

# Mental Health Continuum

The Mental Health Continuum Model illustrates the different mental health phases you may experience throughout your life and career. It's important to remember that you can move in either direction along the spectrum, which means there is always the possibility to return to full health and functioning.

Mental Health Continuum shows how levels of mental health are reflected in:

- What we do (behaviors)
- How we feel (emotions)
- How we think (cognitions)
- How we feel in our body (physical)

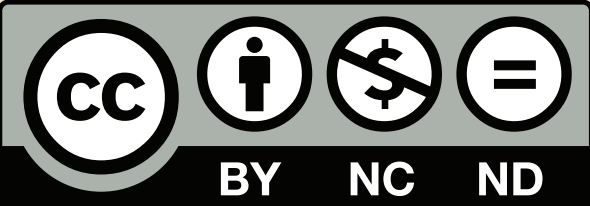
Common signs are reflected along the continuum, so you can see how your problems increase and your functioning decreases, as you move towards the right along the continuum.

They are grouped into six themes: Mood, Attitude, Sleep, Physical Health, Activity, Habits

The continuum goes from healthy, adaptive coping (green), through mild and reversible distress or functional impairment (yellow), to more severe, persistent injury or impairment (orange), through to clinical illnesses and disorders requiring more concentrated medical care (red).

← THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM →				
SELF CARE & SOCIAL SUPPORT		PROFESSIONAL CARE		
	HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
	Normal Functioning	Common & Reversible Distress	Significant Functional Impairment	Clinical Disorder. Severe & Persistent Functional Impairment
MOOD	Normal mood fluctuations Calmness and the ability to take things in stride	Being irritable or impatient Being nervous Being sad or overwhelmed	Anger Anxiety Pervasive sadness or hopelessness	Angry outbursts or aggression Excessive anxiety or panic attacks Depression or suicidal thoughts
ATTITUDE	A good sense of humor Good performance Being in control	Expressing displaced sarcasm Procrastination Forgetfulness	A negative attitude Poor performance or workaholic behavior Poor concentration or decisions	Excessive insubordination An inability to perform duties, control behaviour or concentrate
SLEEP	Normal sleep patterns Few sleep difficulties	Having trouble sleeping Having intrusive thoughts Having nightmares	Restless or disturbed sleep Recurrent images or nightmares	An inability to fall asleep or stay asleep Sleeping too much or too little
PHYSICAL HEALTH	Being physically well Having a good energy level	Having muscle tension or headaches Having low energy	Increased aches and pains Increased fatigue	Physical illnesses Constant fatigue
ACTIVITY	Being physically and socially active	Decreased activity or socializing	Avoidance Withdrawal	Not going out or not answering phone
HABITS	Limited or no alcohol use or gambling.	Regular but controlled alcohol use or gambling.	Increased alcohol use or hard-to-control gambling	Alcohol or gambling addiction Other addictions
ACTIONS TO TAKE AT EACH PHASE OF THE CONTINUUM				
	Focus on task at hand Break problems into manageable chunks Identify and nurture support systems Maintain healthy lifestyle	Recognize limits Identify and minimize stressors Engage in healthy coping strategies Get adequate food, rest, and exercise	Identify and understand own signs of distress Seek social support and talk with someone instead of withdrawing Seek help	Seek consultation as needed Follow health care provider recommendations Regain physical and mental health

Source Data –  
<http://health.nzdf.mil.nz/mind/about-mental-health/the-mental-health-continuum/>  
<https://bcfirstrespondersmentalhealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/MentalHealthContinuumModel.pdf>  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/health-wellness-public-servants/disability-management/fundamentals-employers-responsibilities.html>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Mental Health AE  
[www.mentalhealthae.com](http://www.mentalhealthae.com)  
[@mentalhealthae](https://twitter.com/mentalhealthae)