



Mental Health in the Workplace:

Making Mental Health Part of the Equation

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So What IS NAMI?



- **Who are we?** Families, individuals, professionals, supporters
- **What do we do?** Promote mental health recovery through support, education and advocacy across the lifespan
- **What do we believe?** Everyone deserves the opportunity for recovery
- **What is our vision?** A world free of stigma and discrimination where all people impacted by mental illness get the help, hope and support they need

We challenge the stigma and offer hope, because no one should feel alone

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Challenging Journeys are Hardest Alone



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How we do we improve lives?

We use our experiences to promote the real faces of those impacted by mental health conditions

- to combat stigma and prejudice
- to advocate for service and resources
- to offer hope, tools and connection to overcome the isolation and impact of the mental health condition

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Overview

- Overview of mental health conditions
- How society talks about mental health
- Focusing on your own mental health
 - Stress
 - Strategies to combat stressors
 - Self care

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*Ready to
Play?*



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Mental health problems are the result of poor parenting, poverty and evil spirits.

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People with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable.

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People with mental health problems can snap out of it if they try hard enough.

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There is no hope for people with mental health problems.

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**FACT?
OR
FICTION?**

Mental health problems don't affect me.

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The Facts: Mental Health is a Continuum



Functioning/Healthy

Not functioning/Unhealthy

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*So WHAT IS
a Mental Health Disorder/Condition?*



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What are mental health disorders?

- When the brain is not functioning properly, the primary systems involved include
 - Thinking difficulties or problems focusing attention
 - Extreme emotional highs and lows
 - Sleeping problems
- When these symptoms significantly disrupt a person's life and daily functioning, we say that the person has a mental health disorder, mental health condition, or mental illness.

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So WHAT CAUSES
Mental Health Disorders/Conditions?



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It's Complicated!



Genetics

+



Environment

+



Brain Disorder

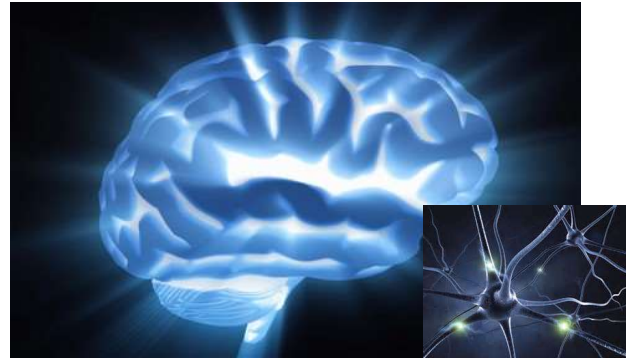
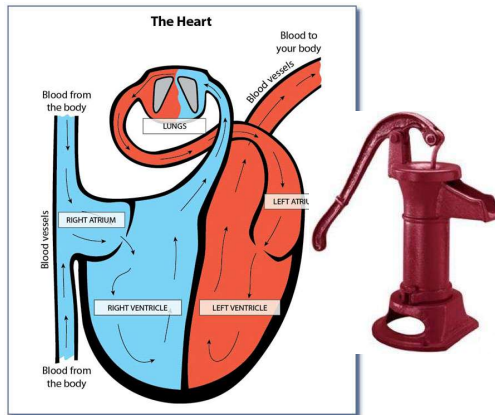
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'The brain is an organ of surreal complexity'

– Dr Insel, past Director of the National Institute on Mental Health



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Treatment: Individualized Balancing Act

May include an array of elements including:

- Traditional treatment – psychotherapy therapies
- Medication
- Non-traditional therapies – meditation
- Routine and structure
- Health lifestyle – exercise, sleep, nutritional foods
- Informal sources of support – family, friends, support groups
- Hope



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How attitudes and reactions around mental health impact people?



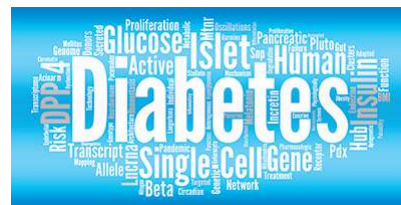
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VS



- Can you think of a slang word for someone with a mental health condition?
- Name adjectives or characteristics of someone with a mental health condition?
- How does the media portray a person with a mental health condition?

