



A guide to help you manage the ups and downs of life

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Got Feelings?

We all do. And lots of them!

That's why mental and emotional health is such an essential part of our overall wellness. It affects everything—our eating, sleeping, relationships, work, and physical health. Feelings make life interesting and wonderful, but they can sometimes be hard and overwhelming too.

This guidebook is full of information, resources, and advice to help you learn how to feel your best.



What is Mental Health?

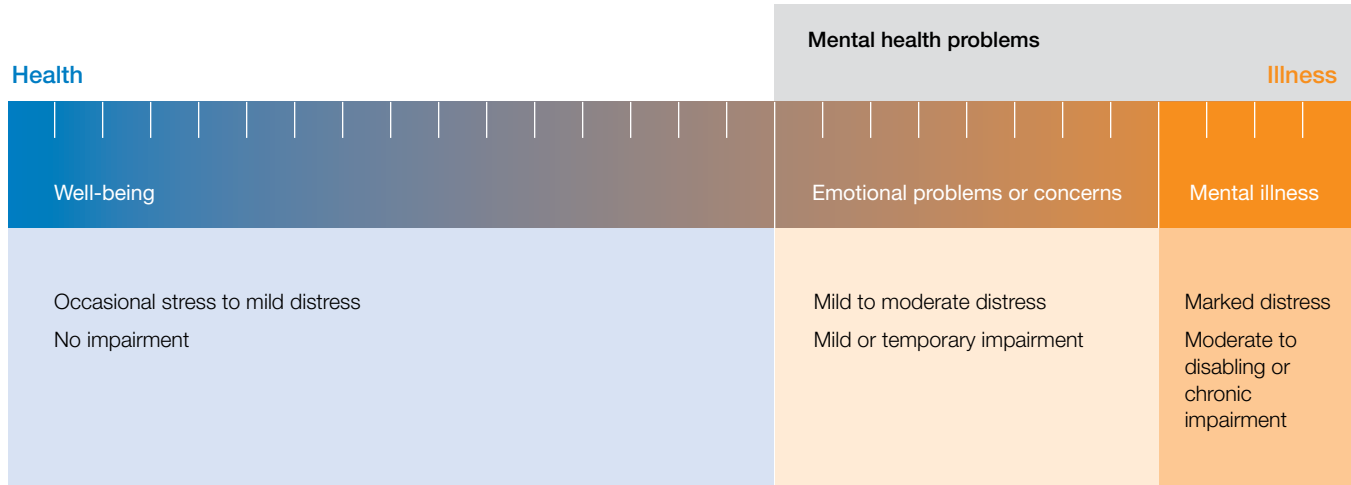
While there is no official definition of mental or emotional health, these terms generally refer to our thoughts, feelings, and actions, particularly when faced with life's challenges and stressors. Throughout our lives, mental health is the foundation of our thinking and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience, and self-esteem.

The Mental Health Continuum

Depending on what's happening in your life at any given time, your mental health may be located at any point along the continuum at right. Our states of mental health are defined by the amount of stress/distress and impairment they cause. The lines differentiating each state are not exact because it is not clear at which point a concern becomes a problem, or a problem becomes an illness.

Most of the time most people will be somewhere on the left half of the continuum — experiencing reasonably good emotional health and handling life events that, while stressful, do not feel unmanageable. In this state of well-being, the stress and discomfort caused by everyday life does not affect your eating, sleeping, or problem solving.

But when major negative life events occur, or more serious problems arise, coping can become more difficult. During these times you may experience what are identified on the continuum as “mental health problems.” Within this category there are two major states: emotional problems and mental illness. When you are experiencing either of these states, there are self-care strategies and resources available that can help you get through the difficult time (several are highlighted in this guide).



Causes of Mental Health Problems

Mental health researchers and professionals have developed several theories to explain the causes of mental health problems (including addiction), but they have reached no consensus. One factor on which they agree is that the individual sufferer is not responsible for the condition, and cannot simply turn it on or off at will. Most likely several factors combine to trigger a condition.

