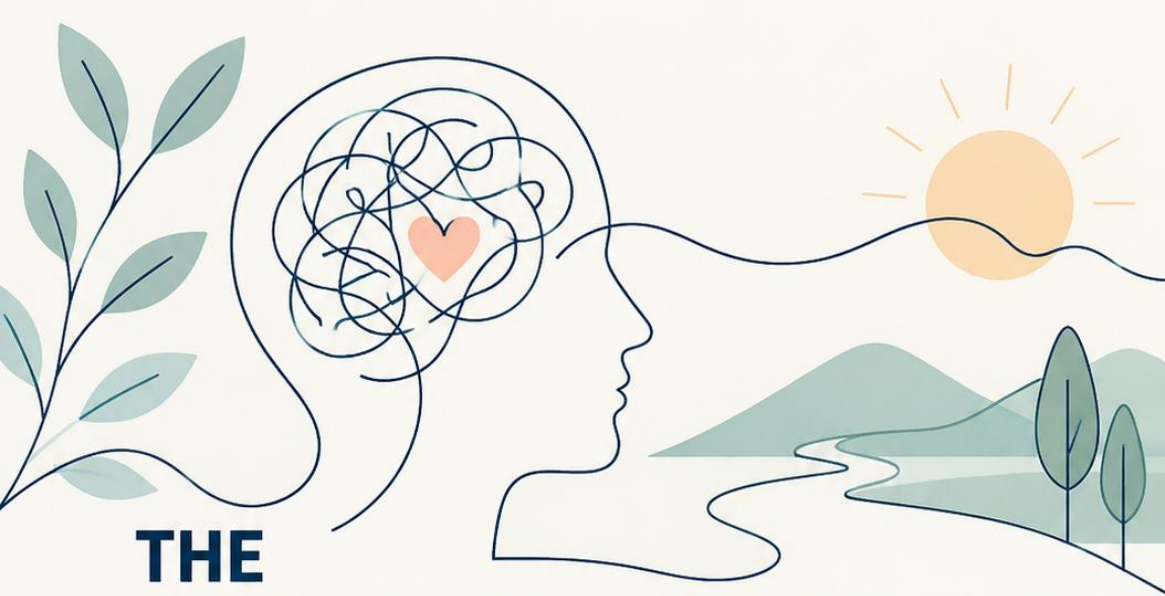




THE MENTAL HEALTH A-Z

An A-Z Guide to Mental Health, Emotions & Well-Being

Understand the Word. Recognise the Experience. Know What Helps.



MEANING



RECOGNITION



RELATED WORDS



ACTION

A practical A-Z guide to mental health, emotions and well-being.

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THE A-Z

Mental Health Dictionary

Understand the Word. Understand the Mind. Know What Helps.

WHAT IS A MENTAL HEALTH DICTIONARY?

A Mental Health Dictionary is an A-Z reference guide that explains words and concepts related to mental health, emotional well-being, behaviour, relationships, addiction, recovery, treatment and support. Its purpose is to make mental-health language easier to understand, reduce stigma and help people recognise when everyday self-care, social support or professional help may be useful.

HOW THIS DICTIONARY WORKS

Each entry begins with a simple meaning. It is then followed by three practical points suited to the term: Things That Can Help, Ways to Build It, Steps Towards Support, Steps Towards Safety, or Things to Know.

IMPORTANT

This is a mental-health literacy and awareness resource, not a diagnostic tool or a substitute for individual medical or psychological advice. Mental-health symptoms can have different causes and experiences vary from person to person. When distress is persistent, worsening, significantly affects daily life, or creates a risk of harm, qualified professional support should be sought.



A practical public-awareness guide from A to Z



A-Z at a glance

A Acceptance · Addiction · ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) · Anger · Anorexia Nervosa · Anxiety · Assertiveness · Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism)

B Behaviour · Bereavement · Bipolar Disorder · Body Image · Boundaries · Bulimia Nervosa · Bullying · Burnout

C Caregiver Stress · Childhood Trauma · Compassion · Compulsion · Confidence · Coping · Counselling · Craving · Crisis · Cyberbullying

D Delusion · Dementia · Dependence · Depression · Detoxification (Detox) · Digital Overuse · Discrimination · Dissociation · Distress

E Eating Disorder · Emotional Abuse · Emotional Intelligence · Emotional Regulation · Empathy · Exam Stress · Exhaustion

F Family Support · Fear · Fight-Flight-Freeze Response · Forgiveness · Frustration

G Gambling Disorder · Grief · Grounding · Group Therapy · Guilt

H Hallucination · Happiness · Healthy Boundaries · Helplessness · Hope

I Impulsivity · Inclusion · Insecurity · Insomnia · Irritability · Isolation

J Jealousy · Journaling · Joy

K Kindness

L Learning Disability · Lived Experience · Loneliness · Loss · Low Mood · Low Self-Esteem

M Mania · Meditation · Mental Health · Mental Illness / Mental Disorder · Mental Well-Being · Mindfulness · Mood

