

# Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing



**A supportive network can be very helpful to a person suffering from poor mental health. If you are providing support to a person who is experiencing poor mental or physical health or who has been diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder, keep these general tips in mind.<sup>1</sup>**

- Try to keep an open mind
- Be patient
- Don't judge
- Listen if the person wants to talk
- Show you care – and remind the person that many others do too
- Be consistent in your actions and reactions related to the person

## Practical ways to help

- Help with their treatment. Help your friend or family member make healthcare appointments, track medications or provide updates to doctors or therapists.
- Learn about the condition. The more you know, the more effectively you can help.
- Find other resources. Look for people who can help the person in specific ways, such as counsellors, therapists and charities.
- Bring in others. With the person's permission, talk to other friends or family members about sharing responsibilities.
- Share your feelings as a family or with other friends. Talk about issues and emotions and figure out what works and what isn't helpful.
- Develop a crisis plan. Make sure the person knows that there is a plan in place and what will happen in the event of a crisis.

## If you are a carer

- Don't underestimate the stress of caring for a person with a mental illness or other serious health problems. It can be exhausting and frustrating.
- Try not to shoulder all the responsibility yourself — find others to help.
- Don't blame yourself. Mental illness is a medical condition. Nothing you said or did made your friend or family member become ill.
- Remember that your reactions are normal. It's hard not to take the person's behavior personally. Most carers experience a range of feelings from compassion to anger.
- Take care of yourself. Set limits on how much you'll do. Take breaks from caregiving now and then. Make sure you schedule time to do the things you enjoy.
- Expand your social support network. Dealing with mental illness can be lonely. Consider support groups and other community resources.
- Don't give up hope. Most people can be successfully treated. Sometimes it takes time to find the right treatment, but improvement and recovery are possible.

## Building resilience

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity. It is often tested when stressful situations arise in everyday life and when trauma or tragedy strike. Stress is not the only factor that can test a person's resilience. However, how a person handles stress is a strong indicator of their ability to bounce back. Resilience is also a key element in wellbeing.

Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves feelings, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Everyone could benefit from building resilience. Employers are increasingly recognising the need to provide programmes, services and health resources that support mental health, wellbeing and resilience. Benefits of a resilient workforce

include greater job satisfaction and work happiness, organisational commitment and employee engagement. Building resilience contributes to employees' improved self-esteem, greater sense of control over life events and improved interpersonal relationships with colleagues.

### How can I build resilience?

Mental health charity, Mind, offers some tips to help manage stress and build resilience<sup>2</sup>. Trying them won't make all the stress disappear but they could make it easier to deal with stressful situations. Mark ways to build resilience that you already do and those that you will try in the near future.

Ways to build resilience	I already do this	I will try this
<b>Look after your wellbeing</b> This includes finding the time to relax; looking after your physical health; developing your interests and hobbies; being kind to yourself and spending time in nature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Build your support network</b> Your support network might include friends and family; work colleagues; and HR and management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Identify your triggers</b> Understanding what may trigger stress can help you be more prepared if these situations are unavoidable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organise your time</b> Being in control of your time can help you feel less stressed. Consider to do lists; setting smaller targets; varying your activities; managing expectations, including saying no if that's possible; and asking for help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



### What can you do?

Be positive and hopeful. Take care of yourself so that you can support and care for others.

#### Sources:

1. [INTERVENT International. Lifestyle management program: Managing Depression, 2020.](#)
2. [Managing stress and building resilience - tips - Mind](#)

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