Environmental Factors

Early experiences such as a lack of loving parents, violent/traumatic events, or rejection by peers; and current stressors such as relationship difficulties, the loss of a job, the birth of a child, a move, or work problems can be important environmental factors. Cultural factors such as racism, discrimination, poverty, and violence also may contribute to mental illness.

Biological Factors

Physical illness, hormonal change, reaction to medication, substance abuse, diet and stress have been identified as contributing factors.

Genetics

Researchers have found that individuals with particular disorders tend to have had parents or other close relatives with the same illnesses.

Frequently Asked Questions about Mental Health

Question: Is mental illness really an illness?

Answer: Yes. The brain is an organ that is susceptible to illness. Chemicals in the brain regulate how people think, feel and act. Brain function can become affected if these chemicals are out of balance or disrupted, contributing to mental illness. Thus, mental illness is a real bodily illness, not just something “in your head.”

Question: Does the prevalence of mental health problems differ among different racial or ethnic groups?

Answer: No. The prevalence of mental health problems is similar for all racial and ethnic groups. However, members of racial or ethnic minority groups may experience greater disability from mental health problems because of difficulties in accessing culturally-sensitive, good-quality care.

Question: Is it true that mental illness can't be cured?

Answer: This is a complex question. In many cases, mental illness cannot be “cured” in the sense that it will go away and never return. Most often, the symptoms of mental illness can be eliminated or reduced and managed through treatment with medication, therapy or a combination of both. For example, 80 to 90% of people with depression or anxiety can be helped when properly assessed and treated, though it is still possible that the illness will return at a future time.

Question: Are people with mental health problems likely to be dangerous?

Answer: No. Research shows that people with mental health problems do not commit significantly more violent acts than do people in the general population. Research does indicate, however, that substance abuse is frequently involved in violent acts committed by individuals with or without other mental health problems.

Question: If someone has a mental health problem, should they abandon their hopes for a fulfilling career?

Answer: No. Although mental health problems can negatively affect individuals in a significant manner, with treatment and appropriate work accommodations, even people diagnosed with a serious mental illness have succeeded famously.



Common Concerns

There are many common concerns that can affect your health throughout your lifetime. Some of these concerns may lead to feelings of discomfort or distress that affect your daily functioning (e.g., changes in appetite or sleeping habits, lack of concentration). Self-care strategies and the support of friends and loved ones can be especially helpful during these times. Some people also seek counseling to help with their common concerns.



It is estimated that 9% of Americans will experience a severe case of anxiety at some time during their life.

Anxiety

Worry and anxiety are normal emotions that everyone experiences at times. You may feel anxious when you take a test, give a big presentation, get lost, or are faced with making an important decision. In these circumstances, anxiety can be very useful — it makes you more alert or careful. It usually goes away soon after you are out of the situation that caused it.

But for more than 25 million people in the United States, anxiety can cause such distress that it interferes with their ability to lead a normal life. When anxious feelings become frequent and overwhelming, it is time to address the situation. There are many different treatments for anxiety that can involve medication, therapy, or both.

| TIP | Feeling Anxious? Take a Deep Breath |
|-----|---|
| | Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose to a count of six, allowing air to fill your lungs up. |
| | Hold your breath for a count of four. |
| | Then exhale slowly and completely while counting to six again. |
| | Repeat this six or more times. |



Most adults need at least eight hours of uninterrupted sleep at night to maintain optimal mental and physical health.

Sleep Problems

A good night's rest is essential for feeling and performing your best each day. If you're not getting the sleep that you need, ignoring the underlying causes of disturbed sleep, or covering the symptoms with alcohol or drugs, sleep problems will persist and become hazardous to your health.

