiving Day

