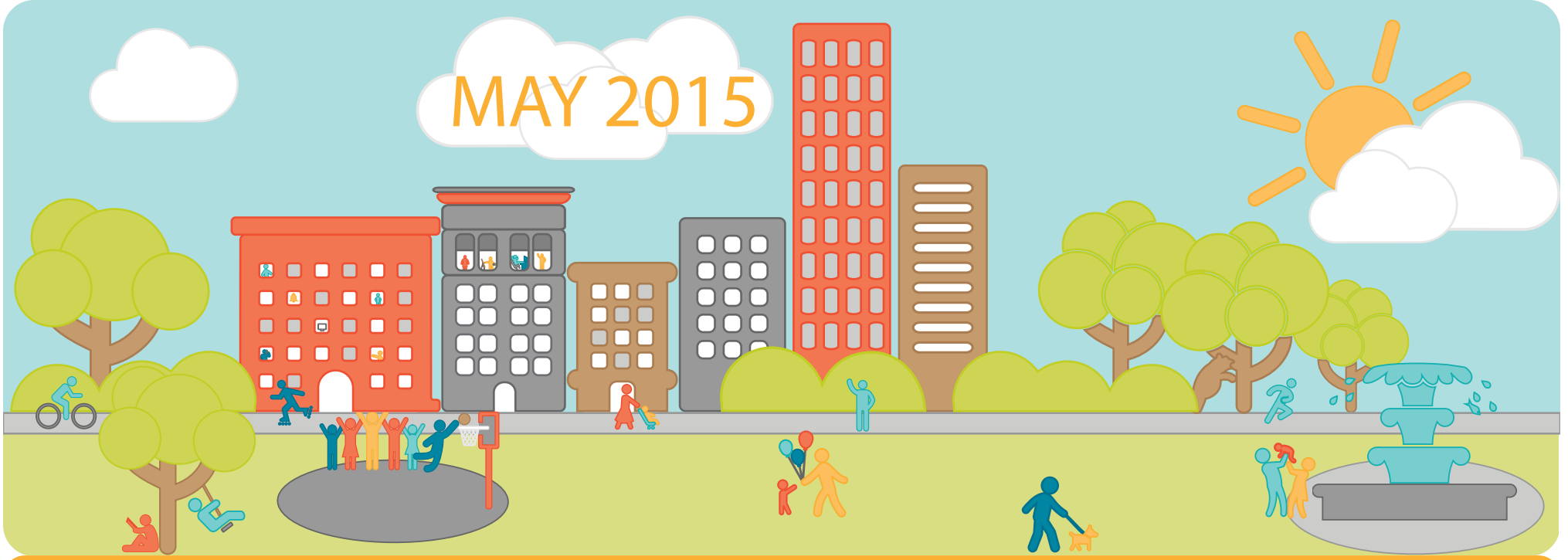


MAY 2015



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2015



**1** Switch up your exercise regimen. Try a dance class or a new sport. Exercising with other people can enhance its stress-reducing benefits.

**2** Try something new and creative. Art projects can be relaxing and promote well-being.

**3** Feed your brain. Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as wild salmon, are linked to decreased rates of depression and schizophrenia.

**4** Feeling groggy? Take a nap! Napping can improve your ability to work and perform daily tasks.

**5** Share an apple or some nuts with your teacher or mentor. They are good sources of vitamin E, which helps maintain the thinking functions of the brain.

**6** Don't wonder about your mental health! Take a screen at [MHAScreening.org](http://MHAScreening.org) and get the tools you need.

**7** Craving sugar? Try swapping sweets for complex carbohydrates, like fruits, veggies, and whole grains. This may help boost activity or serotonin, an important chemical in the brain.

**8** What's for dinner? Foods rich in vitamin B12 and folic acid - such as grilled chicken with a side of broccoli - can help prevent mood disorders.

**9** Travel to a new place or try something you've always been a little scared of - do something outside of your comfort zone to give yourself a sense of satisfaction that you can handle life's challenges.

**10** Stop and smell the roses...literally. Or pick up some flowers for Mom. Studies show that being surrounded by nature is a mood booster.

**11** Get connected - share a meal with someone or pick up the phone. Studies show that good relationships make the difference between very happy and less happy people.

**12** Hold the door for a stranger or sign up to volunteer for your favorite charity. Studies show that random acts of kindness increase release of oxytocin - the "feel good" hormone.

**13** Consider donating time or money to a worthy cause. By helping others you can foster a sense of belonging and remind yourself that you are relatively lucky.

**14** Feeling in a rut? Do something silly and laugh at something you did. Remember, everyone deserves a break and we're often hardest on ourselves.

**15** Get comfortable and read a good book. Reading can help relieve stress and tension.

**16** Write down and share a few things that you are grateful for. People who keep track of their gratitude are more upbeat and have fewer physical aches and pains than others.

**17** Watch a comedy or visit a funny website. Laughter boosts the immune system and can reduce anxiety.

**18** Call someone close to you and tell them how much you appreciate them. Thanking them for their support can boost your mood and theirs.

**19** Swap regular coffee for decaf or freshly brewed tea. While a little caffeine can improve brain function, reducing your overall caffeine intake supports sleep.

**20** Take the stairs instead of the elevator, or park your car farther away from the store. Even small additions of exercise throughout the day can decrease tension and improve sleep.

**21** Add some green to your office or home (if you don't have much of a green thumb, try a cactus). Seeing plants can reduce stress and anxiety.

**22** Keep Cool, Be Mindful. Try this mindfulness technique: Eat an orange slowly, segment by segment. Focusing on the taste, touch, sight and smell of the orange will help reduce stress.

**23** Make a list of activities you enjoy. Set aside time each week to focus on yourself and what makes you happy.

**24** Aim to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep tonight. People who get enough sleep are more likely to succeed at their daily tasks.

**25** Enjoy Memorial Day! Make sure to enjoy 15 minutes of sunshine, and apply sunscreen. Sunlight synthesizes Vitamin D, which experts believe is a mood elevator.

**26** To deal with a difficult task, write out steps you can take to complete it. People facing stress feel less depressed after problem-solving.

**27** Give yourself a break! Take 10 minutes out of your day for a walk. Small breaks (and exercise) improve your ability to deal with stress.

**28** Give yoga a try. Stretching and other forms of exercise help relieve tension caused by stress.

**29** Take a break from social media. Looking at social media can raise your levels of anxiety.

**30** Take a few minutes to breathe deeply - in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try this technique: Pretend you're taking a giant whiff of a bouquet of flowers, then pretend to blow out a candle.

**31** Don't go it alone. Tell your goals to someone you trust and ask them to help you stick with a plan. Studies show that social support helps you achieve your goals.

**Bonus: Play a Brain Game**

Can you find the following items in the scene above?

- An angry bear
- Fish
- Someone reading a book
- Twelve perfect circles (heads don't count)

1. The bear is next to the trunk of the second tree from the right. 2. The fish is with the water droplets on the right side of the fountain. 3. The person reading a book is red and sitting against the tree in the front left. 4. From left to right, there are 2 complete circles in each tree on the left, the two big trees, the basketball, and there are 5 total complete circles in the trees on the right side of the image.