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Introduction

Mental health is more than just a popular topic in the zeitgeist. It's crucial to your overall health and wellness. And you can't take control of your emotional and mental health if you do not understand it. You need to understand what influences it, how you can protect it, and what steps you can take to improve yours.

All mental health experiences are valid. Your mental health operates on a wide spectrum, from feeling fantastic and thriving to unhealthy conditions or situations that impact your quality of life. And sometimes, you may be flying high.

Other times, you may struggle with completing basic daily tasks you have been completing your entire life. If you do not address your mental health at the first sign of trouble, it can spiral out of control and affect your overall wellness.

Throughout the course of your life, you will experience a variety of mental health occurrences.

# The Spectrum Of Mental Health

While the below is not an exhaustive list, it touches on some of the key points on the mental health spectrum.

## Thriving

Thriving is the goal – it's what everyone should strive for. When you're thriving it means you feel good, you feel balanced, and you can cope with any challenge that comes your way, whether it's work, relationships, family issues, or otherwise.

## Distress

When you're on the distress point of the spectrum it means you are dealing with mental health struggles that interfere with your ability to get things done and your overall quality of life. It might be a result of an untreated mental health condition. But it could be an acute depression. Either way, there is a way out and if you are at this point you need to reach out for professional help.

## Struggling

When you are dealing with emotional struggles it can impact relationships, work, and your home life. Often, the human instinct is to buck up and push through it. However, your emotional well-being is important and it's just as important that you acknowledge the fact that you are struggling. At this point, you should be looking for new ways to practice self-care and thinking about speaking to someone for help.

## Managing

Managing is when you have a mental health condition, but you have it under control. Whether you're on medication or you have found healthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress. Managing means just that – you have a good grip on things.

## Negative Feelings

Negative feelings aren't inherently negative. It is normal to experience negative emotions because they provide balance for positive emotions. That's the natural human experience. And sometimes our negative emotions help keep us safe. What isn't healthy is stewing in those negative emotions. If they start to overwhelm you, if they interfere with your ability to enjoy life, then you can't ignore them. It doesn't matter whether you can pinpoint the root of those emotions or not, you can't ignore them.

## Harmful Behavior

If someone is living with an unaddressed mental health condition it can lead to a host of harmful behaviors, from substance misuse to suicidal ideations. If you recognize those warning signs in yourself or in someone you know, it's important to reach out for help immediately.

## Mental Health Conditions

It is normal to feel lonely, anxious, or sad sometimes. However, when those are severe and last for weeks or even months, they could be a diagnosable and treatable medical condition. It's something you should pursue with a professional as soon as possible.

## Trauma

Trauma is the intense emotional human response in reaction to an overwhelming event, from a natural disaster or witnessing a crime to being the victim of a crime. Trauma doesn't always immediately appear and when it does, it can last for years.

## Difficult Experiences

Everyone experiences challenges and bumps in the road, it's a natural part of the human experience. Whether it's a break-up, death, financial issues, or otherwise, it can create emotional obstacles that require work. Often, it requires support. Whatever the situation, you can overcome and manage difficult experiences if you are in a good place with your mental health.

With so many different points on the mental health spectrum, there are a variety of factors that influence it. We can control some of those factors, but others we cannot, and understanding the difference will help you influence your mental health and improve your wellbeing.

The factors you ***cannot*** control include genetics, your early life experiences and upbringing, trauma, medical history, how others treat or mistreat you, and past trauma. You also have no control over the local access you have to mental health care, which for many people makes it more challenging.

However, what you ***can***control is seeking help, your perception of mental health, coping strategies, sense of purpose, self-esteem, self-care routine, relationships, how you manage stress and anxiety, and your openness to discuss your thoughts and feelings.

Useful Definitions

## Mental Health

Mental health is a state of well-being where people realize their potential, can contribute to their community, and cope with life's normal stresses.

## Mental Wellbeing

The state of mental well-being is how you're coping with daily life and how you feel.

## Mental Health Problems

Or issues affect the way you feel, think, and act. An issue or problem can feel just as bad, if not worse, than many physical illnesses.

## Anxiety

Anxiety is the word we use to describe a feeling of worry, fear, or unease. It's a word that can incorporate physical sensations and emotions that we often experience when we're nervous or worried. It is also a diagnosable mental health condition.

It is generally unpleasant, but acute anxiety can be triggered as part of the natural fight or flight response when we are under threat.

