PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

TIP SHEET

ABF
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✉ **info@mwc.community**

🌐 **www.mwc.community**

📞 **+1 647-391-9668**

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What is Mental Health?

Mental Health refers to your emotional well-being. Mental health encompasses your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Good mental health will allow you to cope with life's challenges. Poor mental health can lead to physical and mental illness.

Life experiences such as the passing of a loved one, divorce, or unemployment, your relationships with others, your work or school environment, your physical health, and your community can all influence your mental health.

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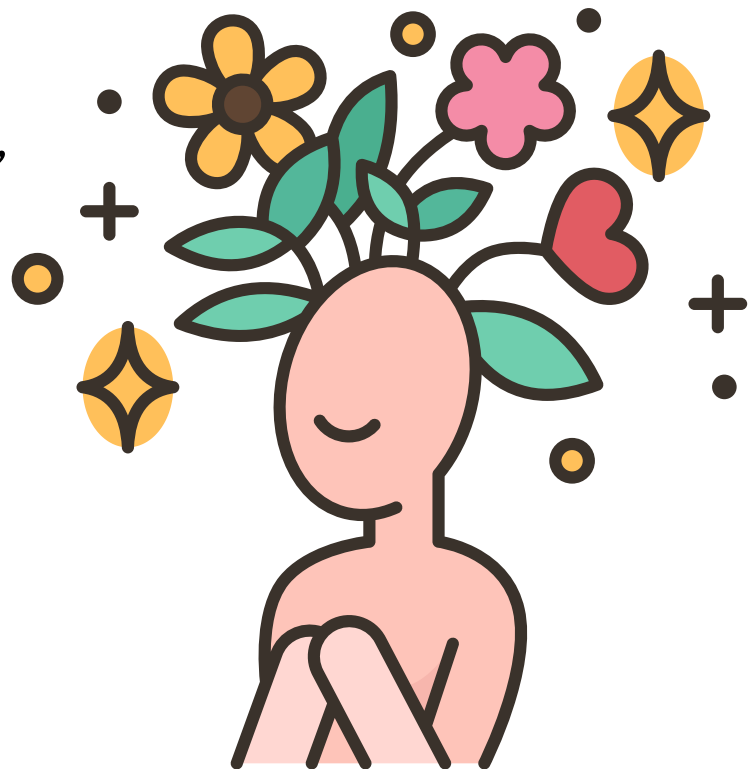
Mental Illness

Many of us may face stressors because of difficult life situations. We may be able to bounce back from these challenges. However, a person with a mental illness may experience regular distress. Mental health disorders include depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and addiction. These affect an individual's mood, thinking, and behavior.

