

# WHY MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



Mental health is health. Our mental well-being is what makes us human and is integrated into every aspect of who we are and influences the possibilities for what we can become.

Without mental health, there can be no true physical health. And there's data to back that up. People with depression, for instance, are at higher risk of other medical conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

When it comes to the workplace, employees don't check their mental health at the door (or virtual workplace); it makes or breaks their ability to perform. Poor mental health and stress can negatively impact employee job performance, productivity, engagement, and even everyday functioning.

Conversely, positive mental health can help people:

- ✓ Realize their potential
- ✓ Cope with stress
- ✓ Work productively
- ✓ Make meaningful contributions to their community

## THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

It's important to understand mental health as not just the absence of illness, but as a broad concept that applies to us all. The World Health Organization agrees and defines mental health as:

"A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."

Mental health is not a binary state - you are not either mentally healthy or ill. There's a mental health continuum - and everyone falls somewhere on it. Today, it represents an inclusive approach to mental health. But it was not always that way; over the years, several different models of the continuum have been developed.

“*Without mental health, there can be no true physical health.*”  
- Dr. Brock Chisholm, the first director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO)

Some of the first mental health continuum models relied on the outdated idea that “mental health” is simply the absence of mental illness. These models looked at “health” and “illness” as two separate states of mind – and never examined the relationship between them. It’s crucial to recognize that mental health is not static – we all have the potential to drive ourselves towards the positive end of the spectrum.

# MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM\*: Mental Health is Not Static

Mental health is not a binary state - you are not either mentally healthy or ill. There's a mental health continuum and everyone falls somewhere on it, sometimes fluctuating from one day to the next.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typical sleep patterns</li><li>• High energy levels</li><li>• Consistent performance</li><li>• Socially active</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nervousness</li><li>• Tired/low energy</li><li>• Muscle tension/ headaches</li><li>• Procrastination</li><li>• Decreased social activity</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness</li><li>• Restless or disturbed sleep</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Social avoidance or withdrawal</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excessive anxiety, enraged, depressed</li><li>• Unable to fall or stay asleep</li><li>• Exhaustion, physical illness</li><li>• Unable to work</li><li>• Isolation</li></ul> |
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## ..... Actions that can help during each phase of the continuum .....

HEALTHY	REACTING	STRUGGLING	UNWELL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on present task</li><li>• Break problems into manageable steps</li><li>• Identify and nurture support systems</li><li>• Maintain a healthy lifestyle</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize limits</li><li>• Get adequate rest, food and exercise</li><li>• Engage in healthy coping strategies</li><li>• Identify and minimize stressors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and understand your own signs of distress</li><li>• Talk with someone</li><li>• Seek help</li><li>• Seek social support instead of withdrawing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seek consultation as needed</li><li>• Follow healthcare provider recommendations</li><li>• Focus on regaining physical and mental health</li></ul>