## Depression

Depression is a low mood condition that lingers for a long time. While some people go through a depressive period, others have chronic depression that requires professional care. In the mildest forms of depression, it could be low spirits.

It makes everything seem harder even though it doesn't prevent you from leading your normal daily life. At its most severe, however, it can be life-threatening.

## Self-Harm

Self-harm is a term used for when people hurt themselves as a way of coping with difficult emotions, painful memories, or overwhelming events. It can be seen as a way of taking control back when everything feels outside of someone's control. It can also be something someone turns to when they feel like they have no better options.

# Challenges To Mental Health

Emotional struggles can come for a variety of reasons and can be triggered by a wide range of challenges. Learning how to label or name them and reflect on them is an effective way to manage and overcome them. It isn't something you have to face alone. There are many ways you can support your mental health and before we dive into your action list, let's touch on the wider ways you can support positive mental health.

* **Self-Care**

Self-care is the act of looking after yourself. It includes a healthy sleep routine, ensuring you eat a balanced diet, getting regular exercise, practicing mindfulness, and making time for hobbies. There is a strong link between your physical and mental health so practicing self-care benefits both your body and mind.

* **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a form of self-care, but it's important because it's an excellent way to find quiet and calm. It's a positive way to challenge your thoughts and process your feelings. Mindfulness includes breathing exercises, journaling, and practicing yoga. It's something to explore until you find what works best for you.

* **Coping**

Coping strategies are the methods we use to avoid, minimize or overcome our mental health challenges. There are healthy ways to overcome like seeking professional mental health help. There are effective ways to overcome this by spending time with friends and engaging in hobbies. And there are unhealthy coping strategies people use to overcome, such as alcohol or drug misuse.

* **Support Network**

Nobody is entirely alone. It's important that you build a strong support network to open up about your feelings. When you discuss those emotions, it takes the sting out of them and makes them feel less overwhelming. And when you have friends to support you and support back it gives your mental health a positive boost.

* **Mental Health Support**

Mental health professionals are trained to provide assistance with emotional challenges. This includes work stress, substance misuse, mental health conditions, and relationship issues.

You can see there's a framework for you to build that will help you manage your mental health, wherever you fall on the spectrum. But what does *good* mental health look like?

# Good Mental Health

There is more to good mental health than simply being free of mental illness. Good mental health means that you have achieved a state of well-being where you function well in the world and feel good.

If you're not sure where you fall on the mental health spectrum, good mental health can be described as the ability to cope with life's normal stresses, work productively, realize your potential, and can contribute to the community.

If you have good mental health then you likely experience positive emotions like happiness, you will be compassionate, joyful, and feel satisfied with life in general. You likely feel like you are making a positive contribution to society and belong to a community.

It may also mean you have a feeling of peace or a sense of purpose, whether it's because of a religious state of spiritual wellbeing or one that connects you to the universe or nature.

## The Good Mental Health Checklist

Everyone has challenges to face in life, but people with good mental health are better prepared to deal with the typical ups and downs of life. If you can tick the boxes below, then your mental health is likely in good standing.

* Confident when meeting new people
* Confident when faced with a new situation
* An overall optimistic outlook
* You don't immediately jump to self-blame
* You're a goal-setter
* You have high levels of self-esteem
* You have positive feelings about yourself

Building resilience is an excellent way to gain control of your mental health because it gives you the ability to cope with challenges and unexpected changes. While some people are naturally more resilient than others, it is something you can learn.

It improves your ability to deal with stress, but that doesn't mean you won't feel stressed. The ability to manage it can prevent chronic anxiety and help prevent depression. Coping skills build resilience.

# Poor Mental Health

You might be familiar with mental health diagnoses such as anxiety and depression or schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. A diagnosis doesn't necessarily mean that someone has poor mental health all the time. The majority of mental health conditions can be managed, whether it's with medication or otherwise.

A lot of people have been diagnosed with mental health conditions and are fully capable of functioning at work and managing a home with partners and children. Likewise, someone can have poor mental health without a diagnosis, but also without a mental health condition. Again, mental health is a spectrum and all kinds of factors influence it.