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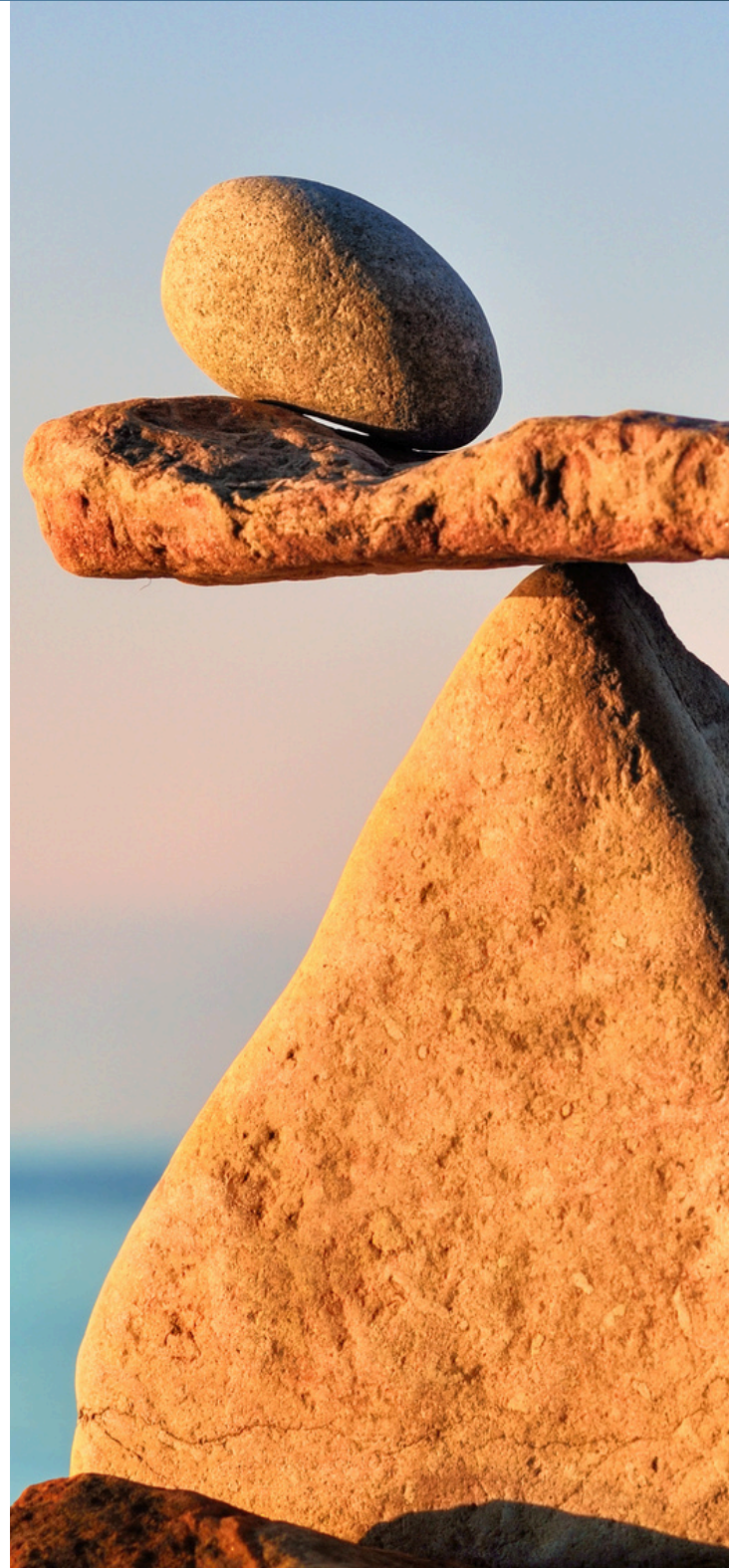
- Mood Disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder, affect how you feel
- Anxiety disorders cause worry that is not based on real dangers
- Schizophrenia can involve delusions and hallucinations
- Eating disorders can cause irregular eating behaviors
- Personality disorders can lead to unhealthy thinking and behavior

Ongoing signs and symptoms that affect an individual's ability to function in work, school, or relationships may indicate a mental illness

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Causes of Mental Illness

Mental Illness can arise because of various factors like genetics, family history, early life experiences (abuse, trauma), stressful life events (divorce, financial struggles, passing of a loved one), environmental influences related to drug and alcohol exposure as a fetus, and social, economic, and educational status.

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Symptoms of Mental Health Issues

Symptoms of mental illnesses can vary, but common symptoms can include:

- Feeling sad or down
- Difficulty concentrating
- Extreme fear, anxiety, anger, or guilt
- Significant trouble sleeping
- Withdrawal from loved ones and activities
- Major changes in eating habits
- Problem with alcohol and drug use

Symptoms can also include physical symptoms such as aches and pains and unexplained headaches.

Consult a doctor or mental health professional. Most mental illnesses do not improve on their own over time and may get worse.

Treatment for Mental Health Issues

A single or combination of treatments may work for individuals.

- Psychotherapy – Psychotherapy is performed by a trained mental health professional who helps you explore your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Psychotherapy paired with medication is the most effective for recovery.

- Medication – Medication may not cure mental illness, but it can help with symptom management.

- Hospitalization – Hospitalization may be necessary in some cases for closely monitoring, and helping an individual with their symptoms and medications.

- Support Groups – Support Groups, often composed of peers with the same lived experiences, are places where individuals experiencing mental health issues can come together and support each other.
- Alternative Therapies – Alternative therapies like massage, herbal medicine, yoga, meditation, and acupuncture may improve your symptoms. But it's best to speak with your doctor, especially if you are taking herbal medicines, as they can interact with your other medications.

You do not need to have a diagnosed mental illness to seek some of these treatment options. You can seek therapy, join a support group, or practice yoga if you are experiencing mental health challenges or to improve your mental health.

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Self–Care Strategies

- Taking care of yourself can help improve your physical and mental well-being. You can try any of the following strategies to improve your mental health:

- Get exercise. 30 minutes a day can boost your physical and mental health.

- Eat healthy meals and drink water.

- Decrease caffeine and alcohol consumption.

- Get 8 hours of sleep.

- Practice gratitude.

- Keep connected with friends and family.

- Try relaxing activities and hobbies. This can include reading, listening to music, going for a walk, etc.

- Experiment with yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises.

