Caring for Your Mental Health

Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how people think, feel, act, make choices and relate to others. Mental health is more than the absence of a mental illness—it's essential to your overall health and quality of life.

Self-care can play a role in maintaining your mental health and help support your treatment and recovery if you have a mental illness. Here are some tips to help you get started with self-care:

Get regular exercise. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged if you can't do 30 minutes at one time.

Make sleep a priority. Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep.

Try a relaxing activity. Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation or breathing exercises.

Practice gratitude. Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down at night, or replay them in your mind.

Self-care looks different for everyone, and it is important to find what you need and enjoy. It may take trial and error to find what works for you. Seek professional help if you are experiencing severe or distressing symptoms that have lasted two weeks or more, such as:

- Difficulty sleeping

- Appetite changes resulting in unwanted weight changes

- Difficulty concentrating

- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable

- Inability to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities

Don't wait until your symptoms are overwhelming. Talk about your concerns with your primary care provider, who can refer you to a mental health specialist if needed.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free and confidential assessment and counseling services. BHS is available by visiting www.behavioralhealthsystems.com or calling 800-245-1150 .

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