

KEY FACTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health refers to our cognitive, behavioural and emotional wellbeing - it is all about how we think, feel, and behave. It helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.

Mental health also includes a person's ability to enjoy life - to attain a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.

WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

A medically diagnosable illness which can result from a number of factors including biological or developmental. It can affect the way we feel, act and think and disrupts our ability to work or carry out other daily activities and engage in satisfying personal relationships. It can be managed through prevention, diagnosis, treatment and mental health recovery.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY?

Mental health recovery means being able to live a good life, as defined by the person, with or without symptoms. It is a unique and personal experience that can have its ups and downs. Mental health recovery focusses on what a person CAN do rather than on what they can't. It is not necessarily easy or straightforward. Many people describe the need to persevere and to find ways to maintain hope through the most trying times.

PARITY OF ESTEEM

The principle by which mental health must be given equal priority to physical health. It was enshrined in law in 2012. The government requires NHS England to work for parity of esteem to mental and physical health through the NHS Mandate. This has still not yet been realised.

KEY FACTS ON MENTAL ILLNESS:

- The total cost of mental ill health in England is estimated at £105 billion per year. (NHS England, The Five Year Forward View, 2016)
- Nearly half (43.4%) of adults think that they have had a diagnosable mental health condition at some point in their life (35.2% of men and 51.2% of women). A fifth of men (19.5%) and a third of women (33.7%) have had diagnoses confirmed by professionals. (NHS Digital, 2017)
- 1 in 8 children have a diagnosable mental health disorder – that's roughly 3 children in every classroom. (NHS, 2018)
- In 2018, there were 6,507 suicides registered in the UK, an age-standardised rate of 11.2 deaths per 100,000 population; the latest rate is significantly higher than that in 2017 and represents the first increase since 2013. Three-quarters of registered deaths in 2018 were among men (4,903 deaths), which has been the case since the mid-1990s. (ONS, 2019)
- In a National Union of Students poll of 4,000 students, 52% reported that their mental health had deteriorated or been affected negatively by Covid-19. However only 29% of those had looked for help. (nus student survey, 2020)
- In a survey investigating how the COVID-19 pandemic affected Jews across the UK a clear trend was seen with respect to synagogue membership. Mental distress is notably higher among those who are not synagogue members than among those who are (JPR Hidden Effects Survey, July 2020).
- Adults who were aged 16 to 39 years old, female, unable to afford an unexpected expense, or disabled were the most likely to experience some form of depression during the pandemic. (ONS, August 2020)
- Almost one in five adults (19.2%) were likely to be experiencing some form of depression during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in June 2020; this had almost doubled from around 1 in 10 (9.7%) before the pandemic (July 2019 to March 2020). (ONS, August 2020)

NHS 5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing.

If you give them a try, you may feel happier, more positive and able to get the most from life.



CONNECT

Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.



BE ACTIVE

You don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.



KEEP LEARNING

Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?



GIVE TO OTHERS

Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.



BE MINDFUL

Be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

In these stressful and uncertain times, when the things which can significantly impact you are outside of your control, you need to make sure you look after your own mental health.

- **Stay connected** – love it or hate it ‘Zoom’ has enabled many of us to stay in touch. However you do it, talking to others is essential to maintaining our mental health.
- **Find activities** that will help you focus your mind such as mindfulness meditation – if it is right for you (it’s not for everyone), prayer, reading a book, doing a jigsaw or re-organising your desk or kitchen.
- **Get some fresh air** – if you’re not self-isolating, go for a walk and clear your head. If you are self-isolating, open the windows and let some air in.
- **Exercise** – if you can’t get out for a walk, find an online home workout video.
- **Create a motivating ‘to do’ list** – books you haven’t had a chance to read, a movie you wanted to watch or a new recipe to try out.
- **Have a routine** – if you’re looking after other people, especially children, having a routine is essential. During lockdown and with the disruption to our daily lives that Covid-19 has brought, we’ve had to create new routines. Routine and structure helps most of us function and gives us a sense of ‘control’. Win small control victories by sticking to a time for getting up, time for working, time for dog walking, etc. Children and young people thrive on routine and continuity so having one works for all the generations.
- **Gratitude and Reflection** – we hear a lot these days about the benefit of keeping a gratitude journal. If you haven’t yet tried reflecting on what you can be grateful for, why not have a go? You can do this on a daily basis or on a Friday night with your family.
- **Solitude vs isolation** – some of us have experienced loneliness recently due to self-isolation or not being able to connect with people as we used to. We hope you can use some of these tips to maintain mental health to encourage you to try and reconnect in the new ways that the pandemic allows. But we all need to remember that solitude – being with ourselves rather than always with others can also benefit most people. Whether that’s a walk round the block, taking time to really notice the season or your local neighbourhood or writing a diary entry, doing some things alone can help us mentally refresh and repair before being with others again.