A recent British study found that people who do not get enough sleep were twice as likely to die of heart disease. Sleep problems can also be a sign that something else is bothering you either physically or mentally. Researchers at U-M have found that the body's circadian rhythm, one of the critical factors for helping us to sleep at night, is often out of sync in people with depression. Depression can keep you from getting good sleep, and a lack of good sleep can make you depressed.

Fortunately, with proper diagnosis and care, sleep problems can be managed and overcome. If lack of sleep has become a concern for you, we encourage you to seek help.

TIP Develop sleep rituals before going to bed. Do the same things in the same order before going to bed to cue your body to slow down and relax.



75% to 90% of all visits to
physicians are stress-related.

Stress

Stress is actually a perfectly normal, natural condition which, in moderation, can be good for you. As a response to stress, you experience increases in blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and the blood flow to your muscles. This response can help you perform important tasks at work or home more efficiently and give you a short-term buzz of energy when you really need it.

However, having this automatic physical reaction to everyday stressors can become harmful to your physical and mental health if experienced in large amounts or over long periods of time. You can feel the negative effects of stress physically when you have too little sleep, a poor diet, or an illness. You feel it mentally if you're worried about a life change, a family situation, or a big presentation at work. An important key to managing stress is determining your personal tolerance level

and identifying which situations trigger it the most. If you constantly experience stress without countering its effects or addressing the source, you may begin to experience both physical and mental health problems.

| TIP | Manage Your Stress |
|-----|--|
| | Exercise, eat right, get enough rest, and cut down on tension-producing substances such as sugar and caffeine. |
| | Use humor to release tension. |
| | Do things you like to do. |
| | Practice relaxation techniques. |
| | Talk to others. |



“Grieving is not a weakness.
It is a necessity.”

—Anonymous

Grief & Loss

Grief is a normal and natural response to loss. Grief and loss are most commonly felt when there is a death of a loved one or friend. They are also felt when someone loses a meaningful and intimate relationship through divorce or separation. Many times, significant life or work changes contain elements of loss that can be very powerful as well. Events such as downsizing, reduction-in-force, mergers, and even promotions can result in some grief-like symptoms.

Reactions to grief and loss are as different as the people who experience them; there is no right way to grieve. Grief may be responsible for physical symptoms such as insomnia, appetite changes, malaise, or actual illness. Grief may prompt some to withdraw from life and push others to stay too busy to feel. Contact with others who are experiencing the loss can help one to move through the grief process. Just about

every emotion can be part of the grief reaction: fear, anger, peace, despair, guilt, agitation, and a seemingly bottomless sorrow may all be experienced after a loss.

TIP Support is important during the grieving process. Support comes in many forms, such as from friends and family, by participating in activities you enjoy, or through exercises, such as writing letters or keeping a journal, to help you express your feelings.



“My best friend is the one who
brings out the best in me.”

—Henry Ford

Relationships

Healthy Relationships

Good relationships with colleagues, friends, children, spouses, and partners are all vital to our well-being. Having important people in your life who love, support, and care about you can help you get through the best and worst of times. Problems or conflict in any of your important relationships not only cause great emotional distress but also negatively impact your physical health.

TIP Listen to your partner. Schedule a regular time to be alone together, uninterrupted. Agree to find a weekly time that is protected from other responsibilities and use some of that time to discuss how to strengthen your relationship.

Relationship Problems

Signs of a troubled relationship are interactions in which partners avoid discussing issues, regularly become rigid or defensive, criticize more than compliment, stop sharing thoughts and feelings, and stop having fun together.

A troubled relationship has become abusive if one partner uses manipulative tactics, name calling, threats of physical force or harm to well-being in order to exercise power and control over the other. If you are ever frightened or afraid of your partner or their behavior, or have been hit, kicked, pushed, choked, or forced to engage in sexual acts against your will, you are in an abusive relationship and we encourage you to seek professional help and support.



“Create the family you wish to belong to; make peace with the one you were given.”

—Anonymous

Family Concerns

Whether you are a parent or child, brother or sister, young or old, your family experiences influence who you are and who you will become. Any changes or problems within a family can affect the health and relationships of all its members.

