

Empowering Mental Health in Education



YoungMinds

Module 1: *YoungMinds* on the path to Mental Health

National session



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What we'll explore today

- ❏ To discuss various mental health conditions, their fluctuations, and ways to assist someone during difficult times.
- ❏ To examine how stigma surrounding mental health affects society and explore strategies to reduce it.
- ❏ To review available mental health support options and practice skills to encourage individuals to seek professional help when needed.



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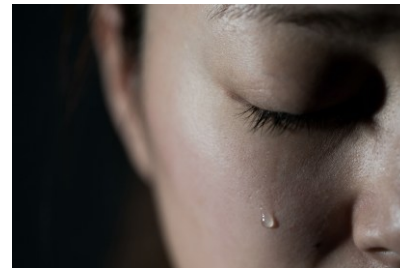
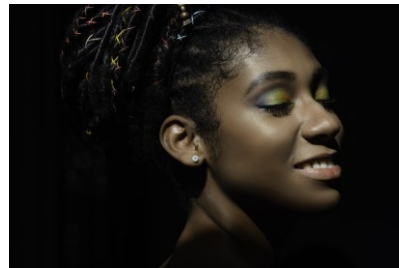
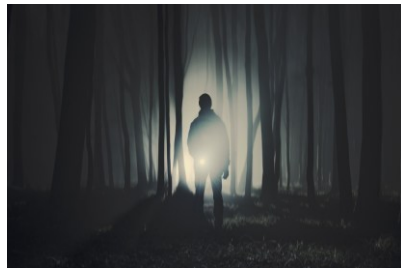
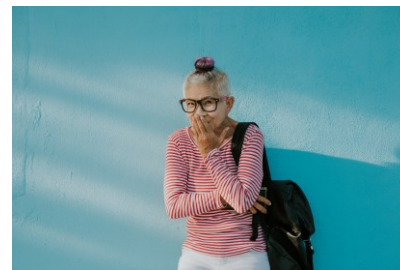
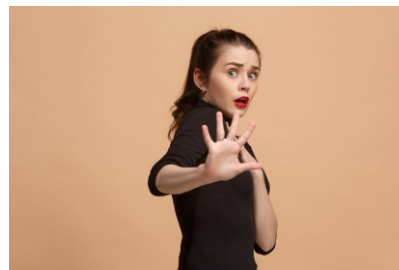
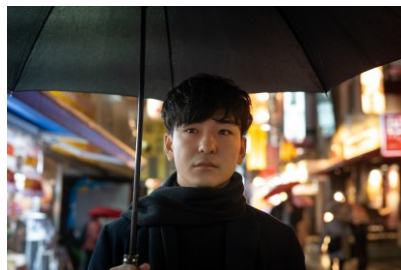
Let's meet...



Please tell us your **name**, **subjects** you teach, **years** of experience and...



... select a picture and tell us **HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY?**





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What is mental health?





World Health Organization

- ❏ Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing
- ❏ It is more than the absence of mental disorders
- ❏ Enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well and contribute to their community

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

Times when someone struggles with feelings, stress, or daily life, but may not have a formal diagnosis.

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Clinically diagnosed conditions that affect thoughts, feelings, or behaviour and make daily life harder.



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Why does our mental health fluctuate?



Mental health continuum

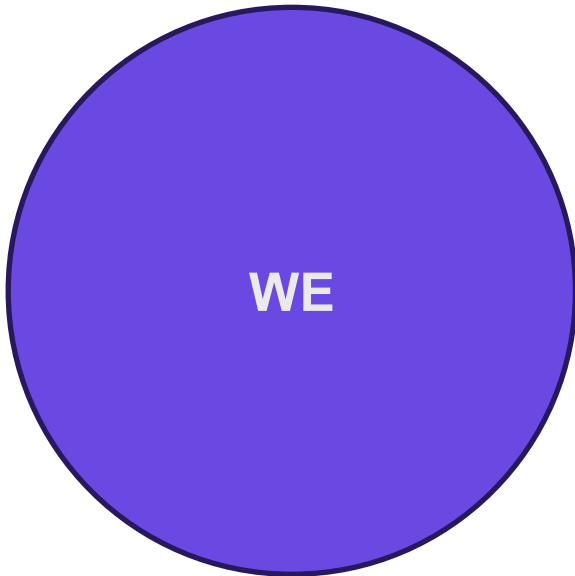
What do you think about this graphic overall?

How does this graphic make you feel?

