

# Looking out for your mental health

More support, less stigma: How you think, feel and act impacts your well-being.

## Understanding your mental health

Feedback

... There is an increased awareness of mental health in our daily lives — in the news, in schools, while at work. But what does mental health actually mean? And why is it important to focus on when we talk about improving our overall health and well-being?

To begin, you may also hear the phrase “behavioral health” come up in discussing mental health. There is a difference and a relationship between mental and behavioral health. We need to understand their definitions, differences and roles in what it means to be healthy.

### The difference between mental health and behavioral health

Both mental and behavioral care recognize that health is more than physical wellness. It's also connected with our thoughts, habits and moods.

- Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects the ways we handle stress, make choices and interact with others.
- Behavioral health involves our actions and their effect on our physical and mental health.

It's common for a person to be struggling with both a mental health and a behavioral health challenge.

## Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being.

Mental health also relates to:

- Preventing or treating mental illness such as depression or anxiety
- Preventing or treating substance abuse or other addictions
- How we think, feel and act

Mental health helps determine how we handle stress, make choices and interact with others.



Common topics related to your mental health

- Panic disorder
- Anxiety
- Suicidal ideation
- Depression
- Unwanted memories
- Sleep difficulties
- Guilt or self-blame
- Concentration problems
- Anhedonia (lack of enjoying things)
- Drinking or using more than intended

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Feedback

Some of us struggle more than others in taking care of our mental health. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) says cultural stigma, discrimination and language barriers can get in the way.<sup>1</sup>

Doctors, health plans, employers and other companies are working to address these challenges. For example, work underway includes:

- Increasing diversity in the health care workforce
- Finding new ways to use technology, like virtual care and apps, to make care more convenient and available in the privacy of your home
- Reducing stigma surrounding mental and behavioral health issues



# Helping all people feel comfortable getting care

Talking about mental and behavioral health topics is not always easy. But while these conditions may not be openly discussed, they are common.


Feedback

Mental health conditions generally affect 1 in 5 American adults each year.<sup>2</sup> After the last year, the numbers may be higher. A recent study showed [nearly one-third of U.S. adults reported symptoms](#) of anxiety or depression in the spring of 2021.

Yet as many as 60% of adults with a mental health condition may not get services they need.<sup>3</sup>

## Reducing stigma related to mental health

The stigma — a set of negative and often unfair beliefs — surrounding mental and behavioral health issues can prevent people from seeking help or talking about their concerns. So privacy may become a critical part of the care journey.

The stigma has declined in recent years. But we can all play a role in improving acceptance of discussing and caring for issues related to mental and behavioral health. 

- 1 Talk openly about mental health
- 2 Encourage equality between physical and mental illness
- 3 Be honest about treatment
- 4 Educate yourself and others
- 5 Show compassion for those with mental illness
- 6 Let the media know when they're being stigmatizing
- 7 Be conscious of language
- 8 Choose empowerment over shame
- 9 Don't harbor self-stigma

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# It starts when you're young

Mental health is important at every stage of life. Half of all mental illness begins by age 14.<sup>4</sup> Millions of children and teens live with mental health issues — as many as 1 in 5.<sup>5</sup>

Now, after more than a year of interrupted routines and loss, children and teens are dealing with new sources of stress, anxiety and grief.

## Until It's Fixed podcast: Supporting Our Kids

[Listen now](#)

Feedback

Listen as three psychiatrists discuss youth mental health, recognizing symptoms and how family and caregivers can help.

# Understanding your mental health



Mental health resources

Bringing attention to your



Article

How to talk to your teen about mental health

## emotional well-being

We've partnered with Psych Hub to help you find resources and educational tools.

[Access resources >](#)

You don't have to go it alone. Use these 5 tips to get started.

[Read now >](#)



Article

### How the pandemic changed the conversation on mental health

Everyday conversations have changed, including how we talk about our mental health.

[Read now >](#)

## MORE NEWS AND ADVICE

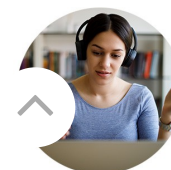
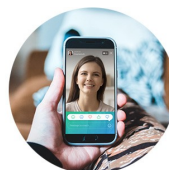
[Thoughts from a therapist — how to feel your feelings](#)

[8 lesser-known signs of anxiety](#)

[10 ways to deal with stress](#)

Feedback

# Find support for your mental health



## Optum Store

Find convenient and affordable therapy, medication delivery and other support to help you on your mental health journey.

[Learn more >](#)

## Live and Work Well

Get access to the right support for you based on your needs and your coverage.

[Learn more >](#)

## Sanvello

Improve your mental health on your terms with an app that offers clinically proven therapies and tools.

[Learn more >](#)

## AbleTo

Get on-demand, personalized emotional support with a dedicated coach from the convenience of your own home.

[Learn more >](#)

## More resources

### Mental health screening

Free, private and anonymous mental health screening available through [Mental Health America](#). Based on the results, MHA will provide information and resources to help.

If you're in a crisis or thinking about suicide, get in touch with someone immediately:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

En español 1-888-628-9454

1-800-799-4889 (TTY)

Text "HELLO" to 741741

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline**

Free and confidential mental health and substance abuse treatment referral and information services available 24/7 (in English and Spanish)

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

[www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)

- **Crisis Text Line**

Connect with a crisis counselor 24/7 via text

Text "HELLO" to 741741

[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

- **Veterans Crisis Line**

1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press 1

Text to 838255

[www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline**

Crisis counselors available 24/7 for anyone experiencing emotional distress related to a natural or human-caused disaster.

1-800-985-5990

Text TalkWithUs to 66746

[www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)



## Sources

1. American Psychiatric Association (APA). [Mental health disparities: Diverse populations](#).
2. National Alliance on Mental Illness. [Mental Health by the Numbers](#). Last updated March 2021. Accessed October 1, 2021.
3. World Health Organization. [Universal health coverage for mental health](#). Accessed August 4, 2021.
4. National Alliance on Mental Illness. [Mental Health Facts: Children and Teens](#). Accessed September 1, 2021.
5. World Health Organization. [Mental disorders](#). November 28, 2019. Accessed August 4, 2021.

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