

What is Mental Health?

Being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that you don't have a mental health problem.

If you're in good mental health, you can:

- make the most of your potential
- cope with life
- play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends.



Some people call mental health 'emotional health' or 'well-being' and it's just as important as good physical health.

Mental health is everyone's business. We all have times when we feel down or stressed or frightened. Most of the time those feelings pass. But sometimes they develop into a more serious problem and that could happen to any one of us.

What are Mental Health Problems?

Mental health problems range from the worries we all experience as part of everyday life to serious long-term conditions. Most people who experience mental health problems can get over them or learn to live with them, especially if they get help early on.

Mental health problems are usually defined and classified to enable professionals to refer people for appropriate care and treatment. But some diagnoses are controversial and there is much concern in the mental health field that people are too

often treated according to or described by their label. This can have a profound effect on their quality of life. Nevertheless, diagnoses remain the most usual way of dividing and classifying symptoms into groups.



Symptoms

Most mental health symptoms have traditionally been divided into groups called either 'neurotic' or 'psychotic' symptoms. 'Neurotic' covers those symptoms which can be regarded as severe forms of 'normal' emotional experiences such as depression, anxiety, or panic. Conditions formerly referred to as 'neuroses' are now more frequently called 'common mental health problems.'

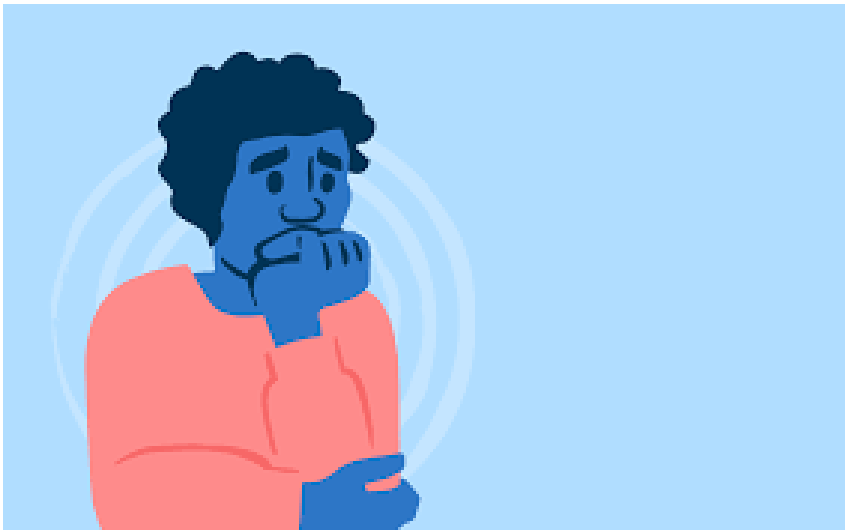


Less common are 'psychotic' symptoms, which interfere with a person's perception of reality, and may include hallucinations such as seeing, hearing, smelling, or feeling things that no one else can. Mental health problems affect the way you think, feel, and behave. They are problems that can be diagnosed by a doctor, not personal weaknesses.

Mental Health Problems are Common

As found by the APMS (2014), 1 in 6 people in the past week experienced a common mental health problem.

Anxiety and depression are the most common problems, with around 1 in 10 people affected at any one time.



How do mental health problems affect people?

Anxiety and depression can be severe and long-lasting and have a big impact on people's ability to get on with life.

Between one and two in every 100 people experience a severe mental illness, such as bi-polar disorder or schizophrenia, and have periods when they lose touch with reality. People affected may hear voices, see things no one else sees, hold unusual or irrational beliefs, feel unrealistically powerful, or read meanings into everyday events.



Although certain symptoms are common in specific mental health problems, no two people behave in the same way when they are unwell.

Many people who live with a mental health problem or are developing one try to keep their feelings hidden because they are afraid of other people's reactions. And many people feel troubled without having a diagnosed, or diagnosable, mental health problem - although that doesn't mean they aren't struggling to cope with daily life.

Do you need urgent help?

If your mental or emotional state gets worse, or you are worried about someone you know – help is available.

You're not alone. Talk to someone you trust. Sharing a problem is often the first step to recovery.

SEEK HELP FROM YOUR GP.

Helpful websites:

- Samaritans
- Rethink Mental Illness
- Mind
- NHS Choices
- The Mix
- Childline
- Youth Access Directory of Services
- Youth Wellbeing Directory
- Young Minds Parents' Helpline