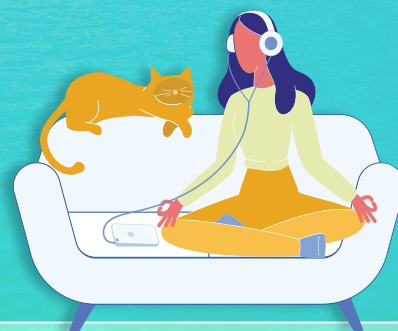


Mental Health Awareness

Like our physical health, there are signs that we are not emotionally 100%, and we can observe those signs in friends and colleagues. When we feel some of the symptoms of poor mental health, the earlier we intervene, the better our recovery.



SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

- ▶ **Loss of interest in regular activities:** When we find that we are less interested in the things that normally bring us joy, this is often a sign that we are tired and emotionally depleted.
- ▶ **Changes in behaviour or mood:** Feeling sad is a normal way of being sometimes but if it goes on for more than a couple of weeks this is a sign that mental health is struggling.
- ▶ **Exposure to ongoing stress:** Dealing with stress which goes on for a longer period puts people at higher risk of developing conditions like anxiety and depression.
- ▶ **Family history:** Mental health issues may be genetic or learned at home. Poor mental health in your family does not predict this will happen to you, but it may put you at a higher risk.
- ▶ **Coping mechanisms:** Alcohol is a socially acceptable way to relax. If you're drinking more or using illicit or prescriptions drugs to wind down, you are self-medicating in an unhelpful way.

- ▶ **Insomnia and diet changes:** Trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep, having no appetite, or bingeing food are all ways in which our body shows we are getting overwhelmed.

What do I do when I notice these changes?

- ▶ Remember that mental health is impacted by life's experiences. Talk to a friend, talk to AccessEAP. Know that by reaching out, you are making the first step towards recovering.
- ▶ Your mental health can have good and bad periods. Anxiety and depression – the most common states – respond well to intervention, and the earlier you make contact with a friend or professional, the sooner you will begin to feel better.

How do I help others?

- ▶ If you're concerned about someone, find somewhere private and ask how they are. Listen. Don't try and solve issues – being heard is the first step. Suggest professional support – and check in a week later.

All through the year we bring people together to help build : BETTER **CONNECTIONS**

