

# Celebrate World Mental Health Day

**Overcoming stigma: Learn more about mental health and why your wellbeing is important**



Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. And they're both equally important to your overall health and wellbeing. Yet stigma (negative beliefs and attitudes) continues to keep many people with mental health concerns from getting help.

Stigma can take many forms. It can come from the people around you, the way systems and policies are formed in your community, and from within yourself. Stigma persists even in cultures where legislation exists to protect the human rights of people with mental health conditions.

World Mental Health Day is held each year on 10 October. Its aim is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilise efforts in support of mental health. As stigma is often rooted in fear and misunderstanding, let's take a moment to learn more in honour of World Mental Health Day.

## **What is mental health?**

As defined by the World Health Organization, mental health includes your emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how you think, feel and act. It also helps determine how you handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices.

Contrary to what many people think, mental illnesses do not represent a lack of self-discipline or a flawed character. They also do not usually come and go, like a phase or stage in life.

In fact, mental health conditions are medical conditions. And they develop as a result of biological, psychological and social factors. They can affect people from all backgrounds, geographies and demographic groups.



**10 October**

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**Happy World  
Mental Health Day**

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## Are physical and mental health conditions related?

Mental illnesses can affect all areas of your life, including your overall health, relationships, career and finances, just as physical illnesses, i.e. disturbances of the wellbeing of your body, can do.

People can experience one or the other, or both. This means that physical and mental health conditions can be separate health issues, interconnected health issues, and can also cause or contribute to one another.

People who have mental health conditions often experience physical symptoms. For example, people with depression may suffer from headaches, fatigue or digestive issues. And people with anxiety disorders can have difficulty focusing their attention, and experience stomach and sleep troubles.

## What can I do to help my mental health and wellbeing?

There are lots of proven ways to help nurture your mental and emotional health. Start by thinking of ways you can proactively manage stress, maintain optimism and build resilience. For example, to manage stress, avoid overcommitting yourself at work and in your personal life.

Also, do things that help you release tension. Take time to relax, move your body, laugh and participate in enjoyable activities.

Making meaningful social connections with people you find uplifting can help bring joy and positivity into your life too. So does practising gratitude, which can help you remember the good things in life even when times are tough.

And if you are experiencing a mental health concern, practise self-care and reach out for support.

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