In addition to day-to-day pressures, you will also experience changes in family life throughout your lifetime. These changes may cause you (and family members) stress and will require that you develop new skills in order to cope with the challenges involved. Newlyweds need to learn how to live and function as a couple. New parents adjust to their caretaker roles while trying to remain a couple. Parents struggle to guide and raise their children through many stages into

adulthood. Many older adults face the transition from child to caretaker as their own parents age and need help and support.

In addition to these regular life events, many families may also experience unexpected crises or changes such as serious illness, death, financial problems, or divorce that cause strain and require adjustments in their lives.

TIP Self-reflection, education, and counseling are all ways that you can help improve your communication, coping skills, and family life.

Signs You May Need Help

| Anxiety | Sleep Problems | Stress |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Feelings of panic, fear, and uneasiness; uncontrollable, obsessive thoughts; nightmares; ritualistic behaviors, such as repeated hand washing; sleep problems; cold or sweaty hands and/or feet; shortness of breath; heart palpitations; inability to be still and calm; dry mouth; numbness or tingling in the hands or feet; nausea; muscle tension; or dizziness.</p> | <p>Feeling sleepy on most days; having difficulty staying awake when sitting still; having difficulty paying attention or concentrating; having trouble remembering things; performing tasks below your potential; often told that you look tired; consuming caffeinated beverages to keep going.</p> | <p>Physical reactions like insomnia, increased or decreased appetite, backaches or headaches. Emotional reactions may include getting angry or upset more easily or feeling dissatisfied, worried, or inadequate. High levels or long periods of stress can also lead to anxiety disorders or depression.</p> |

| Grief and Loss | Relationship Problems | Family Concerns |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Grief can look and feel similar to depression. Symptoms may include insomnia, poor appetite, and weight loss. Others may sleep excessively or overeat as a means of coping with the loss. If symptoms persist for two months or more, professional assistance is recommended.</p> | <p>Troubled relationships can lead to feelings of sadness, frustration, anxiety, disappointment, or anger and physical symptoms such as sleep loss, irritability, loss of appetite, or increased alcohol consumption.</p> <p>The distress faced by those in abusive situations can be overwhelming. Many experience major depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.</p> | <p>Family concerns can cause great stress for all members involved (see stress symptoms).</p> |



Mental Health Problems

There are several serious types of mental health problems that you, a loved one, friend, or coworker may encounter during your lifetime. Those most common are anxiety, depression, and substance misuse.



Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health problem and affect more than 25 million Americans.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. It helps one deal with a tense situation in the office, study harder for an exam, or keep focused on an important speech. Although anxiety at this level may be uncomfortable and distressing, it is not an illness. When anxiety becomes an excessive, irrational dread of everyday situations, it becomes a disabling illness.

Anxiety disorders can take several forms. Some individuals might experience a chronic state of exaggerated worry and tension, even when there is little or nothing to provoke it. Others may experience obsessive thoughts, compulsive behaviors, or irrational fears or phobias. Still others may experience episodes of panic or vivid and disturbing memories of earlier traumatic situations.

There are several recognized anxiety disorders:

Panic disorder

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Social anxiety disorder

Specific phobias

Generalized anxiety disorder



Depressive disorders affect 12% of women (more than 12 million) and nearly 7% of men (6 million) in the U.S. each year.

Depression

Depression is the second most common mental health problem and can frequently occur with anxiety disorders. Depression is more than just feeling down or having the blues; it is a mood disorder that comes in different forms in which the number, severity, and persistence of symptoms differ.

It may appear as a single, long-lasting negative mood or as episodic symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, study, sleep, eat, and enjoy once pleasurable activities. Some individuals will experience only one depressive episode in their lifetimes; for others, depressive episodes will be interspersed with years of regular functioning; for those with bi-polar disorder, periods of depression can be combined with periods of euphoria or mania.