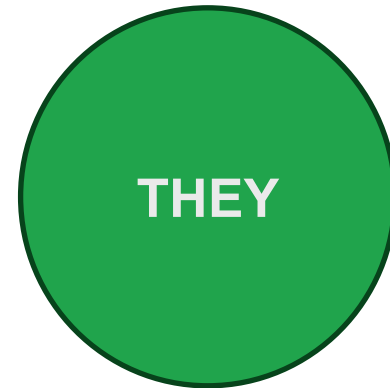
What do you think about the size of the graphics?

If you were to redesign the graphic, what changes would you make and why

GOOD MENTAL HEALTH



MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES



Mental health continuum



GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES



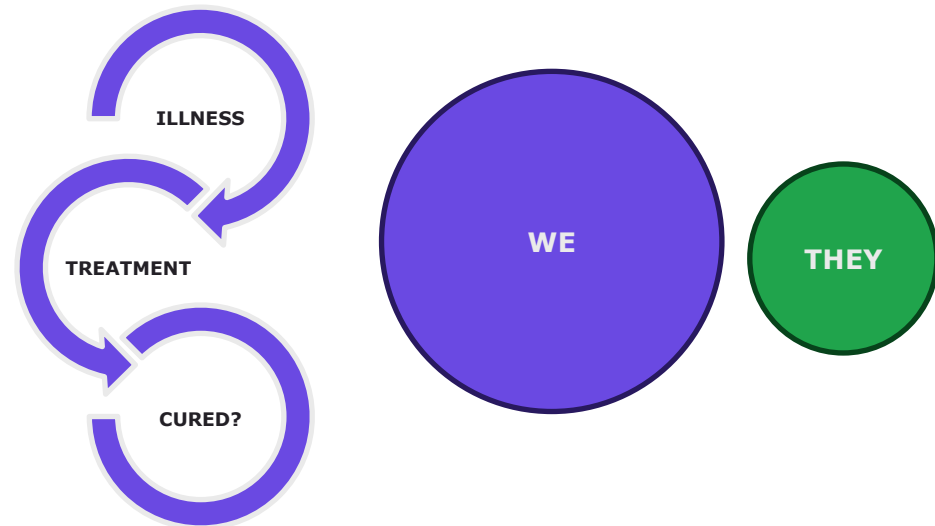
- ☒ We all have mental health — it's part of being human.
- ☒ Life challenges like stress, loss, or discrimination can affect our balance.
- ☒ Staying well means having support, expressing emotions, eating well, and doing things that matter to us.
- ☒ Mental health moves on a continuum — we all shift between feeling well and struggling at times.
- ☒ The Continuum Model reminds us that everyone's experience is different and that early support and care make a big difference.



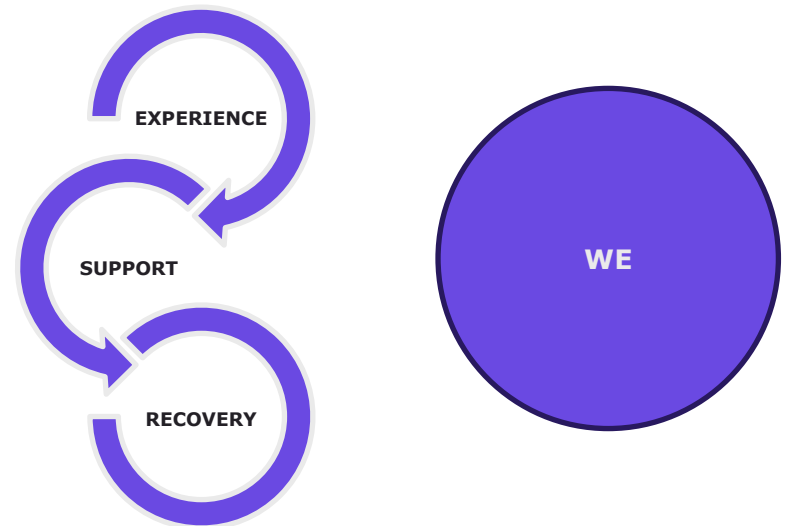
Mental health models

Which model feels closer to how you see mental health?

