HEALTHY HARMONY - World Mental Health Day is October 10

By Jackie Billhymer

“I'm exhausted from trying to be stronger than I feel.”
~ Unknown

The impact of COVID-19 has brought an incredible wave of change and an increased awareness around mental health and wellness. According to the World Health Organization, mental wellness is defined as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” How do you become more aware of your abilities or determine if you are not coping well with stress? It is not always easy to recognize when you may need support.

As a University of Illinois System employee, you have access to resources that can be utilized no matter what you may be experiencing. The State of Illinois and the system have free, voluntary and confidential Employee Assistance Programs that can help with a variety of concerns, including, but not limited to the following:

- Anger management
- Anxiety or worry
- Conflict at work or home
- Domestic violence
- Elder-care issues
• Family/parenting issues
• Depression
• Financial concerns
• Grief/loss
• Pre- and post-natal concerns
• Problems with alcohol or drugs
• Stress

In addition, the World Health Organization has a mental well-being website with resources for maintaining mental health and reducing stress. It has an illustrated guide and audio files with information for practicing self-help techniques and managing stress. Mental wellness is key to your overall well-being and it is important to remember that you are not alone.