

Mental Health & Wellness

Mental health includes our emotional health, our psychological health (the way that we think and process information), and our social well-being. Mental health can impact the way that we think, how we feel, and the decisions that we make. It can also influence how we respond to life events, including difficult or stressful experiences, the connections and relationships we develop with others, and the ways in which we work to promote overall wellness in our lives. Mental health is important at every stage of life.

Does mental health impact physical health?

Yes. Your mental health may have a profound impact on your overall health. Those who experience mental health challenges may also experience a number of related issues that can impact physical health. For example, untreated long-term depression can increase the risk of heart disease and other chronic conditions. It's important to note that chronic physical health issues can also have a negative impact on mental health. Therefore, making efforts to promote comprehensive, overall health is important.



Can mental health change over time?

Yes. Like our physical health, there are many factors which can negatively or positively impact our mental health over time. For examples, living with a high rate of stress beyond one's ability to cope could impact their mental health overtime.

How are mental health issues diagnosed?

A person who experiences mental health concerns may or may not have symptoms that warrant a diagnosis. Many people who experience mental health concerns do not have a diagnosable mental health condition (sometimes referred to as mental illness). However, some people may experience specific symptoms that are diagnosable. To diagnose mental health condition, a person would usually meet with a professional who will assess for a specific type and number of symptoms, and determine the extent that these symptoms are causing a negative impact on the person's life. If there are enough symptoms present that are related

to depression, for example, and the symptoms are negatively impacting the person's life in some way, depression may be diagnosed.

The purpose of a diagnosis, whether it is for a mental health issue or any other health issue, is to determine the best approach for treatment. An appropriate diagnosis helps in telling us what we can do to address the issue. Again, it is important to note that mental health is much to complex to be labeled as "good" or "poor". Rather, it should be viewed on a continuum ranging from ideal or optimal mental health to significantly challenging mental health.

How common are mental health concerns?

Diagnosed mental health conditions are among the most common health conditions in the United States. **In a recent health survey of Anoka Technical College students, 54% report being diagnosed with at least one mental health condition within their lifetime.** Of these students, 23% report that they are currently taking medication for the mental health condition. The two most common mental health conditions reported by Anoka Technical College students include anxiety and depression.

The table below includes survey responses regarding diagnosed mental health conditions reported by Anoka Technical College students. It's important to note that there are

**Mental Health Condition Diagnosis—
Lifetime and Past 12 Months**
All Students

Mental Health Condition	Percent Who Report Being Diagnosed	
Anorexia	2.5	0.2
Anxiety	41.3	14.7
Attention Deficit Disorder	16.1	6.8
Bipolar Disorder	3.9	1.5
Bulimia	1.2	1.2
Depression	38.1	11.3
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	5.7	2.2
Panic Attacks	23.2	7.6
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	12.6	5.1
Seasonal Affective Disorder	13.6	4.6
Social Phobia/ Performance Anxiety	11.7	4.9

■ Within Lifetime ■ Within Past 12 Months

over 200 types of diagnosable mental health conditions and only a select number were included in the survey.

Signs of a Mental Health Condition

As mentioned, mental health can be viewed on a continuum meaning that it can range from ideal or optimal mental health to significantly challenging mental health. There is no exact “spot” on the continuum when a mental health issue should be addressed; however, being aware of common early signs and symptoms of a mental health condition can help you to identify when your mental health or the mental health of someone else you know is worsening.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), there are some early warning signs of possible mental health issues in adults. View this list of signs and more information at <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms>.

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleep or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that do not exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one’s own feelings, behavior or personality (“lack of insight”)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress

How do I seek support?

If you are experiencing mental health concerns, live with a mental health condition, or just want to improve your mental health, there are many sources of help and support available to you. Those dealing with a mental health concern may choose to see a mental health practitioner, such as a counselor or therapist, or a medical practitioner. Some may choose to seek self-help resources or support from peer groups.

Additional Resources

There are many resources available on mental health and related topics. Check out the following resources available from the Jed Foundation (jedfoundation.org/mental-health-resource-center).

- [How to Get Help](#)
- [What is Therapy and Will it Work?](#)
- [How to Tell your Parents and Caregivers You’re Struggling](#)
- [Signs your Friend Might be Struggling Emotionally](#)
- [8 Ways to Take Care of Yourself When You’re Waiting for Mental Health Care](#)

As an Anoka Technical College student, a great place to start is with a college counselor. Counseling services are available to students at no charge. See the box below for additional details.

There are also many valuable community resources available off campus. Visit the Anoka Technical College student resources webpage to view the content listed under the section “Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Resources” found here: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/student-basic-needs-resources/>

Crisis Resources

If in crisis, contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988. This is a free and confidential service that provides support to people in distress and information regarding crisis resources. If there is immediate risk of harm to self or others, call 911.

Counseling Services

Counseling services are available to support Anoka Technical College students. A counselor can talk with you about any concerns or difficulties you are facing, provide support, and help in developing strategies and skills to promote wellness and goal achievement. Counseling services are confidential and free. You are encouraged to reach out for support.

To learn more about counseling services, visit: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/counseling-services/>

To schedule an appointment with a counselor, visit the weblink above or call 763-576-7860.