Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

A checklist for positive mental health

When people hear the words mental health, they often think only of mental illness or lack thereof. Positive mental health encompasses much more than that, and is actually a separate measure altogether.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as, “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”



Positive mental health is, therefore, a state of being in which social, emotional, and spiritual factors intersect to create the best possible level of functioning. Further, positive mental health can coexist alongside mental illness; just as optimal physical health is more than just the absence of illness, so is mental health more than the absence of mental illness.

Positive mental health checklist

Here is a checklist of factors that are found to contribute to this overall positive state of mental health. Take a look and see if you can identify their presence in your day-to-day life.

You experience pleasant emotions

It may sound obvious, but ask yourself if you are experiencing positive emotions such as delight, satisfaction, happiness, and laughter. Negative emotions are a part of everyone’s life, but they should exist in balance with positive ones. What ratio of positive to negative feelings do you experience?

You find meaning in what you do

Do you find nourishment and fulfillment in your day-to-day activities? Do you find meaning in your work, your loved ones, your hobbies? Feeling like what you do with your time has worth is an important part of positive mental health.

You are able to deal with everyday challenges

A part of positive mental health is your ability to deal with life’s daily challenges without becoming overwhelmed and stressed. Stress happens, but someone with positive mental health will experience it without letting it take over or become overwhelming.

You are socially connected and engaged

Positive mental health also has a social aspect - are you in touch with friends on a regular basis? Do you feel connected to a community and engaged with your peers? Do you trust others and feel trusted by those close to you?

If you didn’t check all of these off, it does not mean you are not experiencing positive mental health. However, if you see room for improvement, use the checklist as a guide to help you make changes. You can also seek support from a counsellor on how to get the most out of your life and achieve positive mental health.
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