N Negative Thinking · Neglect · Neurodiversity · Nightmares · Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)

O Obsession · Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) · Occupational Stress · Overthinking

P Panic Attack · Panic Disorder · Peer Counselling / Peer Support · Peer Pressure · Personality Disorder · Phobia · Postpartum Depression · Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) · Psychiatrist · Psychologist · Psychosis · Psychotherapy

Q Quality of Life · Quiet Time

R Recovery · Rehabilitation · Relapse · Relapse Prevention · Resilience · Rumination

S Schizophrenia · Self-Care · Self-Compassion · Self-Esteem · Self-Harm · Shame · Sleep Disorder · Social Anxiety Disorder · Social Isolation · Spiritual Well-Being · Stigma · Stress · Substance Use Disorder · Suicidal Thoughts

T Therapy · Toxic Relationship · Trauma · Trauma-Informed Care · Trigger

U Unhealthy Coping · Understanding · Unresolved Grief

V Validation · Victimisation · Violence · Vulnerability

W Well-Being · Withdrawal · Workplace Stress · Worry

X Xenophobia

Y Youth Mental Health

Z Zest



A



Acceptance

Meaning: *Recognising a difficult reality, feeling or experience without denying it.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Acknowledge what is happening.
2. Separate what you can and cannot control.
3. Focus on the next constructive step.

Addiction

Meaning: *A condition involving difficulty controlling substance use or a behaviour despite harmful consequences.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Recognise the problem.
2. Seek professional assessment.
3. Build ongoing recovery and relapse-prevention support.

ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)

Meaning: *A neurodevelopmental disorder involving persistent difficulties with attention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that interfere with functioning.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Seek proper assessment.
2. Create structure and routines.
3. Use evidence-based professional support.

Anger

Meaning: *A normal emotion that can arise when we feel threatened, hurt, frustrated or treated unfairly.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Pause before reacting.
2. Identify the underlying trigger.
3. Express feelings without harming yourself or others.

Anorexia Nervosa

Meaning: *An eating disorder involving restrictive eating, intense concerns around*

weight or shape, and significantly low body weight.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Seek medical and mental-health assessment.
2. Involve trusted support.
3. Follow specialist eating-disorder treatment.

Anxiety

Meaning: *Feelings of worry, fear or uneasiness that can become a problem when excessive, persistent or disruptive.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Slow your breathing.
2. Identify triggers and thought patterns.
3. Seek professional support if anxiety persists.

Assertiveness

Meaning: *Expressing your needs, opinions and boundaries clearly while respecting others.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Speak clearly.
2. Practise saying no respectfully.
3. Communicate needs without aggression or apology.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism)

Meaning: *A neurodevelopmental condition involving differences in social communication, behaviour, interests and sensory processing.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Every autistic person is different.
2. Focus on individual strengths and support needs.
3. Acceptance and appropriate accommodations matter.

B



Behaviour

Meaning: *The observable ways in which a person responds to thoughts, feelings, people and situations.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Behaviour can communicate unmet needs.
2. Look for patterns and triggers.



- 
3. Avoid judging a person solely by one behaviour.

Bereavement

Meaning: *The experience of losing someone through death.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Allow yourself to grieve.
2. Stay connected with supportive people.
3. Seek help when distress becomes overwhelming.

Bipolar Disorder

Meaning: *A mental-health disorder involving episodes of significant mood changes, including mania or hypomania and usually episodes of depression.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Obtain professional assessment.
2. Follow the agreed treatment plan.
3. Monitor significant changes in mood and sleep.

Body Image

Meaning: *How someone thinks and feels about their physical appearance and body.*

3 WAYS TO SUPPORT IT

1. Reduce unhealthy comparison.
2. Appreciate your body beyond appearance.
3. Seek support when body concerns significantly affect eating or daily life.

Boundaries

Meaning: *Limits that protect a person's emotional, physical and psychological well-being in relationships.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD THEM

1. Know your limits.
2. Communicate them clearly.
3. Respect your own and other people's boundaries.

Bulimia Nervosa

Meaning: *An eating disorder involving repeated episodes of binge eating followed by behaviours intended to compensate for eating.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Seek professional assessment.

2. Address physical and emotional health together.
3. Build ongoing specialist support.

Bullying

Meaning: *Repeated aggressive behaviour involving a real or perceived power imbalance.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Tell a trusted person.
2. Document and report repeated incidents where appropriate.
3. Strengthen safety and support around the affected person.

Burnout

Meaning: *A work-related syndrome associated with chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Prioritise recovery.
2. Address unsustainable demands.
3. Seek workplace or professional support when needed.

C



Caregiver Stress

Meaning: *Emotional, mental or physical strain associated with caring for another person.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Share responsibilities where possible.
2. Protect time for your own needs.
3. Ask for practical and emotional support.

Childhood Trauma

Meaning: *Lasting effects that can follow experiences during childhood that were frightening, harmful or overwhelming.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Establish safety.
2. Build trustworthy relationships.
3. Seek trauma-informed professional care when needed.