## Signs of Poor Mental Health

* A lack of concentration or being easily distracted
* Worrying often
* Difficulty making decisions
* Less interest in daily activities
* Feeling overwhelmed, especially if it's by things you often deal with just fine
* Low mood
* Tearfulness
* A lack of energy, tiredness, or fatigue
* Sleep issues, whether it's less or more sleep than normal
* Avoiding social activities or talking less
* Jumping from different ideas or topics, talking more, and talking quickly
* Difficulty controlling or managing your emotions
* A short temper, aggression, or irritability
* An increase in substance use, whether it's alcohol or otherwise

If you have noticed some of these signs present in yourself or others, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have a mental health condition. However, it should spur you to seek professional advice to find out whether there is an underlying issue (<https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/about-mental-illness/learn-more-about-symptoms/worried-about-your-mental-health/>).

Often, the people around us notice these changes before we do. So, don't be afraid to encourage a friend who is displaying these symptoms. If you're unsure of how to broach the subject, you could bring it up as stress or burnout rather than immediately addressing mental health. If you are the one experiencing these symptoms, you can reach out to someone you trust by using the terms stress or burnout as well. It might help you process what's happening.

Everyone experiences stress differently and people with mental health troubles often experience different symptoms. So, everyone should be aware of their early signs so they know when to seek help.

Creating An Action Plan

Before we address action steps, it's worth discussing action plans. You can create a mental health action plan to help manage your mental health wherever you fall on the spectrum. As you create your action plan, you should be able to answer the questions below.

* What actions are necessary to achieve your goals?
* Who is responsible for making those actions?
* What is your timescale to achieve the goal or goals?
* What resources are necessary to achieve those goals?
* Who else will be involved in your journey?
* How will you utilize those people and your available resources?

Every mental health action plan should include actions and behaviors that support overall mental health and wellbeing. It should be focused on you as an individual and should act as a support.

# 40 Action Steps To Good Mental Health

Below are 40 action steps to good mental health, you can try all of them or some of them. If you are trying to build good mental health, your best bet is to try each of them to see how they work for you.

1. **Open Up**

One of the most valuable steps in supporting good mental health is opening up and talking about your feelings. It's a great way to get things off your chest and process troubling emotions with someone you trust. There is no weakness in discussing your feelings, it's an act of taking control of your wellbeing and doing what is necessary to maintain good health.

Talking is a good way to cope with an ongoing problem you have been dealing with. There is power in feeling the support of a friend or feeling as though you are being listened to. It's a good reminder that you're not alone. And your ability to open up is a good way to encourage others to do the same.

Describing your emotions isn't always easy – you don't have to stick to using a single word. Use as many words as it takes to describe what it feels like in your head or to talk about what it makes you feel like. It doesn't need to be a big production of sitting friends or family down to have a massive conversation about your emotions and wellbeing. You will likely feel more comfortable by allowing the conversation to develop naturally. And if it does initially feel awkward, give yourself time to process. The more you do it the more natural it will feel.

1. **Reach Out**

When you start to share your story, you see other people who have gone through similar situations. It can be incredibly cathartic to share yourself with people who have been there and to hear them share their stories.

Look at social media for hashtags related to what you are experiencing. You would be surprised by just how much healing can be done by sharing with strangers.

1. **Stay Active**

Exercising helps trigger the release of feel-good chemicals in your brain. Those chemicals make you feel *great*. Not only can regular exercise improve concentration, increase self-esteem, and encourage a better sleep routine, it's great for confidence. Exercise is good for your vital organs, and it's great for your brain.

The key to *staying* active is choosing exercises you genuinely enjoy. Forcing yourself to go jogging when you can't think of anything worse is not going to contribute to positive mental health. But going for a daily swim when it's something you enjoy is a great way to be consistent about staying active.

It isn't just going to the gym or joining a local team – gardening, housework, and walks in the park are all exercises. Start small but be sure to make physical activity a part of your daily life until you reach 30 minutes of daily exercise at least five days a week.

1. **A Healthy Diet**

The food you choose can improve how you feel or it can make you feel worse. For example, sugar and caffeine have an instant effect. It's why we grab an energy drink or pour a second cup of coffee. It's why we choose sweet breakfast treats. We can feel the instant impact.

The problem is with those highs come extreme lows that start the cycle again. You chase that high with more unhealthy treats. A treat should be just that – a treat. Your body and brain need a balance of nutrients to function properly so you need lean protein, fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, dairy, whole grains, and plenty of water.

Once you nail the basics of a balanced diet, you can enjoy treats as treats. But labeling foods as bad can also contribute to poor mental health. So, if you have a special treat you love, you shouldn't write it off entirely. Everything is good in moderation. It's helpful to avoid caffeine after 2 pm, limit your alcohol intake, and cut back on sugary drinks.

