Students with Disabilities Week

Mental Health, Wellness and the Building of Resilience.

Presented by the Student Counselling Unit (SCU)

Presentation Overview

- What Is Mental Health?

- The Mental Health Continuum

- What Is Mental Illness?

- Stigma and Mental Illness

- How To Look After Your Mental Health?

- Access to Psychological Services

- The importance of Mental Health

- Promoting Wellness and Resilience

- Building Resilience

What is Mental Health?

Mental health has been described by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a **state of well-being** where a person **realises** their **own abilities**, manage the **stresses** of life, do their work with productivity and makes a contribution to their society. Our mental health refers to our **emotional**, **psychological well-being**, it affects how we **think, act and feel**.
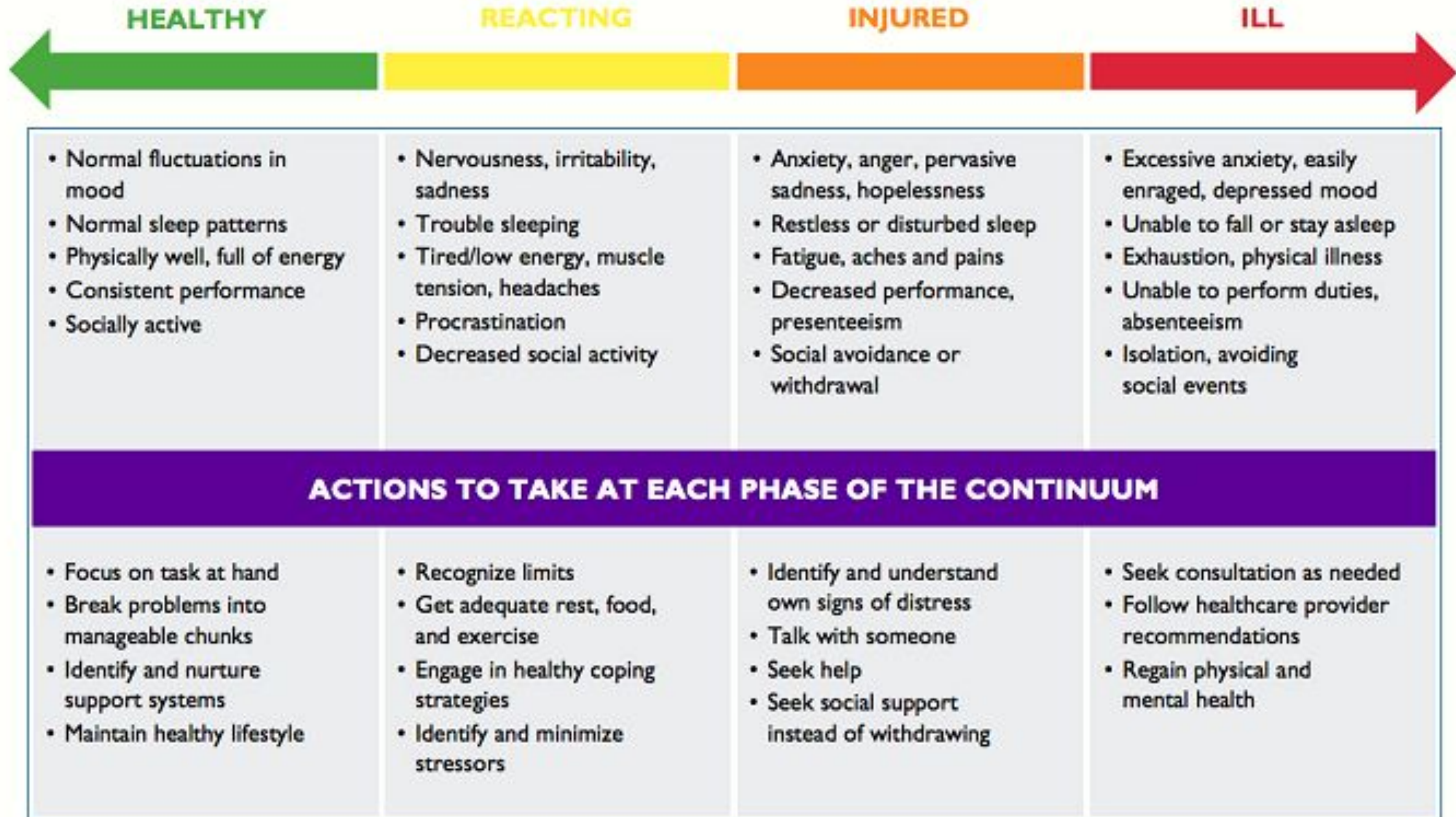
(Barry & Jenkins, 2007)