Depression can often appear with major physical illness, such as heart disease or cancer. It can also accompany pregnancy and childbirth (postpartum depression).

People who are depressed may:

Have trouble concentrating, remembering, and making decisions

Have changes in their eating and sleeping habits

Lose interest in things they used to enjoy

Have feelings of guilt and hopelessness

Think a lot about death or suicide

Complain about problems that don't have a physical cause, such as headaches and stomachaches

Substance Misuse

We often think that problems associated with substance use result from abuse or addiction — the heavy or frequent use of a particular chemical or substance. However, substance misuse can occur anytime an individual uses a substance too much, too often, for the wrong reasons, at the wrong time, or at the wrong place.

Many people who misuse substances also suffer from symptoms of depression and anxiety. Some begin misusing substances as an attempt to alleviate their symptoms. While others develop depression and anxiety as a response to the personal and work-related problems that result from their substance misuse.

Substances that are commonly misused include:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Alcohol | beer, wine, spirits |
| Cannabis | marijuana, hashish |
| Depressants | sleeping medications, sedatives, some tranquilizers |
| Hallucinogens | LSD, PCP, mescaline, ecstasy |
| Inhalants | hydrocarbons, solvents |
| Opiates | morphine, heroin, codeine, some prescription pain medications |
| Stimulants | cocaine, amphetamines, Ritalin |
| Prescription drugs | or over-the-counter medications which are misused or taken inappropriately. |



Where to Go for Help

In this section, you'll find information on campus and community resources. Whether you're concerned about yourself or someone you care about, please know that there is help available for you—and there is hope.

Take that important next step to make the call, and start feeling better.

Understanding U

Understanding U is a program of MHealthy created to help U-M faculty and staff manage the ups and downs of life. Our website at MHealthy.umich.edu provides useful resources to help you better understand yourself (and others!).

www.MHealthy.umich.edu

Look for:

Information on common concerns and mental health conditions

Tools and strategies to help manage everyday stress

Confidential online screenings to help evaluate concerns

A directory of U-M and area resources to assist faculty and staff with mental or emotional health issues

Online tutorials for managers and supervisors

FAQs for faculty and staff about mental health issues in the workplace

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FASAP) is a confidential, no-cost service for U-M faculty, staff, and their immediate family members. FASAP provides short-term counseling on personal, emotional, family and work place issues; personalized coaching services to assist with achieving professional or personal goals; critical incident, trauma and grief counseling; and educational presentations on a variety of emotional and mental health topics.

www.mhealthy.umich.edu/fasap

Central & Flint Campus (734) 936-8660

TTY (734) 647-1388

Dearborn Campus (313) 593-5430

University of Michigan Health System Employee Assistance Program (UMHS EAP) offers confidential, supportive assessment and short-term counseling for personal or work-related concerns; coaching services; mediation services; critical incident debriefing; educational programs on subjects of grief and loss, stress, renewal, compassion fatigue, and cultivating positive emotions at no charge to faculty, staff, and their families.

www.mhealthy.umich.edu/eap

(734) 763-5409

Addiction Treatment Services (UMATS) is part of the U-M Department of Psychiatry's Substance Abuse Section, and is committed to providing outstanding clinical care for people recovering from alcohol and other drug problems.

www.psych.med.umich.edu/umats

Toll Free 1-800-525-5188

Adults: (734) 764-9190

Adolescents: (734) 764-7269

Alcohol Management Program, MHealthy is a brief, confidential educational program that helps you eliminate drinking problems by reducing your drinking or stopping altogether.

www.mhealthy.umich.edu/alcohol

(734) 647-6691 or Toll Free 1-800-222-5145

Cardiovascular Medicine at Domino's Farms, Stress Management Services offers stress management classes and individual consultations to enhance health and well being. Services are open to all U-M staff, faculty, students, patients and the general public.

www.med.umich.edu/cvc/health/classes_stress.html

(734) 998-5679

Center for Education of Women (CEW) offers counseling services to students, faculty, staff and community members to support exploration of educational and career interests within the context of relationships and life circumstances.