Compassion

Meaning: *Recognising suffering and responding with care and a desire to help.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Listen.
2. Avoid immediate judgement.
3. Respond with kindness and practical support.

Compulsion

Meaning: *A repetitive behaviour or mental act a person feels driven to perform, often to reduce distress.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Recognise the pattern.
2. Avoid shame or ridicule.
3. Seek professional assessment when compulsions interfere with life.

Confidence

Meaning: *Belief in your ability to handle particular situations or tasks.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Set achievable goals.
2. Notice progress.
3. Practise skills instead of waiting to feel completely confident.

Coping

Meaning: *The thoughts and behaviours people use to manage stress and difficult circumstances.*

3 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN IT

1. Identify the problem.
2. Choose healthy strategies.
3. Notice what actually improves your well-being.

Counselling

Meaning: *Professional support that helps people explore emotional, personal or behavioural difficulties.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. It should provide a safe environment.
2. Finding an appropriately trained professional matters.
3. Progress may take time.

Craving

Meaning: *A strong urge to use a substance or engage in an addictive behaviour.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Delay acting on the urge.
2. Move away from triggers.
3. Contact a recovery supporter or professional.

Crisis

Meaning: *A situation in which distress or circumstances overwhelm a person's usual ability to cope safely.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY

1. Move towards a safer environment.
2. Contact a trusted person.
3. Obtain urgent professional or emergency help when there is immediate danger.

Cyberbullying

Meaning: *Bullying through digital platforms, messaging, social media or other technology.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Don't retaliate.
2. Save evidence and use reporting/blocking tools.
3. Tell a trusted adult or authority when appropriate.

D



Delusion

Meaning: *A strongly held belief that remains despite clear evidence to the contrary and may occur in some mental-health conditions.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Don't ridicule or aggressively confront.
2. Focus on safety and distress.
3. Encourage professional assessment.

Dementia

Meaning: *A broad term for conditions involving significant decline in memory, thinking or other cognitive abilities that interferes with daily life.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Obtain medical assessment.
2. Create predictable routines and safety.





3. Support both the person and caregivers.

Dependence

Meaning: *A state in which the body and/or mind adapts to a substance, sometimes leading to withdrawal when it is reduced or stopped.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Dependence and addiction are related but not identical.
2. Some withdrawals can be medically serious.
3. Professional guidance may be necessary before stopping a substance.

Depression

Meaning: *A mental-health condition involving persistent low mood and/or loss of interest, often accompanied by changes in energy, sleep, appetite, concentration or thoughts.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Tell someone.
2. Maintain basic routines where possible.
3. Seek professional assessment when symptoms persist or become severe.

Detoxification (Detox)

Meaning: *The medically supervised process of managing withdrawal from certain substances.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Detox is only one stage of treatment.
2. Medical supervision may be essential.
3. Long-term recovery usually requires continuing care.

Digital Overuse

Meaning: *Excessive or poorly controlled use of digital devices or platforms that interferes with sleep, relationships, study, work or well-being.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Track screen habits.
2. Create device-free periods.
3. Replace some screen time with sleep, movement and real-world connection.

Discrimination

Meaning: *Unfair treatment based on identity, characteristics or perceived differences, which can affect mental well-being.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Recognise it.
2. Seek appropriate support and reporting channels.
3. Build safe and inclusive environments.

Dissociation

Meaning: *Feeling disconnected from yourself, your thoughts, memories, emotions or surroundings.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Use grounding techniques.
2. Move towards a safe environment.
3. Seek professional help if episodes recur or disrupt life.

Distress

Meaning: *Emotional or psychological discomfort that can range from temporary upset to severe difficulty coping.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify the source.
2. Talk to someone supportive.
3. Seek professional help when distress becomes severe or persistent.

E



Eating Disorder

Meaning: *A mental-health condition involving serious disturbances in eating behaviours and related thoughts or emotions.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Seek specialist assessment.
2. Address physical and psychological health together.
3. Avoid shame and appearance-based judgement.

Emotional Abuse

Meaning: *Repeated behaviour that manipulates, humiliates, controls, threatens or*





undermines another person's emotional well-being.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY

1. Recognise harmful patterns.
2. Tell someone trustworthy.
3. Seek professional or safeguarding support when necessary.

Emotional Intelligence

Meaning: *The ability to recognise, understand and manage emotions in yourself and respond appropriately to emotions in others.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Name emotions.
2. Listen before reacting.
3. Reflect on how your behaviour affects others.

Emotional Regulation

Meaning: *The ability to understand and manage emotional responses.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Name the emotion.
2. Pause before acting.
3. Choose a constructive response.

Empathy

Meaning: *The ability to understand or appreciate another person's feelings and perspective.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Listen fully.
2. Ask rather than assume.
3. Respect experiences different from your own.

