

Introduction to Mental Health



What is mental health?

Kids Help Phone defines mental health as a state of well-being when someone reaches their own potential, can cope with the everyday stresses of life, can focus on their own work and get it done, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

Mental health can be visualized as a continuum where some days are better than others. When someone experiences a challenge to their mental health, we use the term mental ill-health. Mental ill-health might include sadness, worry, and stress. Symptoms of mental ill-health may or may not be diagnosed by a professional as a mental disorder.

Mental disorders are diagnosed by a psychologist or doctor and typically mean someone has been experiencing symptoms of a certain severity over a period of time. For example, depression and anxiety are considered mental disorders.

There are many different treatment options for all mental disorders. It is important that you discuss them with your doctor or other health care professional, and encourage your 4-H members to seek help when needed.

Everyone will experience mental health and mental ill-health at some point in their life, although not everyone will have a mental disorder. Mental health and mental ill-health can range from positive to challenging.



Feelings of Mental Health

Focused	Motivated
Resilient	Excited

Feelings of Mental Ill-health

Sadness	Stressed
Loneliness	Overwhelmed

Why is it important?

We all experience ups and downs to our mental health. Just like with physical health, it is important to check in with yourself or with a professional from time to time, the same way you would see a doctor for a cough or a backache.

While mental health may not be an easy topic to talk about and can be a sensitive issue for some people, the stigma is decreasing as awareness of the importance of mental health to our overall well-being increases. The more you talk and learn about it, the easier the conversations around mental health will become.

4-H Canada's mental health resource

In this resource, you will find tip sheets for both your 4-H members and for yourself as a 4-H leader. You will find that these tip sheets complement each other and share similar information.

Tip sheets for youth:

- Taking Care of Yourself
- Building your Support System
- Accessing Resources
- Supporting a Friend in Distress
- Understanding Bullying

Tip sheets for leaders:

- Demonstrating Self-Care
- Building a Support System
- Accessing Resources
- Supporting a 4-H Member in Distress
- Understanding Bullying

As a companion to the tip sheets for 4-H leaders you will also find an Activity Guide for Leaders with tips on how you can incorporate mental health into your 4-H meetings and some activities to help start the conversation on mental health with your 4-H members.

To further assist you in using these resources, 4-H Canada's accompanying webinar presentation will introduce you to the Healthy Living Initiative, and provide you with ideas on how to use these tips sheets with your members.

This webinar and all the above resources are available at 4-h-canada.ca/healthyliving.

Top three discussion topics at Kids Help Phone in 2017:

1. Mental/Emotional Health - Depression
2. Peer Relationships - Conflict
3. Suicide/Suicide-Related - Self Ideation/Attempt

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Kids Help Phone 

4-H Canada has partnered with Kids Help Phone to develop these resources

KidsHelpPhone.ca



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