Components of Mental Health

Check Your Mental Health

HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
• Normal fluctuations in mood • Normal sleep patterns • Physically well, full of energy • Consistent performance • Socially active	• Nervousness, irritability, sadness • Trouble sleeping • Tired/low energy, muscle tension, headaches • Procrastination • Decreased social activity	• Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness • Restless or disturbed sleep • Fatigue, aches and pains • Decreased performance, presenteeism • Social avoidance or withdrawal	• Excessive anxiety, easily enraged, depressed mood • Unable to fall or stay asleep • Exhaustion, physical illness • Unable to perform duties, absenteeism • Isolation, avoiding social events

ACTIONS TO TAKE AT EACH PHASE OF THE CONTINUUM

• Focus on task at hand • Break problems into manageable chunks • Identify and nurture support systems • Maintain healthy lifestyle	• Recognize limits • Get adequate rest, food, and exercise • Engage in healthy coping strategies • Identify and minimize stressors	• Identify and understand own signs of distress • Talk with someone • Seek help • Seek social support instead of withdrawing	• Seek consultation as needed • Follow healthcare provider recommendations • Regain physical and mental health

What is Mental Illness?

Mental illness is often defined as a psychological dysfunction experienced by an individual which usually involves:

- **Distress**
- **Impairment** in functioning (i.e. academic, emotional, social, occupational)
- Thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviour that **deviate** from the individual's societal/cultural norm
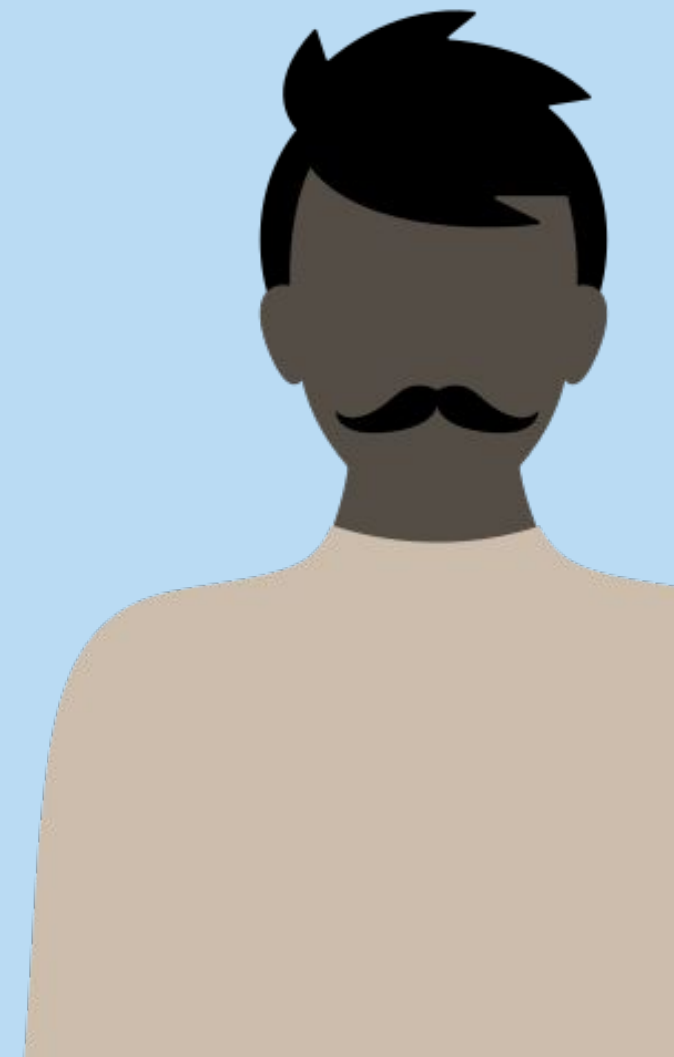
How To Look After Your Mental Health

