

What is mental health?

Mental health includes emotional and psychological health, which impact how many people think, feel and act. It also determines how you manage stress, work with others and make healthy choices. Mental health is important throughout every stage of life.

Why is mental health important?

Mental health is important to overall health and well-being. Depression can increase the likelihood of many health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke. The risk of mental illness can also increase with the development of chronic conditions.

How can I cope with stress?

There are ways to cope with stress to improve overall mental health, including:

- Meditate or take deep breaths.
- Increase physical activity.
- Limit the use of coffee, energy drinks, nicotine and alcohol, especially around bedtime.
- Get enough sleep and practice good sleep habits by going to bed and getting up at the same time each day.



What are the signs of depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that can cause feelings of constant sadness or lack of interest in life. Sadness is only a small part of depression. Some people with depression may not feel sad at all. Depression has many other symptoms, including physical ones. If you have experienced any of the following signs or symptoms for two weeks or more, you may be suffering from depression. It is important to talk to your doctor about how you feel.

- Feeling continually sad, anxious or “empty”
- Feeling guilty, worthless or helpless
- Loss of interest in activities and hobbies
- Isolation
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or trouble sleeping
- Struggle to focus and make decisions
- Persistent physical symptoms
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Restlessness and/or irritability

Sources: [National Institute of Mental Health](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



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What if I or someone I know has thoughts about suicide?

Suicidal fantasy is defined as thinking about, considering or planning the ending of one's own life. People who feel completely hopeless or believe they can no longer cope with their life situation may have suicidal thoughts.

If you have experienced any of the signs of depression described below, please seek advice from your physician. One or more of these signs could be present, or maybe none.

- Talking about wanting to die or commit suicide.
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Making plans or researching ways to die.
- Talking about overwhelming guilt or shame.
- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions.
- Feeling unbearable pain (emotional or physical).
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Increasing alcohol or drug use (frequency or amount).
- Acting anxious or agitated.
- Withdrawing from family and friends.
- Changing eating and/or sleeping habits.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Taking significant risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast.
- Talking or thinking about death often.
- Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy.
- Giving away important possessions.
- Saying goodbye to friends and family.
- Putting affairs in order, making a will.

Seeking help

Whether you're in crisis, or just beginning to struggle with depression, seeking help and support is the first step toward recovery. If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, please seek immediate help:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress. Call or text 988, or chat at <https://988lifeline.org>.

Sources: [National Institute of Mental Health](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



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