

Understanding Mental Health

A youth-friendly guide to wellbeing, common challenges, myths and help-seeking.

Mental health is part of overall health

Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how people cope with stress, learn, work, make decisions, form relationships and participate in community life.

Mental health can change over time. Relationships, physical health, education, work, finances, discrimination, violence, displacement, loss and access to support can all influence wellbeing.

Common challenges

- Stress related to exams, work, unemployment or finances
- Anxiety, repeated worry or panic
- Low mood, loss of interest or hopelessness
- Loneliness, grief or relationship difficulties
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination or social-media pressure
- Sleep difficulties, chronic illness or exposure to violence and emergencies

Signs that additional support may be needed

- Distress continues, gets worse or interferes with school, work or daily responsibilities
- Major changes in sleep, appetite, concentration or energy
- Withdrawal from friends, family or normal activities
- Using alcohol, drugs or other harmful behaviours to cope
- Thoughts of self-harm, suicide or not wanting to live

Immediate danger: Call Rescue 1122, Police 15, Edhi Ambulance 115, or go to the nearest hospital emergency department. Do not stay alone.

Myths and facts

Myth: Mental-health difficulties mean a person is weak.

Fact: They can affect anyone, and asking for help is a responsible step.

Myth: Only severe illness deserves support.

Fact: People may seek help for stress, grief, relationships, sleep, fear or other concerns before they become severe.

Sources: World Health Organization - Mental health; WHO - Adolescent mental health; UNICEF Adolescent Mental Health Hub.
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