



# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH 2021

## Employee Stories

David Hannah | Academic Support Coordinator  
College of Education and Human Development

### What's your story?

This last year since COVID hit I have taken my fitness to another level. I have been into fitness training since I was a teenager, however, as I got into my late twenties and early to mid-thirties I lost a lot of the strength that I originally had and it even showed on my body. I was going through a major depression in 2017 and didn't realize the toll the mental aspect of depression was having on my physical wellbeing. I ballooned up to 210 pounds. I did not realize how that weight looked on my 6'1 frame. In my mind I had a different picture of how I thought I looked. It wasn't until my then 7-year-old daughter, Brielle, told me that I looked chubby especially around my stomach, that it made me truly take a look at what I had turned into. I immediately asked my son Cameron to please take some pictures of me with my shirt off. When I saw the pictures of myself, I was mortified at how I looked. That was the start of me working to get myself back in shape and to take control of my life. I begin planning to remove any obstacles that would prevent me from being my best self which included walking away from things that were not good for me mentally and emotionally. As I increased my fitness trainings during the week, I got mentally stronger. That mental strength and confidence I was gaining, along with amazing mentors, encouraged me to go back and finish my Bachelor's degree in Sociology. Something I had walked away from 15 years prior. I was extremely nervous about going back to school, but I wanted to become the best version of myself not only physically but also educationally. So, while working a full-time job and having a family, I resumed school in the summer of 2018. After two years of hard work and study and dedication, I finally graduated with my Bachelor's degree from UD in the summer of 2020. During 2020 with the pandemic, I begin to train more and more at home and at Glasgow park because the gyms were closed. Because of



these increased trainings, it helped me to get my body back in shape and to get in even better shape than I had been in my teens and twenties. My wife, who is an amazing cook, also tailored both of our diets to help us to see results in our bodies. All of that excess weight that I built up literally melted off of my body by the way I was eating and working out. I was really surprised at my progress and to hear the compliments I would receive about my body from other people. Additionally, my wife continued to encourage me to get my personal trainer certification since I loved to train not only myself but others as well. As soon as I finished my Bachelor's degree that's exactly what I did. I am proud to say that I was able to obtain my personal trainer certification online within a few months of self-guided study.

## What helped you?

Honestly, talking to people about some of the struggles I was facing was a huge help, especially for dealing with depression. Not being afraid to talk to a therapist helped me to change my perception of how I was viewing myself, my situation, and the world around me. Thanks to that wonderful advice and counsel, it helped me to put things in perspective, the right perspective, and to turn my life completely around.

*For anyone interested in talking to David about his story, he has kindly shared his email address, [David.C.Hannah@gmail.com](mailto:David.C.Hannah@gmail.com)*



"Not being afraid to talk to a therapist helped me to change my perception of how I was viewing myself, my situation, and the world around me."

- David Hannah

How a moment of self-awareness led to big physical and emotional change



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
**EMPLOYEE HEALTH  
& WELLBEING**