1. **Sensible Alcohol Use**

Alcohol is a depressant and people often drink it as a means of changing their moods. So, you have a difficult day at work and you tell yourself you have earned the bottle of wine. Or you feel lonely and think a few cocktails will cheer you up because nobody can hang out. Whatever the reason for it, the effect is temporary.

Alcohol wears off and when it does, you often feel worse. Whether that's because you overdid it and have a hangover or you wake up and realize nothing has changed. Drinking feels good when you're doing it, but it isn't an effective or healthy way to manage difficult emotions.

And if you drink too much often it can cause serious withdrawal symptoms that affect your body and brain. People dependent on alcohol can have a miserable time until they drink again which only fuels the vicious cycle. In addition to the damage alcohol can have on your body, it takes more and more of it to get that short-term boost every time you drink.

There's nothing wrong with the occasional drink, the issue comes when it's a crutch. The CDC classes moderate drinking as one drink for women and two for men (<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/moderate-drinking.htm>). Additionally, it's advised you do not drink seven days a week, your body needs a break.

Some people may use tobacco or drugs, legal or otherwise, to improve how they feel. Just like alcohol, the effects are temporary and the more often you use them the more you will crave the feeling it gives you. None of those substances address the underlying cause of your feelings. They aren't going to solve any problems, but they can create additional issues.

1. **Stay In Touch**

Humans are inherently social creatures and building a strong support network is important. Your loved ones help you deal with life's stresses, whether it's providing you with love and support, offering you a shoulder to cry on, or simply having people to hang out and have fun with.

The added benefit of talking to people about what's going on in your life is that they can give you a different perspective than what's happening in your head. They help solve problems and can keep you active and grounded.

There's no better feeling than catching up with someone you love, whether it's face-to-face, over the phone, or even an online chat. It's good for you and it's good for them. And if you have relationships you have neglected, now is a good opportunity to put the work in.

It's normal to lose touch because life can be chaotic, but it isn't too late to nurture it back to health. And if there's someone actively damaging your mental health, you should address that.

1. **Realistic Relationships**

Relationships are exciting, but you have to be realistic about how they unfold. Whether it's a friendship, romance, or even a familial connection, you need to set clear boundaries and respect theirs too. Nobody can drop everything every time you call.

Whatever you're going through, you can't dump it on the same person all the time without putting your relationship at risk. So, if you know someone is busy or going through things, ask them if they have time to listen before you go into your spiel.

1. **Nurture Valuable Relationships**

When you're nurturing relationships, you should find value in the relationships that allow you to be imperfect and loved. Those are relationships you should cultivate.

1. **Seek Help**

Nobody is perfect and nobody is superhuman. Everyone gets tired, everyone feels overwhelmed, and that's okay. When things go wrong or it feels like everything is too much, you should ask for help. It might be that you need a literal hand from your partner, you may need parental or sibling support, or maybe you need a friend to listen.

There are also professional services you can seek out, whether it's a support group filled with people experiencing the same issues as you or a therapist for one-on-one assistance.

1. **Take Breaks**

Never underestimate the power of a good break. Regular breaks throughout the day are an important part of boosting your brain and maintaining productivity. Whether it's leaving your desk for lunch, taking a walk in nature to get away from the office, or simply taking a pause from your chores.

A short break can be more than enough to de-stress you. Me time is important. How you take your breaks will depend on the type of person you are. For example, it might mean doing something active or it might mean doing nothing. Either way, it's important.

Another important step in taking breaks is using your paid vacation. If you are lucky enough to get paid time off work, you should ensure you take every second of it.

It doesn't matter whether you can afford to take a holiday abroad, whether you go camping or visit a friend out of state or simply stay at home. A break from work is important for your body and mind. Think of it as a reboot.

1. **Be An Expert**

If there's one thing that makes everyone feel good it's doing something they're *great* at. Having fun and enjoying yourself is an effective way to beat stress, which is one of the biggest dangers to good mental health. So, if you're an expert at destroying the competition in video games, then play video games.

If you knit like nobody's business, make time to knit. If nobody in the county can grow roses like you, put effort into your garden. Think about activities you get lost in, whether it's something you love doing now or something you used to love doing but haven't had a chance to do in a while.

Doing activities or hobbies you're good at is a great way to boost self-esteem. You can also embark on a new activity, something that requires total focus means there isn't room or time to worry. It's all about giving yourself time to be *you* while doing something *you* love.

