



Champion mental health at home and at work



When someone asks you how you're doing, how likely are you to respond with a simple, "Great, thanks. How are you?"

You might genuinely feel good, but if you were stressed, angry, sad, anxious, or experiencing another difficult emotion, would you say so?

In most cases, whether inside or outside our inner circle, many of us wouldn't feel comfortable sharing our true feelings. Likewise, many of us wouldn't feel comfortable pressing a friend or co-worker to share theirs for fear of overstepping boundaries or of appearing nosy.

But avoiding conversations about difficult emotions and hard times – whether temporary or ongoing ones – can add to the stigma that surrounds mental health.

Overcoming stigma

Many people live with situational or chronic depression, anxiety or other mental health difficulties. Globally, an estimated 15% of working-age adults and 12% of people have a mental health disorder.^{1,2} Most are left untreated.

Negative attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes persist among individuals, community systems and policies, even in cultures with laws protecting mental health rights. This stigma keeps many people from seeking support. At the same time, some people don't realise they need help, while others mistakenly believe needing help is a sign of weakness.

Others simply don't have access to mental health resources.

These are all reasons World Mental Health Day is observed each year on 10 October. Global and national organisations and institutions come together to raise awareness of the importance of mental health, rally support and help to put policies and systems in place for those in need.



**10 October
is World Mental
Health Day**

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struggle with a mental health disorder.

Understanding mental health

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health – and they're equally important to your overall health and wellness. Just like physical health, mental health can affect all areas of your life, including your overall health, relationships, career and finances.

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. The following are some common signs of mental health conditions:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Persistent sadness, hopelessness, or “empty” feeling
- Extreme mood changes, including irritability or anger
- Changes in eating habits, energy level or sleeping patterns
- Increased use of alcohol or other substances
- Persistent physical aches and pains
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress

Most people experience these kinds of emotions from time to time. If these feelings persist and get in the way of your day-to-day functioning, it might be a sign of a mental health disorder, which is a treatable medical condition.

Mental health conditions can develop as a result of biological, psychological and social factors. People of any gender, from any background and in any circumstance across geographies can experience mental health issues and conditions.

Sources

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It's important to note that: The same mental health disorder can occur in different ways for different people. For example, both men and women with depression may feel sad, hopeless or exhausted, sleep too much or have a hard time sleeping, and feel have physical problems like digestive issues.

But, compared to women, men with depression are more likely to be irritable, angry and combative. They are more likely to engage in “escapist behaviours”, like working long hours or focusing a lot of time and attention on sports or other activities. They also are more likely to engage in risky behaviours, like driving dangerously or misusing alcohol or drugs, than women.

Promoting mental health and wellbeing

Many proven ways can help nurture your mental and emotional health, including:

- Proactively managing stress, maintaining optimism and building resilience. For example, to manage stress, avoid overcommitting yourself at work and in your personal life.
- Do things that help you release tension, such as taking time to relax, moving your body, laughing and participating in fun activities.
- Make meaningful social connections with uplifting people to add joy and positivity into your life.
- Practise gratitude to remember the good in life, even when times are tough.
- And remember that mental health conditions are treatable. If you or someone close to you is experiencing a mental health problem, consult a medical or mental health professional.

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