

What is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how individuals think, feel, act, relate to others, and handle stress. Good mental health enables people to cope with the demands of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities.



Common Mental Health Disorders

1. Depression

- **Symptoms:**
 - Persistent sadness or low mood
 - Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
 - Fatigue or lack of energy
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Changes in sleep or appetite
 - Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
 - Suicidal thoughts
- **Causes:**
 - Genetic factors
 - Chemical imbalances in the brain (serotonin/dopamine)
 - Stressful life events (loss, trauma)
 - Chronic illness or medications
- **Treatment:**
 - Psychotherapy (CBT, interpersonal therapy)
 - Antidepressant medications (SSRIs, SNRIs)
 - Lifestyle changes
 - Support groups
- **Self-care Tips:**
 - Engage in regular physical activity
 - Establish a sleep routine

- Practice mindfulness or meditation
- Stay connected with loved ones

2. Anxiety Disorders

- **Types:** Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Panic Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Phobias
- **Symptoms:**
 - Constant worrying
 - Restlessness
 - Muscle tension
 - Irritability
 - Rapid heartbeat or sweating
- **Treatment:**
 - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
 - Anti-anxiety medications (e.g., benzodiazepines, SSRIs)
 - Exposure therapy (for phobias)
 - Deep breathing and grounding techniques
- **Self-care Tips:**
 - Limit caffeine
 - Avoid alcohol or recreational drugs
 - Journaling your thoughts
 - Yoga and breathing exercises

3. Bipolar Disorder

- **Symptoms:**
 - Mood swings between depression and mania
 - Elevated or irritable mood during manic phases
 - Risk-taking behavior
 - Low energy and hopelessness in depressive phases

- **Treatment:**
 - Mood stabilizers (Lithium, Valproate)
 - Psychotherapy
 - Medication adherence monitoring

4. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

- **Symptoms:**
 - Intrusive thoughts (obsessions)
 - Repetitive behaviors (compulsions)
 - Anxiety if compulsions are not performed
- **Treatment:**
 - Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP)
 - SSRIs
 - CBT tailored for OCD

5. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- **Causes:** Exposure to trauma (violence, abuse, accidents)
- **Symptoms:**
 - Flashbacks, nightmares
 - Avoidance of reminders
 - Hypervigilance, irritability
- **Treatment:**
 - EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing)
 - Trauma-focused CBT
 - Medications (SSRIs)

Mental Wellness & Self-Care

Maintaining good mental health is not just about treating disorders—it's about proactive wellness.



Self-Care Practices:

- **Mindfulness Meditation:** Focuses on breathing and present-moment awareness to reduce stress and improve emotional regulation.
- **Gratitude Journaling:** Writing down things you're thankful for helps shift perspective and boost mood.
- **Sleep Hygiene:**
 - Sleep 7–9 hours regularly
 - Limit screen use before bed
 - Create a calming bedtime routine
- **Nutrition:**
 - Eat balanced meals with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
 - Omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish) are linked to better mood
- **Physical Activity:**
 - Aim for 30 minutes of activity per day
 - Exercise boosts serotonin and endorphins
- **Digital Detox:**
 - Take breaks from social media
 - Set screen time limits



Supporting Others

How to Support a Friend:

- Listen without judgment
- Offer help with daily tasks
- Encourage professional support
- Respect their privacy and boundaries



When to Seek Help?

Consider professional support if:

- Symptoms persist for more than 2 weeks
- Daily functioning is impaired
- There's a risk of self-harm or suicidal thoughts

Emergency Resources:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- Local emergency hotlines
- Crisis text lines



Holistic Approaches to Mental Health

- **Art Therapy**
- **Animal-Assisted Therapy**
- **Nature Walks & Ecotherapy**
- **Spirituality and Purpose Finding**
- **Routine Building**



Daily Mental Wellness Checklist

- ☒ Drink enough water
- ☒ Eat nourishing meals
- ☒ Sleep 7–9 hours
- ☒ Take a break from screens
- ☒ Move your body
- ☒ Talk to someone you trust
- ☒ Reflect or journal
- ☒ Practice gratitude