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The Facts: Mental Health Statistics

- 1 in 6 children and 1 in 5 adults live with a mental health condition.
- 50% of all mental health disorders begin by 14 years old, and 75% by age 24.
- On average, 10 years pass between onset of first symptom and seeking treatment.
- 50% of student aged 14 years or old with a mental health condition will drop out of high school
- Nearly 60% of adults and 50% of youth in need of services were unable to receive treatment in the prior year.
- 26% of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness.
- 24% of state incarcerated individuals have “a recent history” of a mental health condition and 70% of youth in a juvenile justice system.
- Minority communities face especially challenging obstacles to treatment including more stigma, less access to treatment/insurance, poorer quality of care, cultural insensitivity and discrimination.

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The ‘No Casserole’ Illness

Stigma refers to a cluster of negative attitudes and beliefs that motivate the general public to fear, reject, avoid and discriminate against people with mental illnesses. Stigma brings experiences and feelings of:

- Shame
- Blame
- Isolation
- Hopelessness
- Misrepresentation in the media
- Reluctance to seek and/or accept necessary help



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Polling Question

- How comfortable do you feel discussing your mental health with your coworkers?

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Stigma: Major Barrier

A Report of the Surgeon General identified stigma as one of the major barriers that discourages adults living with a mental health condition, and the families of children and adolescents with serious emotional disorders from seeking treatment.

- **Individuals**
 - Self-stigma and shame lead to isolation and denial
- **Families**
 - Lack of family conversations, early recognition, understanding of where to find help, ability to find support as a caregiver
- **Communities**
 - Limited community based funding, services,

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Stigma: Hard hitting

The impact of mental health stigma on the US is staggering:

- Lost productivity (\$193 Billion every year in income)
- Lost lives (suicide occurs, on average, every 15 min in the US)
- Cost to provide crisis care, jails, etc.
 - \$31,000 per person housed in jail annually
 - \$1,200 cost per emergency department visits

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How to Create a Safe Environment

- Learn the facts – educate yourself
- Mind your language - use person first language
- Talk to those with a mental health condition or read blogs, books or watch videos
- Be proactive – promote mental health resources and support services
- Speak up – talking about your own efforts to promote your mental wellness, let others know you are someone they can talk too

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Language – person first

- Avoid stigmatizing words we mentioned earlier (psycho, lunatic, wacko and crazy)
- Avoid 'afflicted by...', 'suffer from..' or 'is a victim of...' rather 'living with a mental health condition or mental illness'
- Avoid 'mentally ill' rather 'person living with a mental illness or mental health condition'
- Avoid 'schizophrenic' rather 'person living with schizophrenia'
- Avoid 'normal behavior' rather 'typical or usual behavior'

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Learning and Connecting through Empathy not Sympathy



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Major Dimensions that Support a Life in Recovery:

- **Health** - overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms.
- **Home** - stable and safe place to live.
- **Purpose** - meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income and resources to participate in society.
- **Community** - relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

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Paying Attention to Your Own Mental Health



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Remember: Mental Health is a Continuum



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Let's Talk about Stress

Stress – how the brain and body respond to any demand

- It effects everyone
- It isn't always bad
- Long term stress is bad
- You can manage your own stress



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Long Term Impact of Stress

- Stress becomes a problem when the stress response hangs around.
- Adrenaline and cortisol are not good for the body long term as they disrupt your body's normal functioning to address a perceived threat
- Because the stress response impacts so many systems in our body, it effect our bodies, minds, emotions and behaviors.



Like a deer in headlights

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Stress and Your Brain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuyPuH9ojCE>

How stress affects your brain - Madhumita Murgia

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Symptoms of Stress

Increased respiration, perspiration, and heart rate, auditory exclusion, or temporary hearing loss, and tunnel vision

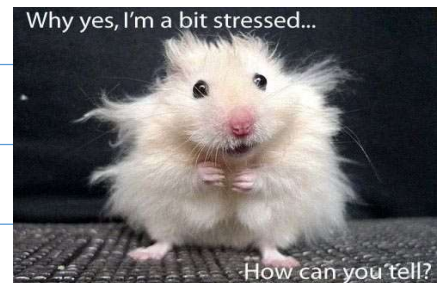
Irritability

Difficulty sleeping

Having low energy

Physical pain

Increased alcohol or substance



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Your Mental Healthiness: *Stress Management*

Being Active -

- Causes the production of your brain's 'feel-good' neurotransmitters, called endorphins
- Helps your body and its systems work through physical effects of the stress response hormones
- Serves as a distraction, focusing your attention on that one activity
- Improves overall health, including promoting sleep

What can you do?