www.umich.edu/~cew/services/couns.htm

(734) 764-6360

Depression Center offers a multidisciplinary team approach to care. Clinicians from various specialties are consulted to make certain patients receive the most comprehensive diagnosis and treatment possible.

www.depressioncenter.org
(734) 936-4400 or 1-800-475-MICH (6424)

Geriatrics Center and Turner Senior Resource Center offers individual and group counseling in the clinic to both older adults and family members. A wide range of support groups, educational programs, and peer counseling services are also available.

www.med.umich.edu/geriatrics/communityprograms
(734) 764-2556

House Officer Mental Health Program, UMHS provides confidential counseling, evaluation, and psychotherapy for house officers and their significant others.

www.sitemaker.umich.edu/hoa/house_officer_mental_health_program
(734) 647-9776 or (734) 936-6266#13728 pager

Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) provides emergency/urgent walk-in evaluation and crisis phone services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for people of all ages.

www.psych.med.umich.edu/pes
(734) 996-4747
24 hr Crisis Phone Service: (734) 936-5900

Psychological Clinic offers outpatient mental health services for adults and couples age 18 and over. University affiliation is not required to receive services.

www.psychclinic.org
(734) 764-3471

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) provides services for the U-M community related to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking. SAPAC offers crisis intervention, outreach, counseling, advocacy, consultation, training, awareness, and prevention.

www.umich.edu/~sapac
24-hour Crisis Line: (734) 936-3333

Sleep Disorders Center diagnoses and treats patients who have problems with their sleep or level of alertness. The large majority of sleep problems can be improved, controlled, or eliminated.

www.med.umich.edu/neuro/sleeplab
(734) 936-9020

Stress and Anxiety Disorders Program is a subspecialty clinic within the U-M Department of Psychiatry committed to providing state-of-the-art treatment for anxiety disorders.

www.psych.med.umich.edu/anxiety
(734) 764-5348

Tobacco Consultation Service (TCS), MHealthy assists people who wish to be free from tobacco addiction. TCS offers both individual and group sessions for employees, patients and community members.

www.mhealthy.umich.edu/tobacco
(734) 936-5988

University Center for the Child & Family (UCCF) offers counseling, therapy, and mental health services to children and families in the community.

www.umuccf.org
(734) 764-9466

Work/Life Resource Center (WLRC) provides programs and services designed to support the healthy integration of work life and personal life. The WLRC can assist U-M employees with locating child care, care for aging parents, or back-up child care (Kids Kare at Home), and with designing flexible work schedules.

www.hr.umich.edu/worklife
(734) 936-8677

Community Resources

Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH)

provides support and services for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbance, people with developmental disabilities, and people with substance use disorders.

Visit the MDCH website for an alphabetical listing of local Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSPs).

www.michigan.gov/mdch
(517) 373-3740

Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS)

is Michigan's public assistance, child and family welfare agency. DHS operates numerous public assistance and service programs through a network of over 100 county offices around the state.

www.michigan.gov/dhs
(517) 373-2035

Michigan Mental Health Networker website provides listings of mental health therapists, agencies, and support groups in Michigan.

www.mhweb.org

SOS Community Services offers services to families and individuals in Washtenaw County who are homeless or who are experiencing housing-related crises.

www.soscs.org
(734) 484-4300

United Way 2-1-1 provides callers with information about and referrals to human services, for everyday needs and in times of crisis. Operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

www.washtenaw211.org
Simply dial 2-1-1
Outside of Washtenaw, Livingston, or Monroe counties:
Toll Free (866) 953-HELP

Note: *Mental health services are a covered benefit under your health insurance, but there may be some limitations. Before scheduling an appointment with a mental health provider, we recommend you contact your health plan directly to confirm coverage details.*



A journey of a thousand miles
must begin with a single step.

—Chinese Proverb

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MMD 090048



MHealthy.umich.edu