Exam Stress

Meaning: *Stress associated with examinations, performance expectations or academic pressure.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Break study into manageable goals.
2. Protect sleep and breaks.
3. Ask for support when pressure becomes overwhelming.

Exhaustion

Meaning: *Severe physical or mental tiredness that may arise from prolonged demands, illness, stress or inadequate recovery.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Rest.
2. Identify what is draining you.
3. Seek assessment when exhaustion is persistent or unexplained.

F



Family Support

Meaning: *Emotional, practical or social assistance provided within a family or chosen family network.*

3 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN IT

1. Listen without immediate judgement.
2. Communicate openly.
3. Seek outside help when the family cannot manage alone.

Fear

Meaning: *A normal emotional response to perceived danger or threat.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify the threat.
2. Ground yourself in the present.
3. Seek help when fear becomes persistent or disabling.

Fight-Flight-Freeze Response

Meaning: *The body's automatic survival response when it perceives danger.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Recognise what is happening.
2. Slow breathing and orient to your surroundings.
3. Allow your body time to settle once safe.

Forgiveness

Meaning: *A personal process of reducing resentment towards a hurt; it does not require excusing harm or restoring an unsafe relationship.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. It cannot be forced.



- 
2. Forgiveness and reconciliation are different.
 3. Boundaries can remain even when resentment decreases.

Frustration

Meaning: *Emotional tension that arises when needs, expectations or goals are blocked.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Pause.
 2. Identify what is within your control.
 3. Choose a constructive next action.
- 

G

Gambling Disorder

Meaning: *Persistent, problematic gambling behaviour that causes significant distress or impairment.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Limit access to gambling and money where appropriate.
2. Tell someone trustworthy.
3. Seek specialist professional help.

Grief

Meaning: *A natural response to significant loss.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Allow your emotions.
2. Stay connected.
3. Seek support if grief becomes overwhelming or severely disrupts life.

Grounding

Meaning: *Techniques that help reconnect attention to the present moment during intense distress, anxiety or dissociation.*

3 WAYS TO PRACTISE

1. Notice what you can see and hear.
2. Feel your feet or body against a surface.
3. Slow and steady your breathing.

Group Therapy

Meaning: *Therapy delivered to several people together under the guidance of a trained professional.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Shared experiences can reduce isolation.
2. Confidentiality and boundaries matter.
3. It can complement individual treatment.

Guilt

Meaning: *Distress associated with believing you have done something wrong.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Examine what actually happened.
2. Repair harm where possible.
3. Avoid turning 'I did something wrong' into 'I am worthless.'

H

Hallucination

Meaning: *Hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling or tasting something that others do not perceive, occurring in various medical or mental-health contexts.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Stay calm.
2. Prioritise safety.
3. Seek medical or mental-health assessment, especially when new or distressing.

Happiness

Meaning: *A positive emotional state involving pleasure, satisfaction or contentment.*

3 WAYS TO NURTURE IT

1. Notice positive moments.
2. Invest in meaningful relationships.
3. Make time for valued activities.

Healthy Boundaries

Meaning: *Limits that allow relationships to remain respectful and emotionally safe.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD THEM

1. Know your limits.
2. Communicate them.
3. Respect the boundaries of others.



Helplessness

Meaning: *Feeling that you have little or no ability to change a difficult situation.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify one controllable action.
2. Ask for help.
3. Break the situation into smaller problems.

Hope

Meaning: *The belief that improvement or meaningful possibilities remain.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Set one achievable goal.
2. Notice progress.
3. Stay connected to people and purposes that matter.

I



Impulsivity

Meaning: *Acting quickly without adequately considering possible consequences.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Create a pause.
2. Remove immediate triggers where possible.
3. Seek assessment when impulsivity repeatedly causes harm.

Inclusion

Meaning: *Creating environments where people feel respected, valued and able to participate.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Listen to different experiences.
2. Remove unnecessary barriers.
3. Challenge exclusion respectfully.

Insecurity

Meaning: *Uncertainty or lack of confidence about oneself, relationships or abilities.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify the underlying fear.
2. Reduce constant comparison.
3. Build confidence through realistic achievements.

Insomnia

Meaning: *Persistent difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep or obtaining restorative sleep despite adequate opportunity.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Keep regular sleep and wake times.
2. Reduce stimulating activities before bed.
3. Seek professional help when persistent.

Irritability

Meaning: *Becoming annoyed, frustrated or angry more easily than usual.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Pause.
2. Check for stress, hunger, poor sleep or other triggers.
3. Communicate before frustration escalates.

Isolation

Meaning: *Separation or withdrawal from meaningful social contact.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Contact one trusted person.
2. Reintroduce social activity gradually.
3. Seek support if withdrawal accompanies significant distress.

J



Jealousy

Meaning: *An emotional response to a perceived threat to a valued relationship or position.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify the underlying fear.
2. Check assumptions.
3. Communicate without accusation or control.

