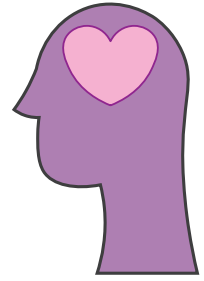


Why Is It Hard to Talk About Mental Health?

- Mental health is just as important as physical health
- Feeling very sad for a long time (called depression), worrying a lot (called anxiety), or having trouble focusing (called ADHD) are real health problems
- You are not weak, lazy, or broken if you need help; getting help is a strong and healthy choice

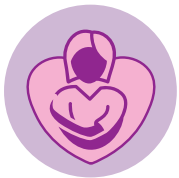


Tips to Feel More Comfortable With Your Mental Health Care



Know You're Not Alone

- Many people like friends, neighbors, coworkers live with mental health conditions, even if you can't see it
- Mental health issues are more common than you think—about 1 in 5 people in the U.S. have or have had them—and many people get better with help



Be Kind to Yourself

- Try saying, "I'm doing my best," instead of, "What's wrong with me?"
- Don't say things to yourself that you wouldn't say to someone you care about
- Struggling with mental health doesn't mean you've failed—it means you're human



Talk About How You Feel in Safe Spaces

- Share your struggles with someone you trust—don't hold it in
- Talking to a friend, family member, or health professional can make a big difference



Keep Learning the "Why"

- The more you know about your condition, the more confident you will feel
- Ask questions at appointments; it's okay to say, "I don't understand—can you explain that again?"
- There's a real medical reason you feel this way, and you have a right to understand it



Remember That Treatment Helps

- Therapy, medicine, or both can make your life so much better
- Treatment is a winding road—some days will be good and others will be hard, but you can get better overall if you stick with your treatments



Celebrate Small Wins

- Getting out of bed, going to therapy, or taking your medicine are all wins
- Even on hard days, doing something small counts: Be proud of that
- You will become stronger each day



Why Is It Hard to Talk About Mental Health?

Things You Should Avoid

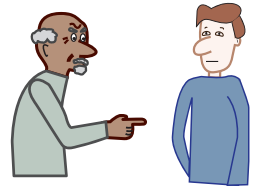
AVOID



Letting fear
stop you



Worrying about
what others think



Thinking you
have to be
strong all the
time



Viewing mental
health struggles
as a weakness



- **Thinking you have to be strong all the time:** It's okay to ask for help. You don't have to do everything alone or be okay every day, but do work towards feeling better every day.
- **Believing mental health struggles are a weakness:** Having mental health struggles doesn't mean you are weak. You wouldn't blame yourself for having asthma or diabetes—mental health is just as real.
- **Worrying about what others will think:** Some people don't understand mental health, but that doesn't make them right. Listen to your health professionals and come up with a plan together.
- **Letting fear stop you:** Getting treatment can be scary, but what is even scarier is living a life where your mental health controls you. Talk to your health professionals about your fears.

Wrong Ideas People Often Believe About Mental Health

"I should be able to fix this on my own."

TRUTH: Everyone needs help sometimes. Talking to a health professional, family member, or friend is a strong and healthy choice. You don't have to do it alone.

"Only people with serious problems need therapy or medicine."

TRUTH: People get help for all kinds of reasons—stress, worry, sadness, focus problems, and more. You don't have to wait until it feels "serious."

"If I talk about mental health, people will think I'm crazy."

TRUTH: Talking about mental health shows you're brave and honest. This may make people trust you even more and help them open up about their own struggles.

When to Talk to Your Health Professional

- You feel sad, worried, or tired most days or you're having trouble sleeping, eating, or focusing
- You're pulling away from others or things you used to enjoy
- You feel like things won't ever get better
- You want help, but don't know where to start and/or feel shame about getting started on a mental health treatment



Neuroscience Education Institute

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