

# Mental Health Awareness: What You Need to Know

## Mental health vs. mental illness

How would you describe mental health?

---

---

---

How would you describe mental illness?

---

---

---

## Examples of signs and symptoms of mental illness

- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Rapid, dramatic mood swings
- Isolation or withdrawal from others
- Excessive worry or fear
- Unable to function at school or work
- Problems with concentration, memory or thinking logically
- Loss of interest in doing activity once enjoyed
- Illogical or irrational beliefs
- Unusually suspicious of others
- Odd or unusual behaviors
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs

---

---

---

---

---

## Traumatic stress

- Sadness
- Feeling nervous, jumpy, or on high alert
- Irritability or anger
- Difficulty sleeping
- Relationship problems
- Intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, or nightmares
- Trouble feeling positive emotions
- Avoiding people, places, memories, or thoughts associated with the traumatic event

---

---

---

---

---

## Coping with traumatic events

- Be patient
- Reach out to supportive people
- Ease into your normal routine
- Use healthy coping skills to resolve day-to-day stress
- Over time, allow exposure to situations that remind you of the traumatic event
- Participate in leisure and recreational activities
- Recognize you can't control everything
- Relax and practice self-compassion

---

---

---

---

---

### 4-7-8 Breathing

- Take a slow, deep breath, allowing your lungs to expand and your belly to rise.
  - While inhaling, silently count to four.
- Hold your breath, and silently count from one to seven.
- Breathe out completely as you silently count from one to eight.

- Try to get all the air out of your lungs by the time you count to eight.
- Repeat these steps three to seven times.

## When to get help

- Difficulty sleeping
  - Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
  - Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
  - Inability to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
  - Thought of harming self or others
- 
- 
- 

## Suicide warning signs

### Talking about

- wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- feeling trapped or feeling that there is no solution

### Feeling

- empty or hopeless or having no reason to live
- unbearable emotional or physical pain
- like being a burden to others

### Change in behavior

- Withdrawing from family and friends
  - Giving away important possessions
  - Saying goodbye to friends and family
  - Putting affairs in order, such as making a will
  - Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
  - Using drugs or alcohol more often
- 
- 
-

## In emergency situations . . .

- Maintain a calm composure
  - Call 911 or 9911\*  
\*Remember, you may need to dial 9 first!
  - Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
  - Call your EAP program
  - Notify management and security
- 
- 
- 

## Fighting mental health stigma

- Talk openly about mental health
  - Educate yourself and others on mental health
  - Be conscious of the language you use
  - Encourage equality between physical and mental illness
  - Have empathy for those with mental illness
  - Choose empowerment over shame
  - Don't harbor self-stigma
- 
- 
- 

## How to help others

- Express your concern and support
  - Remind them help is available
  - Don't avoid talking about mental health problems
  - Reassure the person you care
  - Be respectful, compassionate, and empathetic
  - If they want help, assist them to get it
- 
- 
-

## Tips on having a conversation about mental health

- “I’m here for you. Do you want to talk about it?”
  - “That sounds really difficult. How are you coping?”
  - “I’m sorry you’re going through this. What can I do to help?”
  - “Are you looking for my perspective or would you rather I listen?”
  - “What you’re feeling isn’t uncommon, there are resources to help...”
- 
- 
- 

Resource on having a conversation: Seize the Awkward: <https://seizetheawkward.org/>

## Getting help

- Primary care doctors
  - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
  - 24/7
  - Confidential
  - Trained and licensed consultants
  - Telephone
  - Online
  - Prevention
  - National Institute of Mental Health [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help)
  - NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
  - SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>
- 
- 
- 

## Takeaway

---

---

---