

Emergency
Medical
Services

Firefighters

Police
Officers

ROAD TO MENTAL READINESS

Corrections
Officers

Peace
Officers

Emergency
Response
Operators

HEALTHY REACTING INJURED ILL

Changes in Well-being	Good mental health, normal functioning	Common and self-limiting distress	More severe functional impairment	Diagnosable mental illness, severe and persistent functional impairment
Changes in Mood	Take things in stride Calm Normal mood fluctuations	Sad/Tearful Nervous Irritable/Impatient	Hopelessness/Pervasive sadness Anxious Angry	Depressed mood/Suicidal Excessive anxiety/Panic Easily enraged/Aggressive

Mood **deteriorates** as we move along the continuum. Irritability becomes anger, which moves to easily enraged; nervous become anxious which become excessive anxiety and panic; sadness become hopelessness and more pervasive and then depression.

Symptoms increase and **functioning decreases** as we move along the MHCM.

Changes in Attitude and Performance	Confidence in self and others Performing well Good sense of humour Good attitude	Procrastination Forgetful Frequently overwhelmed Displaced sarcasm	Poor performance; workaholic Poor concentration Poor decision making Negative attitude	Cannot perform duties Cannot concentrate Cannot control behaviour Overt insubordination
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The same pattern can be seen in attitude and performance as in mood. **Symptoms increase, functioning decreases.**

For example, when we are in the green zone, we often have the ability to **laugh** and our **sense of humour** is intact. But ever notice, as we move into the yellow, this turns to **displaced sarcasm** – or humour with an edge? If we move beyond that, we are dealing with a **negative attitude** and eventually, in the red, **noncompliance**. Our ability to think and reason also changes as we move along the continuum: **concentration** and **memory problems** increase; and our thinking patterns may start to include **suicidal thoughts** in the red.

Changes in Sleep and Physical Health	Physically well Few sleep difficulties Normal sleep patterns	Low energy/Some aches and pains Intrusive thoughts/ Nightmares Trouble sleeping	Increased fatigue/Aches and pains Recurrent thoughts/ Nightmares Restless sleep	Constant or prolonged exhaustion/ Frequent illness Persistent ongoing intrusive thoughts/ Nightmares Cannot fall/stay asleep
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This is an example of someone's **physical changes** from healthy to reacting and then to injured or ill.

What affects us mentally, affects us physically and vice versa. Our minds and bodies are connected. If someone is suffering from depression, they will have **physical symptoms**. When someone is suffering from a significant physical problem, such as chronic pain, they often begin to have **psychological difficulties**.

One of the physical changes you may notice as someone moves along the continuum is **sleep**. It is often one of the first areas affected. Ever noticed when in the yellow zone, and under a bit more stress, you have **difficulty sleeping**? It could be falling asleep or be waking up in the middle of the night with your mind going a mile a minute.

Changes in Social Activity	Engaging in relaxation and recreational activities Socially active	Decreased enjoyment in recreational activities Decreased social activity	Inability to enjoy activities Withdrawal	Not leaving the house or answering the phone Complete avoidance or withdrawal
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Social changes may include **withdrawal** from others.

The signs and indicators of mental illness do not necessarily all change together. For example, one person might primarily struggle with **physical and social functioning**, whereas someone else might primarily experience **thinking and emotional difficulties**.

Changes in Substance Use, Gambling, and Other Risk-taking Behaviours	No addictions to alcohol, drugs, gambling, or other Risk Taking Behaviour (RTB)	Regular but controlled substance use, gambling, and RTB	Substance use, gambling, and RTBs hard to control	Substance, gambling, or RTB addictions
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It is important to understand how stress impacts on our mental health. Mental health, like physical health, exists along a continuum and is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. (WHO) The model goes from healthy adaptive coping (green), through mild and self-limiting distress or functional impairment (yellow). It is important to note that yellow is normal, occurs often and does not impact performance, most people move back and forth between green and yellow given the stressors we are experiencing.

If however, we move beyond the yellow zone, we will start to experience more severe, persistent problems or impairment (orange), and beyond that is where we would clinical illnesses and disorders that require more concentrated medical care (red).

The arrow over the four colour blocks indicates health is a continuum, and the state of one's health can move back and forth on the continuum. Many people have physical and mental health problems that, when identified and treated early, can be temporary and reversible. Even if injured or ill, it is possible for one to be healthy and functioning.