1. **Self-Acceptance**

Some people are funny, some are great cooks, some are geeky, and some are quirky. The point is that everyone is different and you should accept yourself exactly as you are. It's a much healthier way to live than trying to compete and compare yourself to others. Be proud of the person you are today, you've worked hard to be where you are.

1. **Compassion For Others**

There is value in caring for others and being a compassionate person. It's an excellent way to nurture relationships, to bring people together, and it makes you feel good too. Boosting your self-esteem isn't the reason to care for others, it's a happy side effect. It's also a really great way to see other perspectives and how the world treats others.

1. **Manage Stress**

Stress is a normal part of life, which is why learning how to manage it with good coping skills is necessary. Laughter is a great way to beat stress so make time for fun and funny entertainment.

1. **Quiet Your Mind**

Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, or prayer can be excellent mind quieting exercises. These exercises can calm you, enhance the positive effects of therapy, and help you get connected to yourself. There is power in knowing yourself and to do that, you need to quiet your mind.

1. **Set Goals**

There is power in having something to strive for. Whether it's an academic goal, a professional one, or a personal objective, setting realistic goals is good for you. First, it provides you with a goal to chase, and second, you experience an immense sense of accomplishment when you achieve that goal.

1. **Beat The Monotony**

Routines are great for managing stress and they give us feelings of safety and security. So, setting a routine is important. But it can be monotonous so find ways to perk up your schedule by exercising in a new environment, changing your route, or trying a new recipe for your planned meal. It doesn't need to be anything big, but it gives you new and interesting things to do within the safety of your routine.

1. **Practice Gratitude**

When your mental health is on a downward spiral it can be difficult to see the good in your life. The negative looms large, which is why practicing gratitude right now is a great way to improve your mental health.

A gratitude journal is more useful because you can write down three things you were grateful for daily and when things get more difficult, you have something to reflect on.

1. **Embrace Your Strengths**

The better you are at something, the more enjoyable it can be. More importantly, it's an incredible way to build your confidence and shake off some of the insecurities that often come with poor mental health.

Building your self-confidence in the good times, means you are more prepared to deal with the dip in the bad times.

1. **Seek Knowledge**

Exercising your brain is just as important as exercising your body, so do yourself a favor and seek knowledge. You can enroll in a class at the local community college. Or read a book on a topic you're interested in, but don't know much about.

Maybe you would benefit from an app to learn a new language. Whatever knowledge you seek, it should be something you're genuinely interested in so you're encouraged to stick with it.

1. **Memory Lane**

If you are feeling anxious or you know you have a stressful period coming up, you can take active steps to battle it by taking a walk down memory lane. Think about the activities you enjoyed when you were young – did you get lost in coloring or playing with Lego? Sometimes retreating to the activities of our youth can be a tonic to the chaos of adulthood. What worked then can definitely work now.

1. **Furry Companions**

Pets are great at reducing levels of the stress hormone cortisol. They also provide a healthy boost in oxytocin. So, whether you have pets or know someone who does, spend some time with a furry companion for a helpful boost of feel-good hormones. Having a pet is a great way to care for someone else and can boost your well-being.

1. **Live in the Present**

It's really easy to get lost in thoughts of the past, which can be incredibly stressful if you can't let of mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes. And if yours are or feel much greater than what other people are dealing with, you should seek the help of a professional counselor to process yours. But in the meantime, you can focus on living in the present.

The future can also be stressful – thinking about having children, getting married, or planning for retirement. It's scary to think about radically life can change in a short amount of time. It's frightening to consider how time flies.

And while you can do practical planning like 401k and career-building, you can't get lost in imagining what your future will look like if you're not living in the present. The action you take now is what builds your future.

1. **Plan**

A lot of people struggle with getting things done. When your mental health takes a dip, it can be incredibly difficult to carry out routine tasks that most people don't give a second thought. And as difficult as it is, you can practice for the bad times by planning in the good times. Get into the habit of setting your clothes out the night before (or planning for the week) and making a weekly menu you shop for to take some of the stress out of mundane tasks.

If you live with a roommate or spouse, you can make up a schedule of who is in charge of what tasks on which days. If you have children old enough you can get them involved with chores as well.

1. **Forgive & Move On**

This is one of the most difficult things for people to grasp. How can you forgive someone who didn't ask for forgiveness? And why should you forgive someone who hurt you deeply?

