



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?



Life can be difficult at times for many reasons, and sometimes we can feel very alone in our experiences believing that no one else could possibly feel this way.

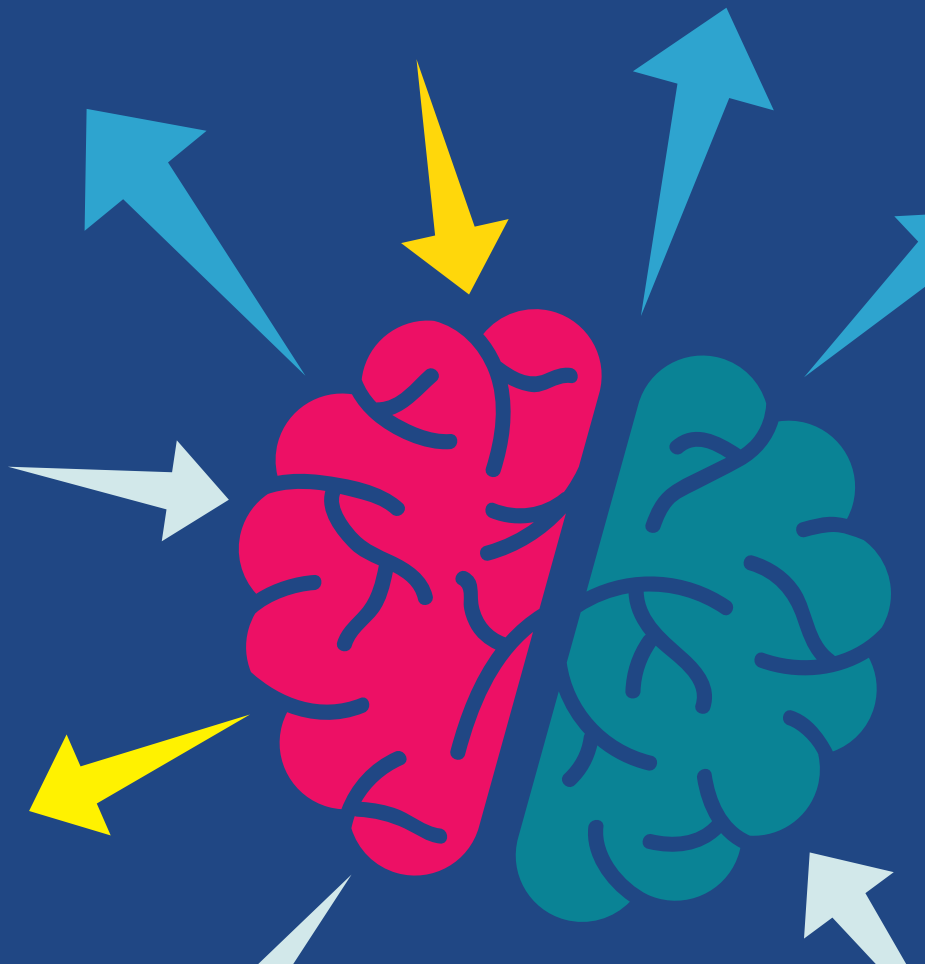
This really isn't the case, as we all experience feelings of sadness, confusion, and anxiety and we can become very upset when things don't quite go to plan. This is a normal part of being human, everyone faces pressure in their lives at certain times. Life is a complicated, it is painful and feeling down is part of living.

Our past experiences can have a big impact on how we view the world and how we react to what life throws at us. If someone or something causes us distress it is likely that in the future we will be more wary. This is our mind's way of protecting us from repeated pain and is an important survival mechanism.

We all have physical health and mental health and just like our physical health, our mental health has its ups and downs. Being mentally healthy means we are able to work through and overcome the difficulties and challenges we all face in our lives.

"THE DOWNERS" - THINGS THAT CAN MAKE LIFE HARDER!

- Abuse (of any description)
- A death
- Friendships (and how hard these can be)
- Parents separate or divorce
- Not living with your family anymore
- Peer pressure / Bullying (face to face and online)
- School and exam stress
- Sexuality/Gender identity
- Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event
- Physical health problems (your own or someone that you care for)
- Drug/Alcohol use
- Current affairs/What's happening where we live and around the world
- Social media (life without filters)



WHAT CAN HELP?

We are all different. So what helps will depend on what you enjoy and what makes you feel good. Different things work for different people. It might take time to find what works for you but here are some ideas that people have told us work for them.

- Spend time with people who make you feel good
- Spend less time with people who bring you down
- Listen to your favourite music
- Watching your favourite film
- Read something that you enjoy (that feel-good factor)

- Do something creative (cook, make something, write)
- Exercise (at a healthy pace - go for a walk - do something where you have to move around)
- Try something new
- Talking to someone you trust - we know this can be difficult but talking to the right people can really help. Sometimes it helps to plan and think about what you want to say beforehand. Choosing a time and a place to talk can also be helpful.

WHEN YOU MIGHT NEED A LITTLE BIT MORE HELP

Sometimes it helps to talk to someone outside of our family and friends. This extra help might be needed if, after a few weeks' of trying these things, our situation isn't getting any easier and we feel stuck.

Here are some signs to watch out for. Please be aware that many of these are a normal part of growing up however, when they are ongoing and interfere with your life it might be a time to ask for help

- Sadness
- Loss of interest in life and any hobbies or pastimes that you used to enjoy
- Tiredness and low energy levels even after a good night's sleep

- Mood swings, irritability or outbursts of anger
- Lack of interest in school and/or your schoolwork is affected
- Poor concentration
- Not seeing/contacting your friends
- Constantly comparing yourself to others
- Not taking care of yourself
- Changes in appetite
- Taking risks (alcohol, drugs, relationships, putting yourself in unsafe situations)
- Self-harm
- Suicidal thoughts (not caring about whether you live or die)

SO WHO IS OUT THERE?

- Your doctor
- A teacher or another professional that you trust

There are lots of people who can and want to help you. Here is a useful link where you can find what is available.

WWW.WELLBEINGINFO.ORG

#REASONS2

REASONS2 IS A FREE APP DESIGNED BY YOUNG PEOPLE AND WASHINGTON MIND TO HELP IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.WELLBEINGINFO.ORG/REASONS2

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