



Supporting women’s mental health



Each year, the world celebrates **International Women’s Day on 8 March** to promote women’s rights, health and wellbeing. Officially, the day is meant to mark the progress made toward gender equality, while raising awareness of the challenges women continue to face around the world.

Mental health

One of the challenges women face is in the area of mental health, which includes emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. Many factors beyond genetics can affect a person’s mental health and wellbeing.

Social determinants of health

The conditions in which a person is born, grows up, works, lives and grows old all contribute to their overall health and wellness. These social determinants of health encompass gender norms, roles and relations, as well as financial wellbeing, and also access to good quality education and health care. In most cultures around the world, women continue to face greater challenges than men in each of these areas.

Women are more likely than men to:

- Experience physical and sexual abuse and violence
- Live in poverty
- Be unemployed or underemployed
- Be in lower-paying, high-stress jobs
- Hold fewer political, economic, social or cultural leadership and decision-making positions
- Have mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder







What this all adds up to is: Although you probably cannot solve global systemic issues alone, you can help to support the women in your life.



8 March

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**Celebrate
International
Women’s Day**

Here are a few ways to get started:

-  **Be respectful.** Treat women as individuals, not as objects.
-  **Use person-first language.** Choose words with sensitivity. Respect the individuality and humanity of women.
-  **Be an ally.** Encourage respect and dignity for all people, including women. If you hear or see someone saying or doing something offensive or harmful, speak up and address it.
-  **Don't make assumptions.** You cannot tell who a woman is, what she is capable of, what she thinks or believes, or what she has gone through, by looking at her.
-  **Gain understanding.** Read articles and books, watch films and listen to podcasts about culture, history and current events that affect women.
-  **Participate.** Whatever you choose to do and however you do it, foster discussion, promote acceptance and encourage enduring mutual respect across gender lines.

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