The STANDARD.

A Publication of the VMI Cadet Peer Educators

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Are You Aware...

Raising Mental Health Awareness on Post

Why should you know more about mental health? Here's Why:

College students who feel well, preform well on tests, exams, VFT, and any other activity they are involved in. Feeling well boosts self-confidence and can even fortify positive friendships.
BUT you're still wondering...

WHY DOES THAT MATTER?

- Everyone has mental health.
- 1 in 4 young adults (that's YOU) experience a mental health issue *yet* many of them do not ask for help because of ***negative perceptions.***

For many years there has been a stigma that surrounds mental health and help-seeking. This stigma can keep individuals *just like you* from seeking help and it fuels the desire to hide any problems from friends and family. You are in the perfect position to SAY SOMETHING to your BRs and other Cadets, to support your friends because ***you can make a DIFFERENCE.***

MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK
October 6-12, 2013
www.nami.org/MIAW

Let's look at some of the facts about mental health:

According to the CDC, mental health is
" A state of well-being in which a person realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."

College is a time where stress is elevated as you are learning to navigate your studies, your VMI requirements, and your future. *Some COLLEGE STRESSORS that can impact your mental health are:*
relationships, lonelines, academics, financial stress, sleep disturbances, body image concerns, alcohol and other drug use, grief, veteran concerns, concerns over your future, overcommittment, and many more.

IT'S TIME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

IN FOCUS

Would You Have Guessed That...

» 1 in 3 college students reported prolonged periods of depression

» 50 % of college students rate their mental health below average or even poor

»30% reported problems with school work due to a mental health issue

» 1 in 7 students reported engaging in abnormally reckless behavior

» 60% of adults received no treatment in the last year.

- Mental Health is important and it affects every cadet on POST and everyone worldwide.

- Mental Health Conditions are more common than you think, and they are very real. Some can be short and mild while others are persistant.

- MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS ARE NOT A RESULT OF WEAKNESS, RATHER A RESULT OF A COMBINATION OF BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS.

- Asking for Help is OKAY. Many cadets improve when they seek help early, before symptoms worsen.

IF YOU OR A FRIEND NOTICE SIGNS OF A MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN...

→ TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST
→ SHARE YOUR CONCERNS (Share with your friend OR Consult with the Institute Counselors)
"I've noticed you're ...."
"I've noticed you aren't yourself lately. Is there something troubling you?"
→ OFFER SUPPORT (i.e. "Can I help you make an appt at the Center for Cadet Counseling?")
→ CONTACT THE PROFESSIONALS:
- The Center for Cadet Counseling (2nd Floor Post Hosp) call: (540) 464 - 7667 or come down
- VMI Post Hospital, located behind the Mess Hall.

All Information Above Cited From www.nami.org and www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth

FLU VACCINE: MYTH vs REALITY:

There is no denying that many vaccines are under scrutiny over the past years. With the increase in public attention, it can be nearly impossible to tell fact from fiction when it comes to vaccinations.

As flu season approaches, Let's look at some of the common Myths regarding the vaccine:

Myth - "The Flu Is Just A Bad Cold"
Reality - While the flu may cause symptoms similar to a cold, the flu can be deadly. In the US alone, 36,000 people fie and more than 200,000 people enter the hospital – all due to the Flu.

Myth: You Can Catch The Flwu From The Flu Vaccination
Reality. The flu vaccine is made from an inactive virus, meaning that it cannot transmit the infection. Loop-Hole – it takes 1-2 weeks for the flu vaccine to fully protect an individual from the flu. If someone you know, or you, has been sick after getting vaccinated, it is likely that that person was going to get sick regardless.

Myth: The Vaccination Is The Only Thing You Need To Protect Yourself From The Flu
FICTION – the vaccine is a very important step to protect yourself during peak flu seasons, however there are other steps you can take. Washing your hands frequently and properly as well as avoid those cadets who have the flu are two extra measures you can take to ensure your health.

Myth: You Do Not Need To Get The Flu Shot Every Year
FICTION. As with most viruses, influenza mutates annually. Getting the annual flu shot ensures that you are receiving the most updated version of the shot and to the strains that are most likely to be prevalent this year.

Because of the nature of close living quarters and shared bathrooms (i.e. barracks, dorms, hotels, etc.), cadets are at an increased risk for catching the flu. These viruses can spread through vapor droplets which reside on doorknobs, keyboards, faucets, and anything else an infected person contacts.

To protect yourself and your BRs from the Flu Virus, go down to the Infirmary during their Flu Clinic in late October and put your knowledge of the flu to good use. Get Vaccinated.

For more information visit the VMI Post Hospital.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: *Navigating Tough Decisions On Your Own*

As cadets at VMI, we are constantly bombarded with information, commands, instructions, and other educational experiences that impact our daily lives. Ideally, we use those experiences and that knowledge gained to empower our decisions. Every cadet at VMI has been raised in a different environment with a range of experiences, therefore, we all have our own individual perspective, and that tends to influence our decisions. In particular, they impact our decisions regarding alcohol.

With Ring Figure just around the corner, many of us will be faced with a personal decision about alcohol use. The main factor in this decision should be our own personal values as well as the legacy we want to leave at VMI. We all know the law… alcohol is illegal for those under 21 years of age and abstinence is always an option. However, there are more factors at play.

It isn't a mystery that underage drinking, though illegal, is common at colleges across the nation. While many cadets want to be just another college student at times, the decision to come to VMI was also a decision to participate in something different than the 'ordinary' college. With that charge and the higher likelihood of a costly penalty, cadets should take thorough care to evaluate their decisions regarding alcohol consumption, regardless of age. Another factor to consider as a cadet at VMI is that of commission. For those seeking commissions with the military, the risk for losing a chance of contracting if caught with or under the influence of alcohol is steep.

How can you make an educated decision? As always, knowledge is powerful. Know the effects of alcohol on you individually (factors such as your age, gender, ethnicity, and medications can alter the effects) and know your limit to stay in a low-risk range. There are other things such as eating carbohydrates and proteins, always having a 100% sober driver, and spacing alcoholic beverages with water or juice that can protect you and your friends if choosing to drink. An additional consideration is your brain development. Your frontal lobe continues to develop well into your college years – a time when you are supposed to be retaining information and growing in knowledge. It would be a waste to negate that process by damaging your neurological processing.

Finally, the decision to consume alcohol is yours and yours alone. If you choose to drink, understand that this was your decision and take ownership of the consequences. While the song might be catchy, you cannot "blame it (all) on the alcohol."

If you want more information on the health implications, contact the VMI Infirmary. If you are concerned about the drinking patterns of yourself or a friend, contact the Center for Cadet Counseling, located above the Infirmary.

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