

Mental Health

Essential to Overall Health

What is mental health?

- How you think, feel, and act in order to face life's situations...
 - For example, how you handle stress.
- How you look at yourself, your life and the people in your life...
 - For example, how you relate to others.
- How you evaluate your options and make choices...
 - For example: how you make decisions.

Key component of mental health: what you think.

- Thinking is the cognitive component of mental health.
- It's important to recognize your thoughts and to determine if they are reasonable for the situation.
 - For example, a friend invites another friend to go to a movie. Do you think "That's OK. She can do that. I know we'll get together another time." Or, do you think "She's not my friend anymore. A real friend would always invite only me..."
- It's important how you respond to your thoughts.
 - Do you let negative, damaging thoughts continue or do you stop them? For example, if you think you've been slighted by a friend, do you go over and over in your mind that the friend is hurtful, disloyal, uncaring...
- Thoughts produce feelings in us.

Key component of mental health: what you feel.

- Feeling is the emotional / sensory component of mental health.
- Thoughts produce feelings.
 - Thinking the same thoughts over and over in your mind will create feelings – negative thoughts will create more negative feelings and positive thoughts will create more positive feelings.
- It's important to recognize your feelings.
 - For example, “I am angry and upset!”
- It's important to understand where these feelings are coming from.
 - Ie: your thought processes and how you interpret what's happened.
- It's important how you respond to your feelings.
 - “I feel this way so it's right to feel this way.”
 - Ask yourself questions such as: “Is this a legitimate feeling that is appropriate for the situation?”

Key component of mental health: how you act.

- Action is the behavioral component of mental health.
- Thoughts and feelings result in actions.
 - For example, you dwell in your mind about how your friend has slighted you until you feel really angry and then you take an action as a result of your thoughts and feelings.
- Actions can be unhealthy.
 - For example, you could pick up the phone and yell at your friend and damage the relationship.
 - For example, you could go out for a smoke or take a drink and hide away in your room.
- Actions can be healthy.
 - For example, you could talk over your thoughts and feelings with your friend or with someone else who could help.

Thoughts, feelings, and actions have impact.

- Since you were a young child, you realized that your behavior had consequences.
 - You touched a hot stove and were burned.
 - You disobeyed a rule and were disciplined.
- It's important to also realize that there are consequences to the way we think and feel.

Why is mental health so important?

Here are just a few reasons...

Mental health is important because:

- It affects your relationships with others:
 - Mental health problems lead to new problems with friends, family, law enforcement or school officials(National Mental Health Association, 1997)
- It affects how you learn:
 - Your attentiveness,
 - Your concentration,
 - Your classroom conduct,
 - Your ability to organize,
 - Your ability to communicate.
 - Source: SAMHSA. http://allmentalhealth.samhsa.gov/school_modules.html#mod2

Mental health is important because:

- Mental health problems can lead to other problems such as:
 - Experimenting with drugs or alcohol,
 - Being sexually promiscuous,
 - Being hostile and aggressive,
 - Taking risks in behavior.

What can I do to help protect my mental health?

- Eat healthfully.
- Exercise adequately.
- Care for your health daily.
- Take time for yourself regularly.
- Sleep bountifully.
- Manage stress diligently.

What can I do to help protect my mental health?

- Play
 - Learn to do something new and fun
- Know yourself
 - Be attuned to your thoughts and feelings.
 - Keep a journal.
 - Recognize when “this just doesn’t seem like I usually think or act”.
- Say “no” sometimes. Don’t overbook your schedule or your life.
 - Make time for quiet
 - Turn off the cell phone, TV...

What can I do to help protect my mental health?

- Recognize warning signs in
 - How you think,
 - How you feel,
 - How you act.
- Practice stress management and other self care strategies throughout life.
- Know when and where to get help.
 - Get help as soon as you suspect you need it.
 - Get help from a trained counselor or through a medical referral.