
EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Ever felt so down you couldn't concentrate in school or enjoy social activities with your friends? If so, you are not alone. In a recent survey, half of all college students said they had been so stressed that they couldn't get their work done or enjoy social activities during the last semester. But all of us have the power to take control of our emotional health in order to improve our moods and get the most out of life.

Taking control of your emotional health involves realizing that choices you make about sleep, diet and exercise can have a direct impact on your emotions and state of mind. It also means being proactive when you are concerned about your thoughts or feelings. When unaddressed, mental health problems like depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, eating disorders and addiction can make it hard to do well or feel good. The good news is that these problems are treatable and getting help is the first step towards feeling better and moving forward.

Signs and Symptoms

Here are some common signs that a friend needs help dealing with emotional issues or a mental health problem:

- Depression or apathy that interferes with obligations or participating in social activities
- Lack of coping skills around day-to-day problems or extreme reactions to certain situations
- Extreme highs, referred to as mania, that may include rushed thoughts, bursts of energy, sleeplessness, and compulsive behavior (like excessive spending or promiscuous sexual behavior)
- Severe anxiety or stress
- Constant feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Increased or regular use of alcohol or drugs

Getting Help

The key to taking control of your emotional health is to listen to your body and understand its needs. Make sure to get plenty of sleep. Stay active. Research has shown that people dealing with mild to moderate depression have experienced up to a 50 percent reduction in symptoms after exercising on a regular basis. Be sure to eat a healthy, balanced diet. Avoid stressful situations whenever possible and make sure you have the right tools to deal with the situations you can't avoid. Know your limits when it comes to drugs and alcohol.

Above all else, it's important to speak up and get things checked out if you are concerned about your thoughts, feelings or behavior.

Resources

Let's Erase The Stigma: lets.org

Love is Louder: loveislouder.com

Half of Us: halfofus.com

Mental Health America: mentalhealthamerica.net

The Unabridged Student Counseling Virtual

Pamphlet Collection: dr-bob.org/vpc

National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality:

borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com

Families for Depression Awareness: familyaware.org

Veterans United: veteransunited.com/network

American Psychiatric Foundation:

americanpsychiatricfoundation.org

BACCHUS: bacchusnetwork.org

Active Minds: activeminds.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness: nami.org

LGBT National Help Center: glbthotline.org

National Institute of Mental Health:

nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml

OK2TALK: ok2talk.org

Make The Connection: maketheconnection.net

Inspire USA Foundation: us.reachout.com

The Trevor Project: thetrevorproject.org

National Dialogue on Mental Health: mentalhealth.gov

Each Mind Matters: eachmindmatters.org

The Center (LGBT Community Center): gaycenter.org

Samaritans: samaritans.org

Befrienders Worldwide: befrienders.org

Family Acceptance Project: familyproject.sfsu.edu

Veterans Affairs Training: veterantraining.va.gov

Veterans Affairs Mental Health Toolkit: [mentalhealth.va.gov/](http://mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/#sthash.nJKjSafq.OiF8WL9S.dpbs)

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Veterans Affairs Mental Health: mentalhealth.va.gov

Source: <http://www.ulifeline.org/uwf/topics/143-emotional-health>