Ultimately, it doesn't matter if they ask and it doesn't matter what they did. They might not deserve your forgiveness, but it isn't *for* **them**. Forgiveness is *for* **you**. By forgiving someone you let go of the hurt you've been holding onto and it's only then that you can move forward.

1. **The Silver Lining**

Get in the habit of searching for the silver lining in any situation. You don't have to be that annoying person that chirps up and shares what that silver lining is with the people around you. It's more about instilling healthy habits and being the type of person who recognizes that even when something cruddy happens, there's something you can take away from it.

1. **Sunshine**

Vitamin D is a major mood booster so go out of your way to get at least 15 minutes of sunshine when it's riding high in the sky. Just be sure to apply sunscreen.

1. **Curiosity**

You should be curious always, but it's important that you are particularly curious about your feelings and emotions, especially the ones that are more difficult to process. If you are feeling fear, sadness, anger, or shame, you should be prepared to ask questions to get to the root of why you feel this way.

1. **Feelings Aren't Facts**

One of the most important things you can learn about mental health and emotions is that they are not facts. Whatever emotions you may be feeling are entirely valid. They are a natural response to whatever you are going through.

But they aren't always accurate. Sometimes they do too much – like when you feel anxious about a conversation because you don't know what it's about. That anxiety can trigger a fear that isn't warranted. So be aware that though they may be valid, your feelings aren't always being truthful with you.

1. **Take a Breath**

There is nothing more calming and centering to the body's parasympathetic nervous system than several deep breaths. It's useful in just about any situation.

1. **Resourcing**

This is similar to a gratitude journal in that it encourages you to focus on good things. But this is more about cultivating resources to draw on when things get difficult. So, practice this by thinking about all of the things in your life that make you feel cared for. Think about all of the people in your life that support you. The more you practice this, the easier it is to call up when you need it.

1. **Emotional Journaling**

This isn't the same as traditional journaling. In fact, it's as simple as writing down your feelings. If you feel anxious or overwhelmed by *whatever*, write it out. Write down the feelings you are experiencing, write down all the tasks you have to do, and take a moment to ground yourself and get control.

1. **Manage Social Media**

It might be one of the worst things to come out of the internet, but it's hard to quit. It's literally designed that way. And even though you might not realize it, it could be seriously damaging your mental health.

So, use an app, change your phone settings, and do whatever it takes to limit how much time you spend on social media.

1. **Assert Yourself**

As important as it is to set boundaries and assert yourself when maintaining them, it's just as important to communicate productively. If you don't learn how to communicate productively, you might end up bottling your emotions which *will* come out one way or another and however they surface, it won't be pretty.

1. **Check Your Thoughts**

It's easy to get caught up in negative thinking without realizing we're doing it. So, take time out to check your thoughts and correct them if you need to. Question your fears, interrogate your negative thoughts, and make sure you're not beating yourself up over the silly little things.

1. **The Meaning**

It's worth remembering that actions and behaviors have meaning. This tidbit can help you get a better understanding of your own actions, as well as others. So, what were you thinking or feeling when you did the thing that made everyone angry?

What was your partner thinking or feeling, what was your child thinking or feeling, etc.? Communicating with others is much easier when you have this insight.

1. **Overcome Perfectionism**

Chasing perfection can be one of the biggest dangers to your mental health. So, make life a bit easier by breaking down big goals into manageable pieces so you aren't paralyzed by everything going on.

And counteract those critical voices by reeling off five of your positive traits. You can also define success for yourself to see that you're doing just fine.

1. **Be Kind**

When you connect through kindness it makes you a healthier, happier person. So, even when someone is being snotty with you, try to rely on kindness.

1. **Big Picture Thinking**

Learning to look at the big picture helps you ignore all the niggly little annoyances that can feel so big when we're struggling. It helps you nurture gratitude and appreciate all the little things that feel amazing instead of the little things that don't feel great.

1. **Educate Yourself**

Stress and anxiety are normal parts of life, but you need to know when it's crossing into a chronic issue that requires professional attention. Educate yourself on the typical symptoms of mental health issues and be aware of your own early symptoms so you can recognize them the moment they emerge.

# Final Thoughts

If you are struggling with your mental health regularly, you should seek help from a mental health professional or speak to your primary care physician for a referral.

Rather than an action step in and of itself, let's end it on this – the biggest favor you can do for yourself and your mental health is to remember you were not created as a human doing, but rather a human *being*. So *be.*