

What do you say when someone asks, “How are you?” or ‘Are you okay?’

Most of us respond with answers that are fairly general and vague – usually a simple “Fine” or “Okay”.

Even when we’re feeling lousy, we might only reply with “Could be better.” We rarely tell people how we really feel.

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself, “How am I?”, “How am I *really* doing?”, “Am I doing well or just getting by?”, “Am I happy with myself and my relationships?”, “Do I feel fulfilled?”, “Am I content?”, “Do I feel that my life has meaning?”, or “Do I merely tolerate and accept a general lack of happiness and contentment with my life and my relationships?”

These are hard questions to ask and can be even harder to answer. But asking and answering these questions are necessary to ensuring good mental health.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Many people confuse mental health with mental illness. These are actually two different things. A person can have poor mental health and have no mental illness or live with a mental illness and have good mental health. Good mental health is the sense of well-being that comes from knowing that you can cope with whatever life sends your way. Mental health is about *quality of life and finding the balance between all aspects of our lives* – social, physical, spiritual and emotional. You are able to work successfully and contribute to family and community life.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT DEGREES OF MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health can range from “flourishing” (good) to “languishing” (poor). And unfortunately, many people are “languishing”, which means that they simply accept that their present state of mental health is just the way it is and will always be.

But none of us needs to settle for “languishing”. If we can *recognize our strengths and address those areas in which we struggle*, we can ease the strain on our mental health and move ourselves to “flourishing”. It is possible for each and every one of us to enjoy life more.

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE GOOD MENTAL HEALTH?

Few people have perfect mental health. We can improve our mental health in the same way that we can change and improve our physical health. We can practice good mental health habits and exercise our coping strategies. We can build good mental health, one step at a time.

THE FIRST STEP -

Get to know yourself

Below is a list of things that define and contribute to good mental health. By answering these questions, you will better understand your strengths, your potential, and those areas that you can change in order to enhance your quality of life.

Emotions – Am I regularly happy and interested in life? Do I smile a lot?

Self-acceptance – Do I like who and what I am?

Personal growth – Do I recognize my own potential and feel a sense of continued development?

Purpose in life – Does my life have direction and meaning?

Mastery of the environment – Do I address my needs in a positive, constructive and non-violent way?

Self-reliant – Do I live according to my own standards and values?

Relationships with others – Do I have warm, trusting and meaningful personal relationships?

Social acceptance – Am I positive toward others and accept their differences?

Attitudes about people – Do I believe that people and society in general has potential and can grow positively?

Contribution to society – Is what I do every day useful to and valued by others?

Interest in people – Am I interested in people, society, and the world around me?

Sense of belonging – Do I feel that I belong to my community and that it supports and comforts me?

Quality of life – Am I mostly or highly satisfied with life overall?

(Source: Keyes, 2007:98)

THE SECOND STEP - Ask others when you need help

Depending on how you respond to these questions, you may need to ask others for help. This is an important step in achieving good mental health. It takes courage to let people know how you are and what you need, and it is the smart thing to do. It is your way of reminding yourself that you matter, and that you are willing to take care of yourself and your needs the best way that you can. *[See the back of this pamphlet for a list of Community Resources.]*

THE THIRD STEP - Check in with yourself regularly

Achieving good mental health and flourishing is a life-long process. So, you need to check in with yourself regularly to make sure you are taking care of your body, mind and spirit, and finding balance in your life.

FIVE WAYS to WELL-BEING *

Simple things can make a big difference to our well-being. Researchers in the United Kingdom identified five actions that can significantly improve our well-being.

Connect – Connect with people around you. Invest time in building relationships at home, work, in your neighbourhood and community as these connections will support and enrich your life.

Be Active – Discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your mobility and fitness.

Take Notice – Be curious. Savour the moment and be aware of the world around you. Practice being aware of sensations, thoughts and feelings without judgement.

Keep Learning – Try something new or rediscover an old interest.

Give – Do something nice for someone else. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer. Get involved.

* Source: www.neweconomics.org

FREE WORKSHOPS (dates available at www.klinik.mb.ca)

HOW TO REGISTER - To register for these workshops please contact **Gwen at 784-4209** or email gcrowley@klinik.mb.ca. There is no fee for participation.

Are You O.K? – Create well-being and be better than O.K.

This is an interactive, ninety-minute information session for women and men who find themselves running on empty and not particularly happy or satisfied with life. This session explores what it means to have flourishing or good mental health, to thrive rather than simply survive. Participants explore their own potential to feel, think and act in ways that increases their ability to enjoy life more and face the challenges of the future. Further, we will address why investing time and energy in taking care of one's self is vitally important, and how obstacles preventing us from doing so can be overcome.

Stress and Stress Management – Learning to De Stress and Enjoy Life More

Stress is a fact of everyday life and although we all talk about stress it often isn't clear what stress is all about. Many people consider stress to be something that happens to them such as an event or what happens to our body, mind, and behaviour in response to an event. It is our thoughts about situations in which we find ourselves that are perhaps the most important. This ninety-minute interactive workshop explores the meaning of stress, its effect on us and most importantly how to manage stress and de stress. This workshop introduces participants to popular stress management and relaxation techniques along with concrete tools that anyone can use every day in order to better deal with the challenges of life and enjoy life more.

Everyone deserves to be happy and content.
Everyone deserves good mental health.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES.....

Klinik 24 Hr. Crisis Line
786-8686

Manitoba Suicide Line
1-877-435-7170

Post-Trauma Counselling Intake
784-4059

Drop-In Counselling Information
784-4067

Family Violence Counselling
784-4208

Manitoba Farm & Rural Stress Line
1-866-367-3276

Enjoy life more; get help to de-stress
www.de-stress.ca

For more information on trauma, go to
www.trauma-informed.ca

Are You Okay?

A
3-Step
Approach
To
Being
Mentally Healthy