Journaling

Meaning: *Writing about thoughts, emotions or experiences as a way of reflection.*

3 WAYS TO USE IT

1. Write without judging yourself.
2. Identify recurring patterns.
3. Record progress as well as difficulties.





Joy

Meaning: A positive feeling of delight, connection or fulfilment.

3 WAYS TO NURTURE IT

1. Notice small pleasures.
2. Engage in meaningful activities.
3. Share positive experiences with others.

K



Kindness

Meaning: Treating yourself and others with care, respect and consideration.

3 WAYS TO PRACTISE IT

1. Listen.
2. Offer practical help.
3. Speak to yourself with the respect you would offer someone else.

L



Learning Disability

Meaning: A condition affecting particular areas of learning; terminology and definitions vary internationally.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. It does not define a person's intelligence or potential.
2. Individual assessment matters.
3. Appropriate educational support can make a major difference.

Lived Experience

Meaning: A person's direct, personal experience of a condition, circumstance or life event.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Listen without assuming.
2. Respect the person's choice about disclosure.
3. Lived experience can inform, but does not replace, clinical expertise.

Loneliness

Meaning: Distress caused by feeling that one's social connections are insufficient or not meaningful enough.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Reach out to one person.
2. Participate in meaningful activities.
3. Seek support when loneliness becomes persistent.

Loss

Meaning: Losing a person, relationship, role, ability, home, opportunity or something else of importance.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Acknowledge the loss.
2. Allow time to adjust.
3. Seek connection rather than carrying it entirely alone.

Low Mood

Meaning: Feeling sad, down or less interested than usual, which may be temporary or part of a mental-health condition.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Maintain basic routines.
2. Stay connected.
3. Seek assessment if it persists or significantly affects functioning.

Low Self-Esteem

Meaning: A persistent negative view of one's own worth or abilities.

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Challenge harsh self-judgements.
2. Recognise strengths and progress.
3. Build mastery through achievable goals.

M



Mania

Meaning: A period of abnormally elevated, expansive or irritable mood and increased energy that can seriously affect judgement and functioning.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Recognise major changes in mood, energy or sleep.



2. Contact a mental-health professional.
3. Prioritise safety if judgement becomes impaired.

Meditation

Meaning: A range of practices that train attention and awareness.

3 WAYS TO BEGIN

1. Start briefly.
2. Focus on breath, sound or another anchor.
3. Practise regularly without demanding a perfectly quiet mind.

Mental Health

Meaning: Emotional, psychological and social well-being that influences how people think, feel, cope, relate and function.

3 WAYS TO SUPPORT IT

1. Care for physical needs.
2. Maintain meaningful connections.
3. Seek help when difficulties exceed your ability to cope.

Mental Illness / Mental Disorder

Meaning: A health condition involving significant disturbances in thinking, emotional regulation or behaviour and associated distress or impairment.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Mental disorders are health conditions.
2. Effective treatments and supports exist.
3. A diagnosis does not define the whole person.

Mental Well-Being

Meaning: A state in which people can function, connect, cope and experience meaning and quality of life.

3 WAYS TO NURTURE IT

1. Connect.
2. Maintain healthy routines.
3. Make room for purpose, rest and enjoyment.

Mindfulness

Meaning: Purposefully paying attention to the present moment with openness and less judgement.

3 WAYS TO PRACTISE

1. Pause.
2. Observe sensations and thoughts.
3. Gently return attention to the present.

Mood

Meaning: A sustained emotional state that can influence thoughts, behaviour and perception.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Moods naturally change.
2. Sleep, stress and health can affect them.
3. Persistent extreme changes deserve attention.

N



Negative Thinking

Meaning: Habitual patterns of interpreting yourself, situations or the future in an overly negative way.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Notice the thought.
2. Examine the evidence.
3. Replace extremes with a more balanced interpretation.

Neglect

Meaning: Failure to provide necessary care, protection or support, particularly to someone dependent or vulnerable.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY

1. Recognise unmet needs.
2. Tell an appropriate trusted person or authority.
3. Obtain safeguarding support when required.

Neurodiversity

Meaning: The concept that human brains naturally vary in how they function and process information.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Difference is not automatically deficiency.
2. Support needs vary.



- 
3. Accommodations and acceptance can improve participation.

Nightmares

Meaning: *Disturbing dreams that cause fear or distress and may disrupt sleep.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Establish a calming sleep routine.
2. Notice stress or trauma-related patterns.
3. Seek professional help if frequent or severe.

Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)

Meaning: *Deliberately injuring oneself without the intention of dying, often as a way of coping with intense distress.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY

1. Move away from means of injury.
2. Tell a trusted person or professional.
3. Obtain urgent help if injuries are serious or suicidal thoughts emerge.

O



Obsession

Meaning: *An unwanted, intrusive and recurring thought, image or urge that can cause significant distress.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Recognise intrusive thoughts without equating them with intentions.
2. Avoid reinforcing repetitive reassurance cycles.
3. Seek professional help when obsessions interfere with life.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Meaning: *A disorder involving obsessions and/or compulsions that cause distress or significantly interfere with daily functioning.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Obtain proper assessment.
2. Learn about evidence-based treatment.
3. Work consistently with qualified professionals.

