

Mental Health

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behaviour could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Some early signs of poor mental health might be:

- poor concentration
- being easily distracted
- worrying more
- finding it hard to make decisions
- feeling less interested in day-to-day activities
- low mood
- feeling overwhelmed by things
- tearfulness
- tiredness and lack of energy
- sleeping more or less
- talking less and avoiding social activities
- talking more or talking very fast, jumping between topics and ideas
- finding it difficult to control your emotions
- drinking more
- irritability and short temper
- aggression

Protective factors are things that contribute to mental health, and allow a person to be resilient in the face of challenges. Someone with many protective factors—such as strong relationships and healthy coping skills—will be better equipped to overcome life's obstacles.

The **Protective Factors** worksheet describes what protective factors are and includes several practical examples. It will help you to identify your strengths and weaknesses, and then describe how you would like to improve upon your protective factors.

Resources:

Protective Factors

How to look after your mental health

Mental Health Problems

Mood Board

Types of Mental Health Problems

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/>

Mental Health

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>

Looking after your mental health

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/looking-after-your-mental-health>