

How do I talk about MENTAL HEALTH?



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Improving the health of people and their communities is the very foundation of public health, and mental health is a key part of this equation. Mental health influences how people relate to others, deal with stress and manage their responsibilities, and it can have profound impacts on physical and social outcomes both for individuals and communities – in other words, mental health is public health.

THE 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELL-BEING

A holistic approach to mental well-being means addressing:

1. **Emotional:** Coping with stress and emotions
2. **Physical:** Sleep, movement, nutrition
3. **Social:** Finding connections and support
4. **Spiritual:** Meaning, purpose, values
5. **Intellectual:** Learning and curiosity
6. **Occupational:** Career, academics, balance
7. **Financial:** Managing money and security
8. **Environmental:** Safe, comfortable spaces



“One thing affects another. If you’re not financially well, if you’re not spiritually well, if you’re not physically well, that affects your mental well-being.”

Courtesy of [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)

WELL-BEING IS MORE THAN JUST MENTAL HEALTH.

Mental health is deeply connected to other areas of life – if you’re stressed about finances, feeling isolated or exhausted from school, that impacts your well-being.

“We need to talk about mental health just like we talk about physical health. If you fall down and scrape your knee, you get help. If you’re struggling mentally, you should do the same.”

TRY THIS →

When you’re feeling off, ask yourself:

- Am I getting enough sleep?
- Am I socially connected?
- Am I financially stressed?
- Am I taking care of my body?

SMALL CHANGES, BIG IMPACT

Simple habits can improve your well-being every day:

- Add a plant to your space
- Listen to calming music
- Take a short walk to reset
- Set screen boundaries, especially social media
- Practice mindfulness/journaling/deep breathing

TRY THIS →

Commit to one small action this week!

“Some things seem small but make a big difference – more plants around campus, calming visuals on screens. These little things help people feel better.”

WHERE TO TURN FOR SUPPORT

“We want to be proactive, not reactive, about our well-being. Resources are here – use them.”

- **Feeling isolated?** → *“A big move or life change can feel overwhelming. Connecting with others – through a group, event or shared experience – can help.”*
- **Overwhelmed?** → *“People don’t always know what they need, which is why talking to a counselor, mentor or support group can make a difference.”*
- **Money worries?** → *“Financial stress affects mental well-being, relationships and work. Seeking financial wellness support is a way to take care of yourself holistically.”*
- **Burned out?** → *“Small environmental changes – like adding plants or shifting surroundings – can ease stress. Finding a grounding space, indoors or outside, can help.”*

FINAL TAKEAWAY

“If people aren’t doing well mentally, they won’t do well personally, professionally or academically. We need to support the whole person.”

Explore more tools and resources at our new **Community Well-Being Website**.

sph.unc.edu/students/student-wellbeing

