

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Mental Health plays a significant role in the field of physical therapy and can manifest in various ways. Physical therapists frequently encounter signs of depression, anxiety, and other psychological conditions, often in connection with physical injuries. However, physical therapy itself can serve as a powerful tool in supporting mental health through movement, structured exercise, and meaningful social interactions. Below are some ways physical therapists can actively promote mental well-being in their practice.



1

Recognize Signs

Learn to identify signs of mental health challenges in your patients. Recognizing these struggles is essential in determining whether additional support or referral is needed.

Stress Reduction

Engaging in physical activity through physical therapy can help reduce stress levels. Exercise is shown to reduce cortisol levels, thus promoting relaxation.

2



3

Endorphin Release

Physical therapy often involves exercise and movement, which can stimulate the release of endorphins (“mood enhancers”) in the brain.

Distraction and Focus

Physical therapy exercises and activities can distract positively from negative thoughts and worries. By engaging, focus is required, which redirects attention from stressors.

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Social Interaction

Many physical therapy sessions are conducted in group settings, providing an opportunity for social interaction and support.