



# MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 18, 2020

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## **Third Week of County Mental Health Awareness Month All About Screening**

*KNOXVILLE, Tenn.*— Knox County continues to recognize national Mental Health Awareness Month, focusing this week on mental health screening.

Many people do not seek treatment in the early stages of mental illness because they don't recognize the symptoms. The delays in treatment for mental illnesses are longer than for many other health conditions; the delay in treating anxiety disorders can take as long as 23 years.

To help combat this problem, the Mental Health Association (MHA) provides several online screening tools—which are anonymous, free and private—meant to provide a quick snapshot of a person's mental health. Found [here](#), available mental health tests include depression, anxiety, psychosis, bipolar, eating disorder, PTSD and addiction. Tests specific to parents and youth are also available to help determine whether emotions, attention or behaviors might be signs of a problem.

“For someone battling a stigma, taking one of these mental health screens might be their way of acknowledging, for the first time, they're dealing with something they can't manage on their own,” said Mayor Jacobs. “A screening or a test can be a helpful tool for starting a conversation with your doctor or a loved one about your mental health.”

About 65 percent of the people who took a screening at MHAScreening.org scored moderate to severe in their chosen testing area and of those, more than 60 percent had never been previously diagnosed.

When deciding to seek help, knowing what resources are available and where to start can be overwhelming. However, online screening has a major key component: providing the participant with information about the next steps to take based on the results.

Additionally, the Mental Health Association of East Tennessee operates the local Peer Recovery Call Center (865-584-9125) can also help. Each of the center's staff member is a certified peer recovery specialist who is also in recovery from a mental health issue. They are available to help a person find the best treatment resource available to them.

“The thing I want to be clear as we observe Mental Health Awareness Month is that there's nothing wrong with reaching out for help,” said Mayor Jacobs. “I hope that if someone is struggling with a mental health or emotional issue they don't wait until they are truly suffering to do something about it.”

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