

What is mental health?



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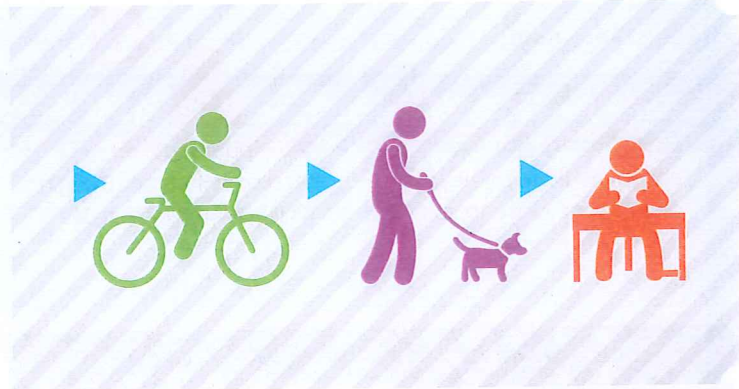
National Youth Mental Health Foundation



What is good mental health?

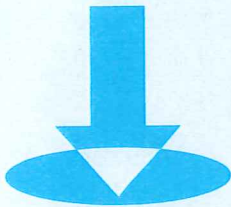
Good mental health is about being able to work and study to your full potential, cope with day-to-day life stresses, be involved in your community, and live your life in a free and satisfying way.

A person who has good mental health has good emotional and social wellbeing and the capacity to cope with change and challenges.



Mental health problems

Feeling down, tense, angry or anxious are all normal emotions, but when these feelings persist for long periods of time they may be part of a mental health problem. Mental health problems can influence how you think and your ability to function in your everyday activities, whether at school, at work or in relationships.



It can be helpful to talk to someone about what's going on in your life if you have noticed a change in how you are feeling and thinking. This might include:

- Feeling things have changed or aren't quite right
- Changes in the way that you carry out your day-to-day life
- Not enjoying, or not wanting to be involved in things that you would normally enjoy
- Changes in appetite or sleeping patterns
- Being easily irritated or having problems with friends and family for no reason
- Finding your performance at school, TAFE, university or work is not as good as it used to be
- Being involved in risky behaviour that you would usually avoid, like taking drugs or drinking too much alcohol, or depending on these substances to feel "normal"
- Feeling sad or 'down' or crying for no apparent reason
- Having trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Having negative, distressing, bizarre or unusual thoughts
- Feeling unusually stressed or worried.



If you feel your mental health is getting in the way of your daily life it is important to

get support and to ask for help.

You could visit your local general practitioner (GP) or **headspace** centre.

What is mental health?



Causes of mental health problems

A number of overlapping factors may increase your risk of developing a mental health problem. These can include:



Early life experiences:

abuse, neglect, or the loss of someone close to you



Individual factors:

level of self-esteem, coping skills and thinking styles



Current circumstances:

stress at school or work, money problems, difficult personal relationships, or problems within your family



Biological factors:

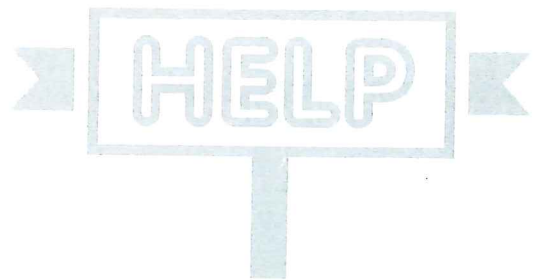
family history of mental health problems

Looking after your mental health

There are a number of things you can do to look after and maintain your mental health and wellbeing. For example, many people cope with stress by getting involved with sports, exercising, meditating, or practising yoga or relaxation techniques. Others express themselves through art, such as poetry, writing or music. What you eat might also affect your mood – a well-balanced diet will help keep you both physically and mentally healthy.



For more tips on looking after your mental health visit headspace.org.au to download the 'Tips for a healthy **headspace**' fact sheet.



If you are concerned about your own or a friend's mental health and wellbeing, **headspace** is a great place to go for help. Getting support can help you keep on track at school, study or work, and in your personal and family relationships. The sooner you get help the sooner things can begin to improve for you.

headspace is for young people aged 12-25 and can help you or a friend with mental health and wellbeing, general health, alcohol and other drug services, and issues at work, school and study.



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For more information, to find your nearest **headspace** centre or for online and telephone support, visit headspace.org.au