UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Stress Management Society
from distress to de-stress

International
Wellbeing Insights
People, Culture & Wellbeing

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel and act in everyday life. Mental health doesn't always stay the same. It can change as circumstances change and as you move through different stages of your life. Unfortunately, there is still stigma attached to mental health problems. This means that people feel uncomfortable talking about mental health issues. However, talking openly about mental health is important as it reduces stigma and grants healthy emotional expression. There is no health without mental health.

WHY IS MENTAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?T

Almost everyone is affected by mental illness. Whether they are personally dealing with it or they have a loved one who is; mental health is important to everyone. NHS England reports that ‘one in four adults and one in ten children will experience mental illness. Yet despite this, gaining access to mental health services is difficult and unequal. The situation in the UK is not good, but for those living in low or middle-income countries, it is worse, with 75-95% of people having no access to the treatment they so badly need. This shows how important it is to talk about Mental Health and how we can support each other.

THE MOST COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Anxiety Disorders
Depression
Learning Disability
Bipolar Disorders
Bordeline Personality Disorder
Eating Disorders
Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Obsessive-cumpulsive Disorder
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Schizophrenia
Autism Spectrum Disorder
Bipolar Disorder
Tourettes and Tic Disorder

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DECREASING MENTAL HEALTH

- Feeling sad or down
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping
- Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations
- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people
- Problems with alcohol or drug use
- Major changes in eating habits
- Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- Suicidal thinking

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SHOW SUPPORT

- **Learn All You Can-** Find out everything you can about the condition your friend is struggling with. The more you understand the causes and symptoms of the disorder, the easier it will be for you to be supportive.

- **Support their Treatment-** Encourage your friend to seek professional treatment, and support their efforts to do so. Mental illness, for many, is a long-term battle. Treatment must continue regularly, sometimes indefinitely.

- **Set boundaries-** It’s important to be sensitive to the needs of your friend who’s struggling with a mental illness. . But this doesn't mean that they can treat you badly. By allowing your friend to treat you poorly, you’re not helping them control the symptoms of their disease — instead, you’re making it okay for them to let the disease control their life, which isn’t helpful for either of you.

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