

Dear LSC Campus Community:

May is Mental Health Awareness Month (established in 1949) and the health and well-being of our community is on my mind.

April in Duluth has left us with a growl, not the light pretty showers that bring May flowers. I am sure there are several life lessons that fit this observation but I'll choose this one: the weather is a powerful metaphor for our emotions. As a country, there is a lot of growling and storms out there causing stress, deep emotional responses, and clashes. And underneath it all, there is also a resilience, a resistance to falling into despair, and the bright promise of resolution and spring flowers. As the people and events around us ride through the storms, so too our emotions follow the ups and downs of storm and sunlight. In a recent article, Lewis Ortiz discusses the relationship between our mental health and emotional response to the weather:

“From a phenomenological point of view, it could be said that it is not so much the weather that changes our perception, but rather our emotional projections upon it. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) noted that the world does not present itself to us objectively but is imbued with lived meanings. Thus, when we feel sadness, a gray sky is not merely a meteorological condition but a symbol of our melancholy. However, this projection is not arbitrary: Environmental Psychology has shown that variables such as sunlight, temperature, and humidity directly affect our mood (Keller et al., 2005). In other words, there is a constant dialogue between the external and the internal. We do not project emotions onto the world randomly; our biology and personal history are also shaped by the physical environment” (Ortiz, April 2025).\*

So, as we move into the sunnier days of May, let us be aware of our mental health and our connection to the weather. On an up note: Think of the showers as liquid sunshine.

May is also ALS Awareness Month, National Stroke Awareness Month, Skin Cancer Awareness Month, National Hamburger Month, and National Barbecue Month.

Important days in May include: May Day (1st), Cinco de Mayo (5<sup>th</sup>), Mother's Day (11th), National Buttermilk Biscuit Day (14<sup>th</sup>), National Chocolate Chip Day (15<sup>th</sup>), and National Taffy Day (23<sup>rd</sup>).

I'll close this message with a sweet poem that seems to pull us all together, no matter the weather.

## Ations\*\*

If we meet and I say, "Hi,"  
That's a salutation.  
If you ask me how I feel,  
That's a consideration.  
If we stop and talk a while,  
That's a conversation.  
If we understand each other,  
That's a communication.  
If we argue, scream and fight,  
That's an altercation.  
If later we apologize,  
That's reconciliation.  
If we help each other home,  
That's a cooperation.  
And all these actions added up  
Make Civilization.  
(And if I say this is a wonderful poem,  
Is that exaggeration?)

Shel Silverstein

Be well, stay dry, and be kind. Trust that the sunshine is on the way.

Patricia L. Rogers, Ph.D.  
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\* Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/metaphors-weather-lewis-ortiz-4cuec>

\*\* Available: <https://allpoetry.com/Ations>