



What is Mental Wellbeing and how can we enhance it

Student Counselling Unit
Mental Health Awareness Series September



- **Mental Health** includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act. Furthermore, it helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health exists on a continuum—this means that the state of your mental well-being changes depending on different circumstances and can either improve or deteriorate.
- **Mental Illness** refers to a psychological dysfunction experienced by an individual which involves distress, impairment in academic, occupational or social functioning and behaviour that deviate from the individual's societal/cultural norm.
- **Well Being** can be described as a person's quality of functioning and is related to low distress levels, the experience of positive emotions and good mental and physical health. It is important to remember that someone suffering from a mental illness can still be mentally well.

The Importance of Taking Care of Your Mental Health ?

Mental Health plays a vital role in our lives, as it:

- 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.



Daily tips to maintain and enhance your mental health:

- Exercise regularly.
- Get sufficient sleep.
- Eat a well balanced diet.
- Deep breathing exercises to relieve stress and reduce anxiety.
- Indulge in activities you enjoy.
- Make time for rest and relaxation.
- Connect with others.

Consequences of Overlooking Your Mental Health:

Not looking after your mental health can affect your:

- Ability to learn.
- Academic performance.
- Level of motivation.
- Ability to cope with life stressors.
 - The quality of your relationships and the ability to maintain healthy relationships.

Did You Know ?

It is normal for our mental health to fluctuate just as our physical health fluctuates. The important thing is to be aware of when this happens so that we can enhance our levels of mental health.

References

- For more info or self-help resources, check the Student Counselling Unit's website <https://www.up.ac.za/student-counselling>
- For 24hr support, call the UP Careline 0800 747 747
- For academic support consult with your Faculty Student Advisor: <https://www.up.ac.za/teaching-and-learning/article/2494904/faculty-student-advisors-fsas>
- De Man, J., Smith, M. R., Schneider, M., & Tabana, H. (2022). An exploration of the impact of COVID-19 on mental health in South Africa. *Psychology, health & medicine*, 27(1), 120-130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2021.1954671>
- Dobson, K. S., & Wolf, S. (2021, May 20). "Myths and Facts" Campaigns are at Best Ineffective and May Increase Mental Illness Stigma. *Stigma and Health*. Advance online publication. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/sah0000323>
- Galderisi, S., Heinz, A., Kastrup, M., Beezhold, J., & Sartorius, N. (2015). Toward a new definition of mental health. *World psychiatry: official journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)*, 14(2), 231-233. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20231>
- Hiremath, P., Suhas Kowshik, C. S., Manjunath, M., & Shettar, M. (2020). COVID 19: Impact of lock-down on mental health and tips to overcome. *Asian journal of psychiatry*, 51, 102088. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102088>
- World Health Organization. (2005). *Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Your Mental Health Toolkit

- If you are on your student portal, please pay a visit to our friendly chatbot SCU-B, who will try to answer your mental health and wellness enquiries in a helpful way.
- Contact the 24 hour UP Careline on 0800 747 747 and speak to a friendly counsellor any time, day or night.
- Join a UP Peer support group.