Occupational Stress

Meaning: *Stress arising from work demands, conditions or relationships.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify specific stressors.
2. Establish reasonable boundaries.
3. Discuss persistent problems through appropriate workplace or professional channels.

Overthinking

Meaning: *Repeatedly analysing or dwelling on something without reaching a useful resolution.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Notice the loop.
2. Separate problems from hypothetical worries.
3. Choose one practical next action.

P



Panic Attack

Meaning: *A sudden episode of intense fear or discomfort accompanied by physical and psychological symptoms.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Slow your breathing.
2. Remind yourself that the episode will pass.
3. Seek assessment for new, severe or recurrent episodes.

Panic Disorder

Meaning: *A disorder involving recurrent unexpected panic attacks and ongoing concern or behavioural changes related to further attacks.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Seek assessment.
2. Learn evidence-based coping strategies.
3. Engage in appropriate treatment.

Peer Counselling / Peer Support

Meaning: *Support provided by someone with relevant lived experience or appropriately trained peers.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Shared experience can build trust.



2. Training and boundaries matter.
3. Peer support complements rather than replaces clinical care when treatment is needed.

Peer Pressure

Meaning: *Influence from peers that affects someone's decisions or behaviour.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Pause before agreeing.
2. Practise saying no.
3. Stay close to people who respect your choices.

Personality Disorder

Meaning: *A diagnostic category describing enduring patterns of inner experience and behaviour that cause significant difficulties or distress; specific disorders have different features.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Avoid using diagnoses as insults.
2. Proper assessment is essential.
3. Treatment and support can help.

Phobia

Meaning: *An intense and persistent fear of a particular object or situation that leads to avoidance or significant distress.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Understand the fear response.
2. Avoid letting avoidance continually expand.
3. Seek evidence-based professional treatment when it interferes with life.

Postpartum Depression

Meaning: *Depression occurring during pregnancy or after childbirth, involving more persistent and significant symptoms than temporary mood changes commonly experienced after birth.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Tell someone promptly.
2. Seek healthcare assessment.
3. Strengthen practical and emotional support around the parent.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Meaning: *A disorder that can develop after traumatic experiences and may involve intrusive memories, avoidance, changes in mood or thinking, and heightened arousal.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Prioritise safety and stability.
2. Seek trauma-informed professional assessment.
3. Build reliable support.

Psychiatrist

Meaning: *A medical doctor specialising in the diagnosis and treatment of mental-health disorders.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Psychiatrists can medically assess mental-health conditions.
2. They may prescribe medication where appropriate.
3. Treatment may also involve psychological and social approaches.

Psychologist

Meaning: *A professional trained in psychology who may assess behaviour, emotions and cognition and provide psychological interventions depending on qualifications and jurisdiction.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Qualifications matter.
2. Psychologists and psychiatrists have different training.
3. Choose the professional appropriate to your needs.

Psychosis

Meaning: *A state involving significant difficulty distinguishing aspects of internal experience from external reality, which may include hallucinations or delusions.*

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Prioritise safety.
2. Seek prompt professional assessment.
3. Respond calmly rather than arguing or ridiculing the person.



Psychotherapy

Meaning: *Structured treatment using psychological methods to help address emotional, behavioural or mental-health difficulties.*

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Different therapies suit different problems.
2. The therapeutic relationship matters.
3. Improvement usually requires active participation and time.

Q



Quality of Life

Meaning: *A person's overall perception of their physical, emotional, social and functional well-being.*

3 WAYS TO SUPPORT IT

1. Identify what matters most.
2. Strengthen relationships and meaningful activity.
3. Address health or environmental barriers.

Quiet Time

Meaning: *Intentional periods with reduced demands and stimulation.*

3 WAYS TO USE IT

1. Step away from distractions.
2. Breathe, reflect or walk.
3. Make restorative pauses part of your routine.

R



Recovery

Meaning: *An individual process of improving health, functioning, meaning and quality of life while managing or moving beyond mental-health or addiction difficulties.*

3 WAYS TO SUPPORT IT

1. Set realistic goals.
2. Build reliable support.
3. Recognise progress as well as setbacks.

Rehabilitation

Meaning: *Structured support intended to help someone restore or develop functioning,*

independence and participation following illness or addiction.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. It extends beyond symptom control.
2. Social and vocational functioning matter.
3. Family and community support can be valuable.

Relapse

Meaning: *A return or worsening of symptoms or substance use after a period of improvement or recovery.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Respond early rather than hiding it.
2. Identify triggers and warning signs.
3. Re-engage with the recovery plan and professional support.

Relapse Prevention

Meaning: *Strategies designed to recognise risks and reduce the likelihood or impact of relapse.*

3 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN IT

1. Know your triggers.
2. Recognise early warning signs.
3. Keep a clear support and response plan.

Resilience

Meaning: *The ability to adapt, recover or continue functioning through adversity.*

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Strengthen supportive relationships.
2. Develop flexible coping skills.
3. Focus on manageable actions.

