



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going.

Increase your self-awareness

- Take a depression or anxiety test online (search “depression test” or “anxiety test”)
- Use a mood tracker app
- Start a regular meditation or yoga practice
- The more patterns you can identify about your mental health, the more power you have to improve it
 - Think about seasons, weather, eating habits, time of day, etc.

Maintenance Strategies

- Just like a car needs regular maintenance to run well, your mind needs regular care.
- No matter what mental space you're in right now, try incorporating these habits into your life
 - Exercise
 - Drinking enough water
 - Time with friends
 - Alone time
 - Eating healthy food/Eating enough food
 - Talking/journaling about what you're feeling, how you're doing with your mental health

Coping with Bad Days

- Bad days can happen because of something at school or work, and sometimes they happen for no reason at all. Even if you don't know why you're having a bad day, you can still do something about it.
- Call a friend
- Do something that relaxes you or distracts you from the bad part of the day
- Accept that it's a bad day and tomorrow will probably be better
- Take a nap
- Check that you've eaten/drunk water today
- Find a pet, stuffed animal, SO, friend, etc. to cuddle with

Coping with Bad Weeks

- Bad days are normal, but if you have an entire bad week, you may need to re-evaluate your stress levels, habits, and coping mechanisms.
- Try to identify any triggers, internal or external, that may have caused or added to the bad week.
 - Are the triggers ones that you can avoid (i.e. staying out too late) or that you need to develop better coping skills for (i.e. weather)?
- Decide on one or two things you can do next week to have better mental health than you did this week.
- Make sure to talk to someone, a trusted friend, family member, or therapist, or journal about how you are feeling, possible triggers, and plans for the next week.

Coping with Bad Months

- If you're having a bad month or several bad months in a row, then it's time to seek outside help. No matter how many good habits you have, your brain may just need a professional.
- UNT has many resources that can help: individual and group counseling, psychiatry for diagnoses and medications, and substance abuse help. (search "UNT mental health resources")
- Don't be afraid to start counseling or medication.
 - If your brain doesn't make its own neurotransmitters (dopamine, serotonin, etc.) store-bought is fine too.

Reduce the Stigma around Mental Illness

- It's obvious to most people that someone with a broken leg needs help, special care, and time to heal. Your mind needs those things as well when it feels broken, it's just harder for you and others to see than a broken leg.
- Practice being emotionally vulnerable. Find people you trust to be gentle when you are vulnerable.
- Be supportive of your friends/family members who are struggling with their mental health.
- You may need to be your own advocate for your mental health if your parents/caregivers are not advocating for you. Find someone you look up to that can help you advocate for yourself.