



# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



**Mental health is just as important to our lives as our physical health**

Mental health is not just the absence of a mental illness. Mental health includes:

- How you feel about yourself, the world, and your life
- Your ability to solve problems and overcome challenges
- Your ability to build relationships with others and contribute to your communities
- Your ability to achieve your goals

Many people take care of their physical health before they feel sick. They may eat well, exercise, and try to get enough sleep to help maintain wellness. We can take the same approach to mental health. Just as we may work to keep your body healthy, we can also work to keep our mind healthy.

## 4 basic dimensions of mental health and well-being

1. **Thoughts:** The way we think about something has a big impact on mental health. If we can only see the negative side of things, it's hard to feel well. If we ignore anything bad and only focus on the best side of things, it's hard to get a balanced picture.

- 2. Body reactions:** Body reactions are changes in your body functions such as heart rate, breathing, digestion, hormones and more. Thoughts and emotions can cause changes in your body, and changes in your body can affect thoughts and emotions.
- 3. Behaviours:** Behaviours are the helpful or harmful things you do. Other people can usually see your behaviours. Behaviours like avoiding other people can worsen mental health, but helpful behaviours like exercising regularly can improve mental health.
- 4. Emotions:** Emotions are the way you feel. They can be pleasant or unpleasant. How we think and act impacts emotions, and emotions impact the way we think and act.

### Why should mental health matter to you and your family?

When your mental health suffers, it can become hard to enjoy life. You may start to feel run down, both mentally and physically. Many of these changes can make it harder to enjoy a balanced and rewarding life. Everyone can benefit from learning how to enhance and protect their mental health—whether or not they've experienced mental illness or a substance use problem.



To learn more about mental health, see where to go next, or take a wellness quiz, find the Mental Health Matters Wellness Module at [www.heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-modules](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-modules)