



# MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

## Employee Stories

Tracy Willman | Administrative Assistant  
UD Career Center

### What's your story?

Five months into home quarantining, the stress of the pandemic was clearly taking a toll on the emotional and mental health of our family members and our family as a whole. The combination of constant worry, severe restrictions, and isolation elevated everyone's stress and anxiety levels. Add to that unexpected job losses, remote learning, cancellation of high school senior year traditions for our twins, a harsh political climate, racial injustices, etc. At times, these weighty overwhelming feelings and unprecedented experiences manifested as irritability, short-temper, and even anger. It became apparent that we needed help to more effectively manage our stress, so we sought out family counseling. I reached out to a licensed family counselor through UD's Employee Assistance Program, which provided us with 5 free counseling sessions. Counseling quickly taught us some new skills and strategies to use to process our feelings and frustrations, and guided us back to a place of understanding, compassion, and care of ourselves and of one another. We have since been able to navigate our subsequent pandemic quarantine experience in a healthy and supportive manner. Our teens have blossomed in their personal growth and development, and their confidence continues to grow their ability to manage their stress, demonstrate resilience, and overcome new challenges with maturity and grace. As hard the past year has been at times, our brief connection with counseling support has enabled us all to grow stronger as individuals and as a family unit.

### What helped you?

Last summer/fall, I utilized my UD/State of Delaware Employee Assistance Program benefit through Health Advocate for 5 free family counseling sessions with a local licensed family counselor. This valuable benefit has enhanced our family's overall healthcare plan, which includes our individual and family's mental and emotional health and wellbeing.



# EMPLOYEE STORIES

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- Tracy Willman

How a call to UD's Employee Assistance Program helped a family navigate difficult change

