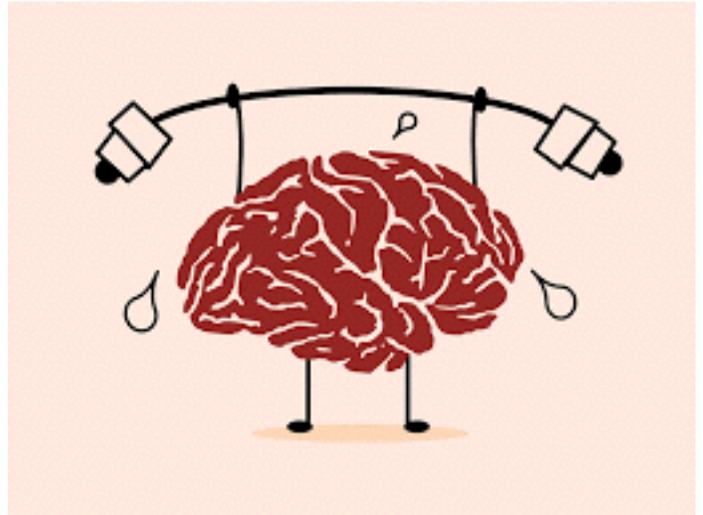




## Contributing Factors of Mental Health

There are many factors that contribute to Mental Health, such as genetics, anxiety, depression, stress, and social isolation. Mental illnesses affect people in a number of ways. Sometimes, Mental illnesses affect people when they don't expect it, and passes with them for either a short or long period of time. A mental illness is never simple, a long lasting personality disorder can come from just a small case of temporary depression.



## How can Mental health be harmed or benefited?

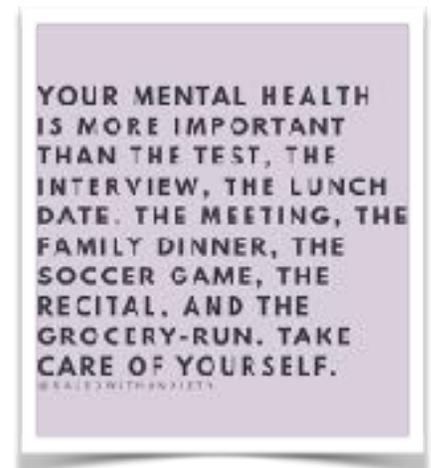
**Abuse-** People that are in an unhealthy environment that contains any kind of abuse, whether physical, sexual, or psychological can make it impossible for a person to maintain being Mentally Healthy.

**Smoking-** Therapists have found evidence that smoking can help a mentally unstable person focus better and “take the edge off” of Mental Health symptoms. Smoking might help a person forget their problems, but in the long run people are getting addicted to the substance and harming their bodies.

**Involvement-** Researchers say that people who suffer from Mental Health symptoms should get involved in the larger community through volunteer work to help with connecting with others and overcoming challenges throughout their everyday life.

## How to boost Mental Health?

People can help boost their Mental Health in a number of ways, such as being active on a regular basis ( this will help people keep their minds occupied and boost people's physical health ), being able to manage stress, having social connections ( this will increase social health ), having a steady sleep schedule, setting a goal and acknowledging a purpose for life, and maintaining a healthy diet can help boost levels of mental health.



Where to get help?

Individuals that are struggling with Mental Health have a wide variety of support groups they can join. Support groups are offered as a safe place for individuals where they can come together and share their stories, experiences, and lives that can help reduce isolation. Similar places such as going to a Psychiatrist, talking with a school counselor, and seeing a therapist weekly can help a person sustain a Mentally Healthy life.

## Mental Health

by Megan Jensik

Mental health is taboo. No one likes to talk about it, no one acknowledges that it's a problem, and no one seems to care, right? When someone is in a mentally unstable state, it's very easy to get into this mindset. As much as our society has grown a lot when it comes to mental health stigma, ask anyone who is mentally ill and you'll realize how far we still need to come. Why is it that when someone has a broken finger, they don't have to participate in gym, but when someone has crippling social anxiety they're expected to speak in front of class? Why is there such a double standard when it comes to mental and physical health? And most importantly, what can we do to ensure safety and comfort for mentally ill individuals?

Mental health problems can come in many different forms. There are anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, eating disorders, etc. And underneath those umbrellas are numerous other illnesses that many people suffer under. For more information on these disorders, please visit this website: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

People usually have unjust stereotypes of almost every kind of disorder. Some even use slurs, offensive language, or they poke fun at people who are dealing with an illness. People with depression are labeled as lazy, people with anxiety are labelled as obsessive, people who self-harm are labelled as attention seeking, and everyone else is labelled as crazy. Whenever someone dares to show their symptoms, they are usually shut down before they can get any help. Even small jokes or remarks give into the stigma that mentally ill individuals suffer under. Next time you want to make fun of an autistic kid for stuttering, use the word retarded as an insult, or make any judgement based on someone's mental health problems, please think before you speak.

Although it seems hard to aid anyone who is dealing with these problems, it's very important to provide help. One basic guideline is to just act kindly to everyone. You don't know what anyone else is going through, and one small harsh remark that you make might end up causing a depressive episode for someone else. It's impossible to be perfect in these situations, but any effort helps.

The advice that we have always been given is to tell an adult if you think that a friend is suffering. Telling anyone, especially an adult, about your mental illness is a very threatening situation. It takes a huge amount of bravery and most people would rather suffer in silence for their entire life than tell

someone about what they're going through. This is obviously a huge problem. It might seem like you're betraying a friend if you get an adult to help them, but sometimes it's necessary. They will forgive you. Recovery takes a long time and it's better to start sooner than later.

And to those who are mentally ill and who are scared to tell anyone, I understand how hard it is. It's hard to admit defeat and to realize that you need help, but needing help isn't a weakness. You can't go through life alone, and there will always be someone there who you can talk to. If you don't know who you can reach out to right now, Crisis Text Line is a resource for those going through any kind of crisis. Whether it be mental health related or not, they have trained professionals ready to talk whenever they're needed. And to those with social anxiety, don't worry, there's no talking on the phone and it's purely over text. Their number is 741-741 and I highly recommend it to anyone that needs help.

Although these temporary solutions can be helpful and provide coping mechanisms, they are just that- temporary. Mental illness can be tricky when it comes to cures because there is none that is quick and easy. Medication can be helpful but usually is discouraged by psychologists to be an end all "cure". Cognitive behavioral therapy is a difficult but more effective type of healing. Even just talking to someone about your problems can be a good start and is a good way to alleviate stress especially when that person is a trained professional. It's my personal belief that therapy should be accessible to everyone because it is a powerful way to overcome some of your past demons.

If you haven't taken in anything that I've written so far, please remember this. You are important. You deserve the world, no matter what anyone else says. Your mental health issues might make you feel lost and alone, but someone will always be there for you. Your life has so much value and you deserve happiness. Please continue to live your life because someday your struggles will be over and you will recover, I promise.

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