EXERCISE REGULARLY STAY ACTIVE

TALK TO FRIENDS

EAT A WELL BALANCED DIET

DO SOMETHING THAT MAKES YOU HAPPY

MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

REACH OUT WHEN YOU ARE LONELY

START A TO DO LIST

TRY SOME DEEP BREATHING

CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THINKING

WORK ON IMPROVING YOURSELF

SCU Services

https://www.up.ac.za/student-counselling ⬅ **Search here!**

1. Chatbot SCU-B

2. Psychological assessments - career, concessions

3. Unlimited access to telephonic counselling UP Careline on 0800 747 747 or, send an SMS to 31393 for a call-back.

4. Consultation and treatment - face to face and online email studentcounselling@up.ac.za

5. Webinars and workshops on student life

6. Daily peer-to-peer support groups

7. Multiple online resources

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The Importance of Mental Health

"Students cannot be intellectually proficient if they are physically or mentally unwell"

Mental Health:

★ Promotes resilience

★ Helps us cope better with life stressors

★ Encourages the use of healthy and effective coping mechanisms

★ Helps maintain healthy relationships

★ Increases productivity and a higher quality of life

Promoting Wellness and Resilience

- **Psychological capital:**
  "An individual's positive psychological state of development" (which is characterized by having high levels of the following elements; Hope, (self-)Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism (HERO),(Luthans, et al., 2007)

- **Resilience:**
  "The process of being able to adapt well and bounce back quickly in times of stress" (positivepsychology.com)

- We follow a stepped approach - not all require intensive therapy (some might), some don't ▪

Stress continuum

- Wish to establish the **Caring Campus** – use of all the integrated resources and all students to create an environment that will build individuals and prevent need for treatment

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Types of Resilience

Academic

An increased likelihood of academic success despite environmental adversities.

Psychological

The ability to cope with adversity and to adapt to stressful life events, while maintaining mental and phsycial health.

Resilience

Physical

The body's ability to respond to physical challenges and recover effeciently in response to adversities such as disease or injury.

Emotional

The ability to adapt to stressful situations or crises through using positive emotional responses.

Building Resilience

- Resilience is associated with increased quality of life, wellbeing and functional capacity in times of adversity.
- Within the university environment, resilience has been viewed as an asset that supports university students' mental health requirements and is associated with fewer mental health problems and successful adjustment to university life (Hartley, 2012).

4 Ways to Build Resilience

- Foster a feeling of competence - Set attainable goals using SMART
- Develop your community - Find your tribe in university, use social media if in-person social gatherings are not possible.
- Feel useful -
- Take back Control - identify what you can control in your situation
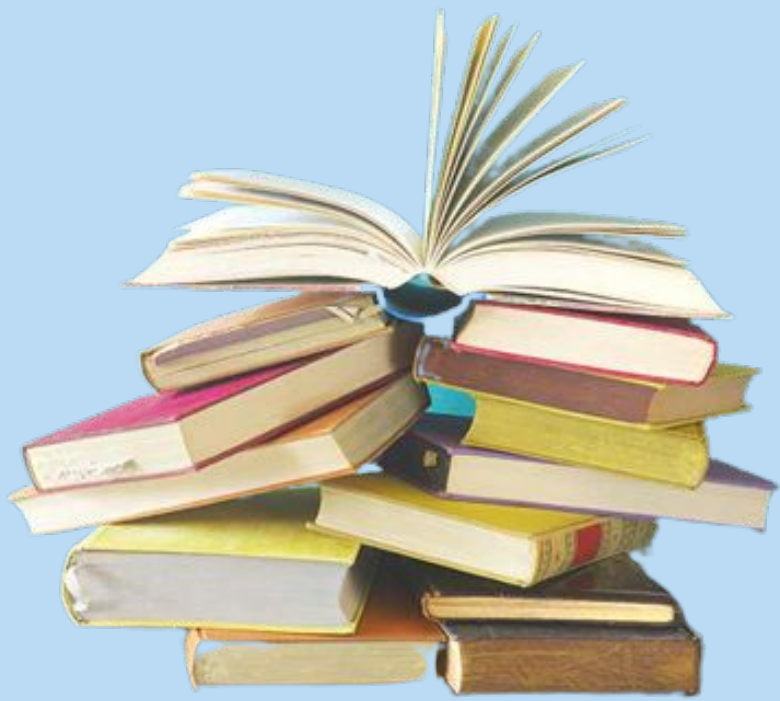
Further Readings

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