

Mental health emphasized during May

By JEFF BUDLONG
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The pandemic has changed daily life for nearly everyone, and that can manifest itself in a number of ways. Something hospitals across the nation have seen is an increase in mental health issues as people adjust to a new normal.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and Wallowa County Health Care District community health clinical social worker Kathryn Kemp shared some ways to identify mental health issues and ways they can be addressed.

Kemp identified three main factors the pandemic presented affecting mental health:

- Sense of isolation: Social isolation breeds sadness and anxiety.
- Grief: The loss of loved ones and ways of life and activities.
- Stress response: When threatened, the body's response can be to ramp up or shutdown, and the pandemic has kept it in this state for a greater length of time.

"We can become chronically activated or chronically shutdown, and for a lot of people having an amped up nervous system can leave them feeling irritable and feeling more anxiety each day," she said. "Little things can feel more overwhelming than usual, and people can get angry with others who are close to them."

A chronic shut down state may include feelings of apathy or numbness, Kemp said. Individuals can oscillate between the states frequently, even during the same day.

Learning to deal with the stresses is something everyone has had to do during the pandemic and led to a greater need to assist a growing population looking for help with mental health issues.

Kemp's position is new and provides more support for both patients and health care workers. She provides in-patient mental health coordination and support in addition to out-patient mental health counseling through the Wallowa Memorial Medical Clinic.

Kemp said the pandemic also put people into new caregiving roles, but it is important to remember to take time for yourself. "I think of the instructions you get when you are on a plane," she said. "You need to put your own oxygen mask on first before you can help others."

The pandemic led many people to address mental health issues while bringing a more shared understanding, but there still is a stigma in society when it comes to asking for help, Kemp said.

"There isn't any shame in reaching out and getting the help you need," Kemp said. "We are all experienc-



Wallowa County Chieftain/File Photo

COVID-19 has left many people wrestling not only with economic and social issues, but with depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns in Wallowa County and across the nation.

ing this stressful thing."

Techniques in practice

Kemp said small things can make a big difference in a person's daily life to deal with a variety of stressors. She suggested looking for patterns that may put your body and brain on edge, and looking for glimmers throughout the day.

"Start by having compassion for yourself," she said. "All of the emotions are normal human responses to a stressful world."

Things that bring people calm and signal safety are important when trying to cope with difficult situations, Kemp said. It helps the nervous system move back into a calm and connected mode.

"It can be something as simple as the warmth of the first sip of coffee or a smile from a child or coworker," she said. "Take a moment to relax into whatever positive feeling

that glimmer gives you."

Kemp also recommends keeping a list of personal anchors that are easily accessible throughout the day to utilize when someone is feeling overwhelmed. Anchors can include memories that bring a sense of comfort, or putting people, places or activities that bring joy. Include goals that make people excited for the future.

Professional help

Kemp said anyone experiencing emotions that are hard to deal with should reach out to medical professionals in their area.

"Getting connected with a mental health counselor or other support is a great place to start," she said.

Individuals feeling hopeless should contact their health care provider or call the local mental health crisis line. The Wallowa County Crisis Line is available 24/7 at 541-398-1175 and is free and confidential.



Leon Werdinger Photography/Contributed Photo

Beth Gibans tends vegetables for sale at a stand at the farmers market in Joseph. The Beth Gibans Memorial Producer Fund Award — named in honor of Gibans, who died in June, awarded more than \$12,000 to Wallowa County farmers.

Farmers market begins 20th year on May 28

By ANN BLOOM
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The 2022 season of the Wallowa County Farmers Market marks its 20th anniversary.

It was in 2002 that the late Beth Gibans, a local organic producer, and a few others had the idea for a market that would feature fresh, locally sourced produce for sale and include artisans and craftsmen offering their products to visitors and community members.

This year, the market is back without the COVID restrictions of the past two years. The first day of the market is Saturday, May 28, running from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The market is in the parking lot of Stein's Distillery, in Joseph. The market is open, rain or shine, every Saturday until Oct. 8. The first market of the season is always the spring planting event with starts for sale.

"Twenty years ago, my former boss and mentor, Beth Gibans, started the Wallowa County Farmers Market as a venue to share fresh, local produce with our community," said Caitlin Rushlow, farmers market president. "What started with a couple of women grew to dozens of vendors joined by local musicians and community partners. As I remember her passing one year ago, I'm

proud to support the market and continue this tradition, not just for our community, but in honor of her."

Many of the Saturday markets will feature live entertainment by local musicians. There will be vendors selling jewelry, photographs of the Wallowa County area, soaps and lotions, bison products, fresh bread, produce, flowers, craft items and more.

Market manager Jessica Bogard reminds people that anyone who is interested in being a vendor can sign up anytime.

"We encourage people to people to sign up even if they can only attend a few times," she said. "New faces and new vendors add to the market's vibrancy."

The market also features a co-op booth where home gardeners with excess produce can sell vegetables and flowers.

Throughout the market season, special events planned include a pie sale, a strawberry shortcake sale and a cider pressing in October.

The market also offers a Friends of the Market and a sponsorship program for anyone interested in supporting the market.

For more information about the market or to become a vendor, email :wallowacountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com :or visit the website at wallowacountyfarmersmarket.com.

Coleman Oil Wallowa Cardlock is NOW OPEN

- Conveniently Located
- Accepting all Major Credit/Debit and CFN Cards
- Easily Accessible for Semi trucks, Campers and RV's
- Non-Ethanol Premium
- 24/7 Fueling

Coleman Oil 71051 HWY 82
Wallowa, OR 97885
888-799-2000
www.colemanoil.com

GET TO KNOW OUR PROVIDERS!

Dr. Wes Baker

Dr. Baker has been with Winding Waters since the fall of 2018 after completing medical school and residency at OHSU. He now provides a multitude of services including primary care from birth to death, hospital and ER care, prenatal care and deliveries. Visit our website or scan the QR code to learn more!

Winding Waters Medical, Dental & Mental Health Care for Our Community 541-426-4502

Enterprise Joseph Wallowa

Happy Memorial Day! May 30th, 2022

Honoring all who served!

EARLY SPACE RESERVATION DEADLINE

for advertising is 5pm Thursday, May 26th.
Ad copy is due on Friday, May 27th at 10am.
All ads must be approved to print Tuesday May 31st at 11am.

Wallowa County CHIEFTAIN

JAC's Innovative Sales and Marketing Solutions
Contact Jennifer Cooney TODAY!
jacs.isms@gmail.com • 541-805-9630

True Value BARGAINS OF THE MONTH

While supplies last.

18.99

Kingsford® 2 pk. 20 lb. Charcoal T 250 987 1

SAVE \$7 OR MORE

M-F 8AM-5:30PM • SAT 8AM-5PM • SUN 9AM-3PM

Hurricane Creek Road Enterprise, Oregon 541-426-3116

WALLOWA COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS BEHIND EVERY PROJECT IS A True Value Sale Good Thru May 31st