**Stonewall Japan**

Mental Health Awareness Month

Elections

Events +

## Mental Health Awareness Month

We readily go to the health club when our doctor suggests we need more exercise,

but we regularly neglect the 'mental health club' that our well-being more truly requires.

— Pico Iyer, British-born American essayist and novelist 2014

LGBT+ identifying people are at a much higher risk of suffering from mental health issues. This is an important issue for our community to understand so that we can better support each other in our fight for survival and equality. Kayla, Stonewall Block Leader writes:

**Mental health, just like physical health, is something that can be drastically affected by your surroundings.** Even if you felt in control of your condition(s) back home, living abroad creates new barriers to tackle. With these new obstacles, many of us may come to a point of feeling hopeless and overwhelmed.

Even if what you're facing feels like an insurmountable hurdle, small steps can lead to a world of difference. Try to see your mental and physical health as two sides of the same coin, both of which need regular check ups and evaluations.

Taking solace in close friends and family members, seeking the advice of trained professionals, **treating yourself with respect and kindness**, and developing coping mechanisms are all things that could be used as initial goals or targets to work towards.

While things may sometimes seem bleak, the beauty of our community is that it is diverse. There are other people out there walking down the same path and there are people out there who want to understand and support LGBTQ+ non-neurotypical people. If you are struggling or would like to help someone who may be going through a difficult time, **look into the organization Tell Japan**.

## ❖ What can you do?

**1. Take Time to Learn.**
Learn about mental health conditions and experiences like depression and bipolar disorder. There are an abundant of resources out there, so just start googling! Here is one we recommend…
http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/a-z-mental-health/

**2. Avoid harmful language.**
Using the appropriate, correct language is important to show that we are considerate of mental health stigma, and respect people who have mental health issues. Ex. "Psycho" "Nut-job" etc.

**3. Reevaluate your preconceived generalisations**
Recognize that everyone's experience with mental health issues can be unique. Generalisations can be harmful as they can trivialize one's experience if the generalisation doesn't concur. Above this, generalisations can be dumbfounded and misguided representations of lived experiences.

**4. Advocate**
Post things highlighting mental health awareness particularly from authors who have experienced/do experience mental health issues. Talk to people about mental health issues. Donate to causes or organizations that support those with mental health issues.

**5. Volunteer**
You can help out by becoming a volunteer with support organizations like Tell Japan: telljp.com/help/volunteer/ Even if you can only spare a bit of time, volunteer to be an extra pair of hands at events, or for one-off projects.

**6. Review Your Mental Health**
Consider your mental health and possible symptoms. A certified professional can give you a mental health check up so you can assess your current health state and possible steps to take if necessary. Check out our newly updated mental health guide to learn more about how to access mental health professionals in Japan!
http://stonewalljapan.org/resources/mental-health/