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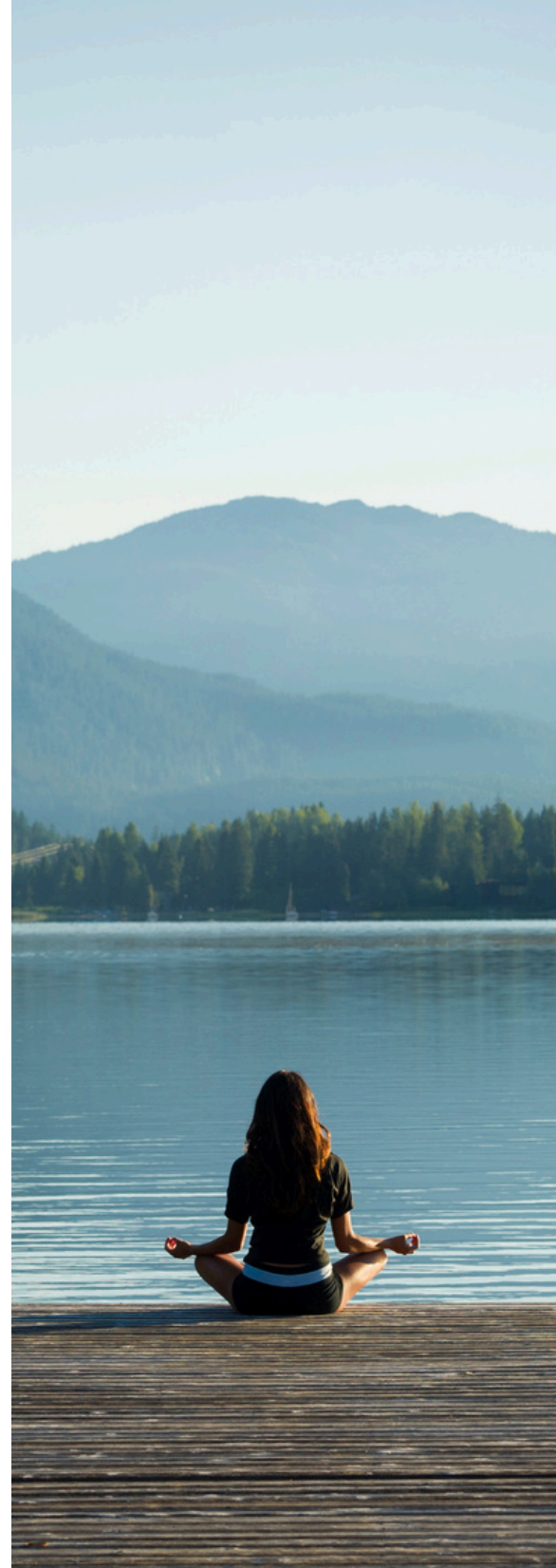
Mental Health Resources

***Please note, this resource is not being regularly updated. Please use the internet to search for the most updated contact information, if necessary.

- If this is an emergency or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 911 or visit your closest emergency department or hospital.
- If you are thinking of suicide, call the Suicide Crisis Helpline: Call or text 988 Available 24/7. https://988.ca/ If your safety is at risk, please call 911 immediately.
- Kids Help Phone: Call 1-800-668-6868 or Text: CONNECT to 686868, Available 24/7. https://kidshelpphone.ca/
- Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200. Available 24/7. https://gersteincentre.org/ Language interpretation available.
- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-4357. Available 24/7. https://www.dcogt.com/ Language interpretation available.

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- NISA Helpline 1-888-315-6472
  https://www.nisafoundation.ca/programs/nisa-helpline (7 days a week from 8 AM – Midnight ET, for Muslim women and girls, support available in English, Urdu, etc.).

For counselling or other support services:

- Punjabi Community Health Services (905) 677-0889
  https://pchs4u.com/ Available during set time periods.

- Family Service Toronto 416.595.9618
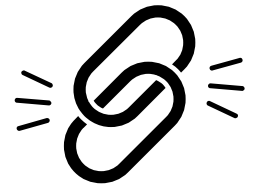 https://familyservicetoronto.org/ Available during set time periods.

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References

- Mayo Clinic: https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968#:~:text=Overview,eating%20disorders%20and%20addictive%20behaviors.

- Government of Canada Mental Health https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/about-mental-health.html

- https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/about-mental-illness.html

- Mental Health America https://mhanational.org/resources/mental-health-treatments/

- National Institute of Mental Health https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health

- City of Toronto Mental Health Resources https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/mental-health-resources/