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Your Mental Healthiness: *Stress Management*

Sleep -

- Sleep is a necessary human function — it allows our brains to recharge and our bodies to rest.
- Most essential component of the circadian rhythm - 24-hour cycle that are part of the body's internal clock, running in the background to carry out essential functions and processes.
- Slight sleep deprivation or poor sleep can affect memory, judgment and mood. Chronic sleep deprivation can contribute to health problems

What can you do?

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Your Mental Healthiness: *Stress Management*

Diet/Eating Habits –

- Boost immune system – vitamins A, B, C through fruits and veggies
- Restart digestive system – fiber rich foods such as oatmeal, whole grains, veggies, nuts and pre/probiotic foods such as bananas, beans, peas, yogurt
- Stabilize blood pressure – all of the foods above, and reduction in salt, sugars, high fat meats.
- Prioritize water

What can you do?

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Your Mental Healthiness: *Stress Management*

Connection with Others -

- A social support network is made up of all the people you know and interact with including friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, bowling league members, etc. They can be formal or informal. You can enlarge your network based on different affinities (e.g. interests or topics)
- These connections mitigate the effect of stress and improve the ability to cope with stressful situations – isolation and loneliness have been connected to a wide variety of health issues

What can you do?

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Your Mental Healthiness: *Stress Management*

Productive Energy -

- Self-talk - studies have shown that positive thinking helps with stress management and can even improve your physical health
- Focus- studies have shown that mindful meditation practices help train your attention to a state of calm attention and acceptance. Structure and routine can also improve focus as well as organization and productivity
- Distraction/joy - studies show hobbies are useful in managing mental health and improving problem solving.

What can you do?

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Mindfulness Tools

- *Often utilizes the senses to deescalate the stress response as emotions have been hijacked your rational mind*
 - *Physiological arousal returns to normal*
- *Able to break cycle of constant thoughts about past and future fears*
- *Take comfort in being fully present in yourself*



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Breathing Exercise

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Quick Five Sense Exercise

For when you have limited time

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STOP Exercise

S: Stop. Whatever you're doing, just pause momentarily.

T: Take a breath. Re-connect with your breath. The breath is an anchor to the present moment.

O: Observe. Notice what is happening. What is happening inside you, and outside of you? Where has your mind gone? What do you feel? What are you doing?

P: Proceed. Continue doing what you were doing. Or don't: Use the information gained during this check-in to change course. Whatever you do, do it mindfully.

For when you need a reset

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Self-care:

Actions that people initiate and perform on their own behalf in maintaining life, health, and well-being.

When do we use it:

- Mitigate the effects of emotional strain or 'self soothing'
- Find space and time to simply be present with yourself to rest/reset your mind



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Self-Care: Strategies

- Stick to the basics. Over time you will find your own rhythm and routine.
- Self-care needs to be something you actively plan, rather than something that just happens. It is an active choice and you must treat it as such.
- Keeping a conscious mind is what counts. Be aware of what you do, why you do it, how it feels, and what the outcomes are.

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Ideas for Self Care

- Read books
- Eat healthy meals
- Watch TV/Movies
- Online Support Groups
- Sleep, take naps, relax
- Set boundaries (with yourself and others)
- Several social platforms offer the opportunity to engage on a wider scale. Escapism is okay
 - Videogames
- Laugh!
- Don't worry about being perfect, or do things perfectly.



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Your Mental Healthiness: *Final Takeaways*

1. Remember that mental health is just as important as physical health
2. Begin to notice stressors in your life and pay attention to how you are reacting
3. Work to build in 1-2 new stress management and/or self-care strategies for yourself
4. Start small, have fun, pull in others and expect some trial and error.

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Get Involved! Stay Connected!

May is Mental Health Awareness Month Activities

- Go green for mental health
- Join a NAMI special event
- Helpline - 1-888-486-8264
- Website - www.namivirginia.org
- Join our e-newsletter - www.namivirginia.org/newsletter
- Follow us on Social Media –
 FaceBook @NAMIVirginia1
 Instagram @namivirginia

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Thank you!

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