

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

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The month of May is recognized as both Older Americans' Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. As many of you already know, Northshore Senior Center has been providing amazing programs and services for over 50 years, and many of them have been of benefit to both participants' physical health as well as mental well-being.

This year, in special recognition of these May topics, the NSC Social Services Team has put together a variety of additional free programs, services, handouts and tips specifically related to maintaining positive mental health. The specific areas that are being highlighted for the month of May are:

- (1) physical activities
- (2) social activities/programs and
- (3) opportunities to experience "joy" in our lives



### FITNESS

Most of us already know that physical activity is not only beneficial for our bodies, but it can also have a positive impact on our mental health and well-being. The NSC H&W Building offers a fully equipped Fitness Center for use along with trainers to provide support and guidance. In addition, there are over 21 fitness classes offered each month through our three Senior Center sites (Bothell, Kenmore and Mill Creek). In addition, there are also hiking groups, a Bicycle Club, a Golf Club, a Walking Group, etc. For the month of May, a special one-page handout lists all the various [active classes](#) and locations will be available at all the sites.

### SOCIAL

We humans are social beings and benefit greatly from interactions with each another. For the past two years, the COVID pandemic has unfortunately limited or restricted the opportunity to be socially connected. And for many individuals, this too has had a negative impact on one's mental well-being. While NSC was closed, the Social Service staff and volunteers began offering several weekly virtual Conversation Café groups to at least provide some opportunities for communication and social connection. When NSC re-opened in the Summer of 2021, these groups continued, some virtual and some in-person. There are several Men and Women Coffee hour discussion groups, Sharing and Caring weekly groups, the hot lunch program, social trips and outings, card playing, Veterans Breakfast Club, Knit Wits, meeting with others at the NSC Coffee Bar, etc. For the month of May, here is a handout which lists all these types of [social connections](#) will also be available.

### FINDING JOY

And finally, finding those moments of joy in life can positively influence our mental health. NSC offers a huge offering of programs and activities that fall into this category...becoming a Volunteer through NSC, attending poetry classes, art classes, dance classes, etc. And finding joy may also include important aspects even outside of the Senior Center like connecting with grandchildren, gardening, making music, etc. Here is a handout that will provide you with ideas for ["Finding Joy"!](#) and well as recommendations for specific [books](#) that cover many mental health topics.

In addition to exploring these mental health opportunities, we will also be providing some special events in May (not listed in the 2nd quarter catalogue), which include:

- [Social Services Presentation at Kenmore Senior Center](#), Tuesday, May 10th from 10-11am
- [Mindfulness Practice](#), Thursday May 12th from 1-2:30pm
- [Social Services Presentation at Mill Creek Senior Center](#), Monday, May 16th from 10-11am
- [Scams & Fraud](#), Tuesday, May 17th from 2-3:30pm
- [Building Resilience](#), Tuesday, May 24th from 1-2pm
- Nutrition & Mental Health, Thursday, May 26th (time TBD)