



## **Men's Health Month: Prioritizing Wellness Inside and Out**

June marks the beginning of summer — a season filled with sunshine, outdoor activities, family gatherings, vacations, and time spent making memories with the people we love. While summer often encourages us to get active and enjoy life, it also serves as an important reminder that June is Men's Health Month.

When discussing health, it is important to recognize that wellness goes far beyond physical appearance or building strength. True health includes caring for both the body and the mind. Men's Health Month is an opportunity to encourage conversations surrounding mental health awareness, self-worth, emotional well-being, and the importance of self-care. Men should know that it is okay to ask for help, take up space, rest, and prioritize themselves when needed. Life does not have to be perfectly figured out to still have value and purpose.

Improving overall health can begin with small but meaningful lifestyle choices. Some healthy habits to consider include engaging in at least three hours of physical activity each week, getting adequate sleep, making healthier food choices, attending routine medical appointments, and seeking medical attention when something feels wrong or concerning (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2024).

Many men delay or avoid doctor visits due to cultural expectations, busy schedules, or discomfort discussing health concerns. Unfortunately, ignoring warning signs can lead to more serious health complications over time (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion [ODPHP], n.d.).

This month, take time to check in on yourself and the men around you. Encouragement, support, and open conversations can make a lasting impact.

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## **2026 Arkansas Prevention Summit - June 23-24**

Prevention professionals from across the state will gather at the Benton Event Center on June 23-24 for the Arkansas Prevention Summit, a two-day educational event focused on strengthening communities and advancing prevention efforts throughout Arkansas.

The summit is designed for behavioral health and prevention professionals, educators, law enforcement personnel, coalition members, and community leaders who are committed to reducing substance misuse and promoting healthier communities. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from local and national speakers on important topics including prevention funding opportunities, community partnerships, collaboration strategies, data-driven decision making, and sustaining long-term prevention initiatives.

Participants may also earn up to 10 continuing education hours through summit attendance.

For registration information or additional details, please contact the MidSOUTH Prevention Team at [prevention@midsouth.ualr.edu](mailto:prevention@midsouth.ualr.edu).

## **International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking - June 26th**

Each year on June 26, communities around the world observe the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as World Drug Day. Established by the United Nations in 1987, this day was created to strengthen global action and cooperation in preventing substance misuse and combating illicit drug trafficking.

This observance serves as a reminder that substance misuse impacts individuals, families, and entire communities. Drug misuse is not only a public health issue, but also a social and economic concern that can affect mental health, education, relationships, safety, and long-term community well-being.

Organizations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continue to emphasize the importance of prevention, education, treatment, recovery support, and compassionate, evidence-based approaches when addressing substance misuse. Recent campaigns have highlighted the need to invest in prevention efforts, reduce stigma surrounding addiction, and support individuals and families through recovery and mental health resources.

Communities can recognize this day by participating in prevention education activities, youth outreach events, awareness campaigns, and conversations that promote healthy decision-making and supportive environments. Prevention begins with education, open communication, strong community partnerships, and ensuring individuals know they are not alone.

At RSI, we remain committed to supporting prevention initiatives that educate, empower, and strengthen our communities throughout Region 4 and beyond. Together, we can continue building healthier futures through awareness, prevention, and support

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## **Understanding Behavioral Health Vulnerabilities in the LGBTQIA+ Community**

In behavioral health and substance misuse prevention, understanding the unique challenges of the populations we serve is vital. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community face distinct stressors rooted in societal discrimination, bias, and marginalization (Shaikh et al., 2024). These external pressures create a hostile environment that significantly drives up behavioral health risks.

### **Intersecting Risks: Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Violence**

The psychological impact of persistent discrimination and identity-related distress frequently manifests as severe mental health disorders. Individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community experience elevated rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidality compared to their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Shaikh et al., 2024).

To cope with this chronic psychological distress and lack of affirming support, many individuals turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, resulting in a disproportionately high risk for substance misuse (Brown et al., 2024). Research indicates that sexual and gender minorities are significantly more likely to use



alcohol and illicit drugs to self-medicate or escape the weight of structural stigma (Brown et al., 2024; Shaikh et al., 2024).

Compounding these behavioral health struggles, the LGBTQIA+ community is highly vulnerable to being victims of violent crimes. Societal prejudice frequently translates into physical, verbal, and sexual victimization, as well as high rates of hate crimes and domestic violence. This persistent threat of trauma and violence further fuels co-occurring substance use disorders and post-traumatic stress.

### **Building Pathways to Healing**

Addressing these disparities requires tailored, trauma-informed prevention and care. By fostering inclusive environments, expanding culturally competent mental health resources, and directly countering discrimination, we can mitigate these severe risk factors and promote resilience, recovery, and long-term wellness for everyone in our community. **References**

- Brown, E., Abdelmassih, E., & Hanna, F. (2024). Evaluating the determinants of substance use in LGBTQIA+ adolescents: A scoping review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 21(12), 1579. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21121579>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). About physical activity. <https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/about/index.html>
- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Men's health. Healthy People 2030. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/mens-health>
- Shaikh, A., Kamble, P., Daulatabad, V., Singhal, A., Madhusudhan, U., & John, N. A. (2024). Mental health challenges within the LGBTQ community: A societal imperative. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 13(9), 3529-3535. [https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc\\_321\\_24](https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_321_24)
- Time and Date. (n.d.). International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. <https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/international-day-against-drug-abuse>
- United Nations. (n.d.). International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, 26 June. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-drug-abuse-day>
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). Drugs. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drugs/index-new.html>

### **Resources in Northeast Arkansas**

**Research Solutions, Inc.** offers education, speakers, information, and training to help support the needs of the community through our prevention programs. RSI is located at 2224 Conrad Drive in Jonesboro. Phone 870.275.7989. You can also email us at [info@ResearchSolutionsInc.org](mailto:info@ResearchSolutionsInc.org)

**NEA Divine Intervention** provides treatment for substance use disorders, support for recovery through meetings and sober living facilities, and peer support services. NEA Divine programs are not faith based and are welcoming to all. Services are inclusive and welcoming to the community. Located at 2222 Spence Circle in Jonesboro. Phone 870.206.8406.

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## **Community Connections: Join RSI in Downtown Jonesboro on June 13!**

Research Solutions, Inc. (RSI) is committed to building healthier, stronger communities through education, prevention, and meaningful partnerships. On Saturday, June 13, our team will be participating in two exciting community events taking place in Downtown Jonesboro, and we invite you to stop by and connect with us!

### **Juneteenth Community Fair**

RSI is proud to sponsor the Juneteenth Community Fair, a celebration of freedom, culture, history, and community at Parker Park Community Center 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Attendees will have the opportunity to visit our booth to learn more about prevention resources, community programs, and wellness initiatives available throughout Region 4. We look forward to celebrating alongside community members and partners while sharing information that promotes healthy and thriving communities.

### **NEA PRIDEfest**

RSI is also sponsoring NEA PRIDEfest, an event focused on community, inclusion, and connection. Our team will be available to provide educational materials, prevention resources, and information about local services available to individuals and families throughout Northeast Arkansas. We are proud to support opportunities that bring people together and strengthen community engagement. Join us in downtown Jonesboro from noon – 9:00 PM.

### **Stop By and Visit Us!**

If you'll be attending either event on Saturday, June 13, be sure to stop by the RSI booth. We enjoy meeting community members, sharing resources, and building partnerships that help create safer, healthier, and more resilient communities throughout Northeast Arkansas.

Together, we can strengthen protective factors, support positive choices, and promote wellness across our region.