

ROADMAP TO MENTAL HEALTH

**THE MENTAL
HEALTH
COALITION**

Mental health is all around us, but it's often misunderstood. Here is some quick info to help demystify what we mean by "mental health" and how to talk about it. →

What is mental health?

Mental health is your general sense of emotional, psychological, and cognitive wellbeing. Everyone has mental health every day, but it's often ignored unless something is going seriously wrong. The best way to prevent that is to pay attention to your mental health even when you're feeling ok or even good.

What is the difference between mental health, mental illness, mental wellbeing, & mental fitness?

The language around mental health is constantly evolving, and understanding these terms can help you understand your own experiences and have meaningful conversations about these topics.

MENTAL HEALTH

- An umbrella term
- Captures everything from your daily mood to severe mental distress
- Exists on a continuum that's always in flux
- 100% of people have mental health every day

MENTAL ILLNESS

- A clinical term that describes a specific condition
- Impacts mood, thinking, and behavior so that it's difficult to feel emotionally and cognitively well
- Can be acute or chronic
- 50% of people will experience mental illness at some point

MENTAL WELLBEING

- A strengths-based term
- Describes a sense of emotional and cognitive wellness
- Can exist at the same time as mental illness
- Is fueled by a sense of belonging, connection, and meaning in one's life

MENTAL FITNESS

- A newer, evolving term
- The purposeful practice of taking care of your mental health
- Can include mindfulness, physical exercise, and self-care practices
- Is important during times of wellness and illness



A quick way to take tabs on your mental health right now

Notice how your mental health is always changing and that you might have felt better yesterday than you do today. That's ok. Part of being human is experiencing the ebb and flow of your mental health. Check in with yourself. Ask yourself how you're really feeling, and see where you fall on the following scale.



Signs that it's time to pay attention to your mental health

When we're mentally healthy, we typically don't think much about it, because it's invisible. Without a thoughtful practice of looking at your mental health, it can be easy to start to feel unwell without noticing it. One way to make the invisible visible is to look out for signs that your mental health needs some care.

Low Energy / Motivation

Trouble sleeping

Unexplained physical pain or tension

Less interest in spending time with loved ones

Long-lasting sadness, worry, or irritability

Racing thoughts that feel difficult to get a handle on

Extremely high or low mood

Unpleasant thoughts that won't leave you alone

Appetite changes

Neglect of personal care

Less interest in the things you typically enjoy

Difficulty focusing on tasks

Friends & family noticing that you seem different

Key ways to take care of your mental health

It's important to find mental and emotional outlets that feel good for you and fit your lifestyle. There's no one-size-fits-all for mental fitness, but these are some of the most common ways of fostering mental wellness.

More information from [Mental Health America](#) and [DBSA](#)

Participate in physical exercise

Create social connection

Engage in spiritual practice

Log quality sleep

Do something you're good at

Consume nutritious foods

Set aside time for meaningful downtime

Practice mindfulness

Work with a mental health clinician



**IF YOU STILL FEEL LOST OR
CONFUSED ABOUT MENTAL
HEALTH, THAT'S **OK**. IT CAN BE
AN OVERWHELMING TOPIC.**

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Check out [The Mental Health Coalition's Resource Library](#) for additional resources that are more specific to what might be on your mind.