

# What is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to one's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Everyone is impacted by their mental health, which can affect how one thinks, feels, and interacts with those around them.

Mental health is not static nor does it qualify simply as good or bad. Mental health travels along a continuum where one can feel mentally healthy and strong while others feel hopeless and frustrated. Furthermore, being mentally healthy does not necessarily mean that one does not have a mental health condition. It merely means that one can:

- Make the most of his/her potential;
- Successfully manage and cope with life; and
- Engage in everyday life with family, friends, co-workers, and the community.

Evidence confirms that one in four U.S. American adults will experience a mental health condition and some experts believe this is an underestimate.



Many factors can contribute to mental health conditions, including:

- Biology, including genes and/or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma and/or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems



## Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Conditions

Experiencing one or more of the following signs or symptoms indicates a meeting with one's primary physician and/or mental health provider is warranted:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent and relentless thoughts and memories
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true or real
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks such as caring for children or going to work or school

**For information about mental health and available services, please call MHC's Information and Referral Line at 800-842-1501, ext. 10.**