Rumination

Meaning: *Repeatedly dwelling on distressing thoughts, feelings or events without productive problem-solving.*

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Recognise when reflection becomes repetitive.
2. Redirect attention to the present.
3. Move towards a concrete action where possible.





S



Schizophrenia

Meaning: A serious mental-health disorder that can affect thinking, perception, emotions and functioning and may involve psychotic symptoms.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Seek specialist treatment.
2. Maintain continuity of care.
3. Build family and social support without stigma.

Self-Care

Meaning: Intentional actions that support physical, emotional and psychological health.

3 WAYS TO PRACTISE IT

1. Protect basic needs.
2. Establish healthy limits.
3. Choose activities that genuinely restore rather than merely distract.

Self-Compassion

Meaning: Responding to your own difficulty or imperfection with understanding rather than harsh self-criticism.

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Notice self-critical language.
2. Acknowledge that difficulty is part of being human.
3. Speak to yourself as you would to someone you care about.

Self-Esteem

Meaning: A person's overall sense of their own worth and value.

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Challenge constant self-criticism.
2. Recognise strengths.
3. Build confidence through achievable actions.

Self-Harm

Meaning: Intentionally causing injury to oneself, often in response to overwhelming emotional distress.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY

1. Move away from anything you could use to hurt yourself.
2. Tell a trusted person or professional.
3. Obtain urgent help if injuries are serious or you may be unable to stay safe.

Shame

Meaning: A painful feeling that something about oneself is fundamentally wrong, unacceptable or unworthy.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Separate behaviour from identity.
2. Talk to someone safe.
3. Challenge harsh and global self-judgements.

Sleep Disorder

Meaning: A condition that persistently disrupts sleep quality, timing or duration and affects functioning.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Track sleep patterns.
2. Establish consistent sleep habits.
3. Seek assessment when problems persist.

Social Anxiety Disorder

Meaning: Intense fear of social situations involving possible scrutiny or negative evaluation that significantly affects life.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Recognise avoidance patterns.
2. Gradually practise manageable social situations.
3. Seek evidence-based therapy when needed.

Social Isolation

Meaning: Having little or insufficient social contact or participation.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Reconnect gradually.
2. Join structured activities.





3. Seek help when isolation is prolonged or linked with significant distress.

Spiritual Well-Being

Meaning: A sense of meaning, values, connection or inner purpose, which may or may not involve religion.

3 WAYS TO NURTURE IT

1. Reflect on what gives life meaning.
2. Practise according to your beliefs and values.
3. Connect with a supportive community if helpful.

Stigma

Meaning: Negative stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination associated with a characteristic or condition, including mental illness and addiction.

3 WAYS TO CHALLENGE IT

1. Use respectful language.
2. Correct misinformation.
3. Treat people as individuals rather than diagnoses.

Stress

Meaning: The psychological and physical response to demands or pressures.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify major stressors.
2. Break demands into manageable tasks.
3. Protect sleep, movement and recovery time.

Substance Use Disorder

Meaning: A health condition involving a problematic pattern of substance use that causes significant impairment or distress.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Seek professional assessment.
2. Develop an individual treatment and recovery plan.
3. Maintain continuing support and relapse prevention.

Suicidal Thoughts

Meaning: Thoughts about ending one's life, ranging from passive thoughts about death to active suicidal intent or planning.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY

1. Tell someone immediately.
2. Create distance from means of self-harm and avoid being alone when immediate risk is present.
3. Contact emergency, crisis or urgent professional support if there is intent, a plan, or difficulty staying safe.

T



Therapy

Meaning: Professional treatment intended to improve psychological, emotional or behavioural well-being.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Different approaches address different needs.
2. Qualified practitioners matter.
3. Finding an appropriate therapeutic relationship can take time.

Toxic Relationship

Meaning: A commonly used, non-clinical term for a relationship characterised by persistent harmful patterns such as manipulation, disrespect, control or emotional harm.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify specific harmful behaviours.
2. Establish boundaries.
3. Seek support, particularly when abuse or safety concerns are present.

Trauma

Meaning: The psychological and emotional effects that may follow experiences perceived as deeply threatening, harmful or overwhelming.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Establish safety.
2. Restore connection and stability.
3. Seek trauma-informed professional help when symptoms persist.





Trauma-Informed Care

Meaning: An approach that recognises the possible effects of trauma and aims to promote safety, choice, trust and empowerment.

3 PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

1. Don't assume.
2. Avoid unnecessary re-traumatisation.
3. Give the person voice and choice where possible.

Trigger

Meaning: Something that evokes a strong emotional or physiological response because of its association with a previous experience.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify patterns.
2. Ground yourself when activated.
3. Develop a coping plan rather than relying solely on avoidance.

