

Hi Janet,

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness, fighting stigma, and discussing ways to support the millions of people living with mental health challenges and their families. This year, as we face the continued challenges brought on by the pandemic and start to imagine a future beyond it, raising awareness about mental health is more essential than ever.

Opponents of gun safety laws often claim that gun violence is a mental health problem, incorrectly arguing that mental illness—not easy access to firearms—is at the root of the more than 40,000 gun deaths each year.

Research shows that most mental health issues—anxiety, stress, depression, PTSD, and borderline personality disorder—have little association with gun violence. Access to guns, however, is strongly tied to aggressive firearm behavior.

Invoking mental health as a cause of gun violence stigmatizes mental illness and can interfere with individuals seeking treatment. Instead, policies can be adopted that remove the threat of firearms from at-risk individuals and allow time to seek treatment or recover safely.

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, we wanted to share a list of resources you might find useful:

Individuals in crisis should contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or suicidepreventionlifeline.org.
Learn more about the suicide prevention policies in place in Washington.
Find a place outside the home to safely store a firearm.
Diverse mental health resources (Washington state and national).
Take care,
-- The Alliance Team