



Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

What is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of your life, if you experience [mental health problems](#), your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected.



Mental Health Conditions

Mental illnesses are disorders, ranging from mild to severe, that affect a person's thinking, mood, and/or behavior. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one-in-five adults live with a mental illness.

[View Conditions](#)

Mental Health: Get the Facts

Can you tell the difference between a mental health myth and

fact? Learn the truth about the most common mental health myths and information to help destigmatize them.

[Learn More](#)

Early Warning Signs & Symptoms

Not sure if you or someone you know is living with mental health problems? Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

Do you think someone you know may have a mental health problem? [Talking about mental health](#) can be difficult. Learn about common [mental health myths and facts](#) and read about ways to help you get the conversation started.

Tips for Living Well with a Mental Health Condition

Having a mental health condition can make it a struggle to work, keep up with school, stick to a regular schedule, have healthy relationships, socialize, maintain hygiene, and more.

However, with early and consistent treatment—often a combination of medication and psychotherapy—it is possible to manage these conditions, overcome challenges, and lead a meaningful, productive life.

Today, there are new tools, evidence-based treatments, and social support systems that help people feel better and pursue their goals.

Some of these tips, tools and strategies include:

- **Stick to a treatment plan.** Even if you feel better, don't stop going to therapy or taking medication without a doctor's guidance. Work with a doctor to safely adjust doses or medication if needed to continue a treatment plan.
- **Keep your primary care physician updated.** Primary care physicians are an important part of long-term management, even if you also see a psychiatrist.
- **Learn about the condition.** Being educated can help you stick to your treatment plan. Education can also help your loved ones be more supportive and compassionate.
- **Practice good self-care.** Control stress with activities such as meditation or tai-chi; eat healthy and exercise; and get enough sleep.
- **Reach out to family and friends.** Maintaining relationships with others is important. In times of crisis or rough spells, reach out to them for support and help.
- **Develop coping skills.** Establishing healthy [coping skills](#) can help people deal with stress easier.
- **Get enough sleep.** Good sleep improves your brain performance, mood and overall health. Consistently poor sleep is associated with anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions.



Need Help?

- If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text [988](https://www.988lifeline.org) or chat [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) [↗](#).
- To learn how to get support for mental health, drug, and alcohol issues, visit [FindSupport.gov](https://www.findsupport.gov).
- To locate treatment facilities or providers, visit [FindTreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov) or call SAMHSA's National Helpline at [800-662-HELP \(4357\)](tel:800-662-HELP).

Resources

- [National Helpline](#)
- [SAMHSA's 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#)
- [Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee \(ISMICC\)](#)
- [Technology Transfer Centers \(TTC\) Program](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Stress and Coping](#)
- [NIMH: Caring for Your Mental Health](#)

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<https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/what-is-mental-health>