U



Unhealthy Coping

Meaning: Strategies that may temporarily reduce distress but create additional harm or problems over time.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify the behaviour without shame.
2. Understand what need it is serving.
3. Replace it gradually with safer coping strategies.

Understanding

Meaning: Making an effort to comprehend your own or another person's experiences, thoughts and feelings.

3 WAYS TO BUILD IT

1. Listen.
2. Ask respectfully.
3. Avoid assuming that your experience is universal.

Unresolved Grief

Meaning: An everyday phrase sometimes used when grief remains intensely distressing or

disruptive for a long period; it is not itself a precise diagnosis.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Acknowledge the loss.
2. Find safe ways to express grief.
3. Seek professional support when grief remains severely disruptive.

V



Validation

Meaning: Acknowledging that another person's feelings or experience are real and understandable without necessarily agreeing with every interpretation or action.

3 WAYS TO PRACTISE IT

1. Listen.
2. Name what you hear.
3. Avoid immediately dismissing or fixing the feeling.

Victimisation

Meaning: Being subjected to harmful, abusive, discriminatory or criminal behaviour.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SUPPORT

1. Prioritise safety.
2. Tell an appropriate trusted person or authority.
3. Seek emotional, legal or safeguarding support where relevant.

Violence

Meaning: Behaviour involving physical force or threats that can cause physical or psychological harm.

3 STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY

1. Move to safety when possible.
2. Contact trusted or emergency support.
3. Obtain medical, psychological or safeguarding assistance as appropriate.

Vulnerability

Meaning: Being open to emotional exposure, uncertainty or the possibility of being hurt.

3 WAYS TO APPROACH IT

1. Choose trustworthy people.
2. Share gradually.



3. Maintain appropriate boundaries.

W

Well-Being

Meaning: Overall physical, emotional, psychological and social functioning and quality of life.

3 WAYS TO NURTURE IT

1. Care for your body.
2. Maintain meaningful relationships.
3. Balance responsibilities with rest and purpose.

Withdrawal

Meaning: Physical and/or psychological symptoms that may occur when a substance on which the body has become dependent is reduced or stopped.

3 THINGS TO KNOW

1. Symptoms vary by substance.
2. Some forms of withdrawal can be medically dangerous.
3. Seek medical advice rather than attempting risky withdrawal alone.

Workplace Stress

Meaning: Stress associated with workload, environment, job insecurity, conflict, lack of control or other occupational factors.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Identify specific pressures.
2. Set reasonable boundaries where possible.
3. Use organisational or professional support when problems persist.

Worry

Meaning: Thoughts about possible future problems or threats.

3 THINGS THAT CAN HELP

1. Separate solvable problems from hypothetical worries.
2. Write down one practical action.
3. Return attention to the present when no action is currently possible.

X

Xenophobia

Meaning: Fear, prejudice or hostility towards people perceived as foreign or different; discrimination arising from it can harm mental well-being.

3 WAYS TO CHALLENGE IT

1. Examine assumptions.
2. Learn from credible information and direct human experience.
3. Practise inclusion and challenge discriminatory behaviour.

Y

Youth Mental Health

Meaning: The emotional, psychological and social well-being of children, adolescents and young adults.

3 WAYS TO SUPPORT IT

1. Listen without dismissing feelings.
2. Notice significant changes in behaviour or functioning.
3. Seek age-appropriate professional help when concerns persist.

Z

Zest

Meaning: Enthusiasm, energy and active engagement with life.

3 WAYS TO NURTURE IT

1. Pursue meaningful activities.
2. Stay socially connected.
3. Notice and appreciate positive experiences.



Words Matter



Instead of “an addict” — Use “a person experiencing addiction” or “a person in recovery.”

Instead of “a schizophrenic” — Use “a person living with schizophrenia.”

Instead of “committed suicide” — Use “died by suicide.”

Instead of “attention seeking” — Ask what distress, need or experience the behaviour may be communicating.

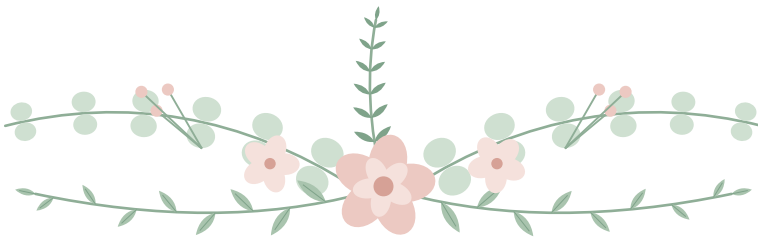
Instead of “crazy” — Describe the actual feeling, behaviour or difficulty.

When to Seek Help



When thoughts, emotions or behaviours are persistent, worsening, causing significant distress, interfering with everyday life, or creating a risk of harm, professional support should be considered. Immediate danger requires urgent local emergency or crisis support.

Local emergency / crisis number: _____



THE A-Z

Mental Health Dictionary

Understand the Word. Understand the Mind. Know What Helps.