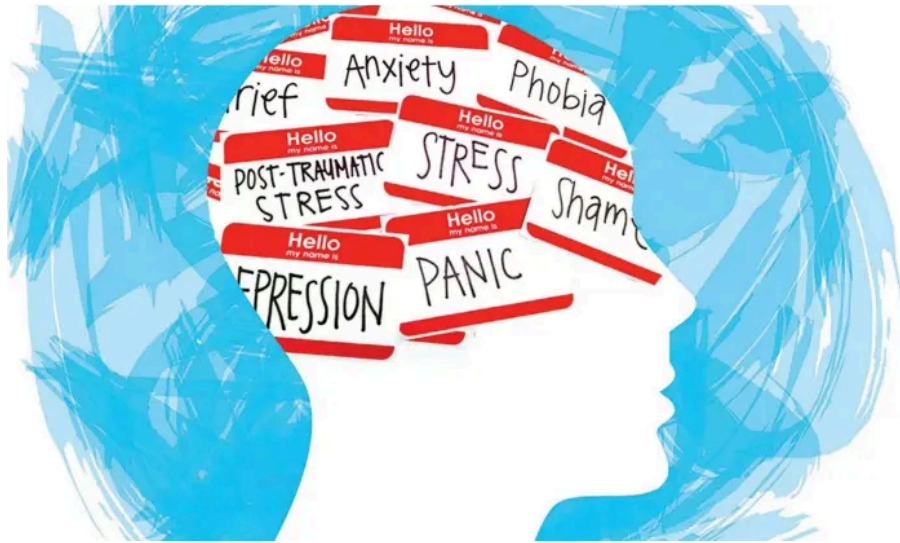


Taking care of your mental health

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Too often we talk about mental health and mental illness in the context of problems. Not often enough do we talk about getting the most out of life, enjoying ourselves, feeling good, helping others, and appreciating the beauty around us.



We might all be feeling better if more often we talked about wellness or well-being.

Well-being is about being emotionally healthy, feeling able to cope with normal stresses, and living a fulfilled life.

It can be affected by things like worries about money, work, home, the people around us and the environment we live in.

Well-being is also affected by whether or not we feel in control of our life, and feel involved with people and communities; also by feelings of anxiety and isolation.

We are all affected by these things but for those of us who are lucky enough not to be living in desperate poverty, we can have an overriding sense of wellness.

There is a simple test, developed by the World Health Organization that you can give yourself, to judge your level of wellbeing.

Ask yourself which of the following is true for you during the past two weeks, on a scale of 5 to 0; somewhere between all the time (5) and never (0).

- I have felt cheerful and in good spirits.
 - I have felt calm and relaxed.
 - I have felt active and vigorous
 - I woke up feeling fresh and rested
 - My daily life has been filled with things that interest me
- The closer that you get to five scores of 5, the closer you are to complete well-being.

Mental well-being

There are five evidence-based things we can do to improve and maintain our mental well-being. They are:

Get active: Do what you can. Enjoy what you do

Connect with others: Talk and listen. Be there. Feel connected

Keep learning: Embrace new experiences. See opportunities

Take Notice/Be Curious: Appreciate the little things. Savour the moment Give to others: Your time. Your words. Your presence

We can introduce any of these actions into our lives, any time, and we will begin to feel the benefits. Start small, keep trying – and good luck!

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Well-being is also affected by whether or not we feel in control of our life, and feel involved with people and communities; also by feelings of anxiety and isolation.

We are all affected by these things but for those of us who are lucky enough not to be living in desperate poverty or be otherwise unfortunate, we can have an over-riding sense of wellness.

Improving our well-being is a positive step that may prevent most mental illnesses and help us deal with stress and anxiety.

While some mental illnesses are caused by physical or chemical factors, there is no doubt that looking after ourselves will improve our chance of avoiding mental illness or lessen its effects, and there is little doubt it will make us feel better.

Even more so if we eat sensibly and have good sleep.