BIOMEDICAL MODEL



BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL

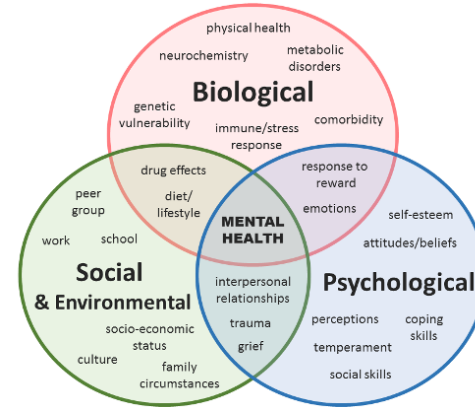


Mental health models

BIOMEDICAL MODEL

- ❏ Focuses only on biology, ignoring social, psychological, and cultural factors.
- ❏ Labels people by symptoms, which can reinforce stigma.
- ❏ Treats conditions as “one-size-fits-all,” overlooking individual differences.
- ❏ Emphasises treatment over prevention, early support, and empowerment.

BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL



- ❏ Considers biological, psychological, and social factors in understanding mental health.
- ❏ Recognises that mental health conditions result from a combination of influences, not just

- ❏ Promotes a holistic, person-centred approach to assessment, treatment, and support.
- ❏ Encourages collaboration among professionals and tailored interventions for everyone.



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Stigma and discrimination



Mental health stigma

Stigma is a negative societal attitude that labels, stereotypes, and devalues people who are seen as different, often leading to discrimination and social exclusion.

People with mental health difficulties or disorders are frequently affected.

Stigma “(...) reveals problems of...

understanding
(ignorance)

attitudes
(prejudice)

behaviour
(discrimination)

What is the difference between...

These types of stigma can lead to isolation, delayed help-seeking, lower wellbeing, and hinder recovery.

SELF-STIGMA

- when individuals internalise negative beliefs
- leads to shame and avoidance of help

PUBLIC & INTERPERSONAL STIGMA

- when others judge, stereotype or exclude someone
- causes judgment, exclusion and bullying

STIGMA BY ASSOCIATION

- Resulting from the fact of individuals being part of a group, culture or family
- creates social pressure and stress

STRUCTURAL STIGMA

- embedded in policies or social systems
- limits opportunities and access to support

Mental health discrimination

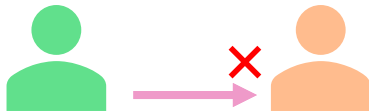
Mental health discrimination is the unfair treatment of someone based on their mental health condition, or the perception that they have one, rather than on their abilities, character, or actions.

Social discrimination consists of treating people with mental health conditions as less capable or dangerous.

Institutional discrimination is related with policies or practices in workplaces, schools, healthcare, housing, or the justice system that disadvantage people with mental health conditions

What is the difference between...

DIRECT DISCRIMINATION



It occurs when **someone is treated unfairly** specifically **because of their mental health condition**.

INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION



It occurs when a **rule or policy applies to everyone** but puts **people with a mental health condition at a disadvantage**, unless justified.

Cases for discussion

SOCIAL

DIRECT

Sarah applies for a job as a receptionist. During the interview, she mentions that she has generalised anxiety disorder but manages it well with treatment. The manager immediately says, *"We don't hire people with mental health problems here - it wouldn't be good for our clients."* Sarah is rejected despite being qualified.

SOCIAL

DIRECT

Emma wants to join a local sports club. When she mentions on the application form that she has schizophrenia, the club secretary says: *"Sorry, we don't allow people with mental health issues to join - it could make others uncomfortable."*

INSTITUTIONAL

INDIRECT

A college requires all students to give a final presentation in front of a large audience without any alternative options. One student with a diagnosed anxiety disorder struggles to participate and risks failing the course.

INSTITUTIONAL

INDIRECT

A youth club has a rule that all members must take part in loud group games every Friday night to stay in the program. A young person with a mental health condition that makes them sensitive to noise and overstimulation cannot cope and is at risk of being excluded.



SOCIAL

INSTITUTIONAL

DIRECT

INDIRECT









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How to provide help?









How can we help others?








-  Just snap out of it
-  Other people have it worse
-  It's all in your head
-  You just need to think positive
-  Stop being so dramatic
-  You'll get over it if you try harder



-  I know this feels hard. I'm here for you—would you like to talk?
-  What you're feeling matters. Your emotions are valid.
-  Thank you for trusting me and sharing this.
-  I can see you're having a tough time. What kind of support would help you right now?
-  I take what you're saying seriously and want to understand what you're going through.
-  Recovery takes time. You don't have to go through this alone.



Support principles

-  Use the biopsychosocial approach: focus on the person's experience, not just symptoms.
-  Invite them to share their feelings and listen carefully.
-  Reflect on their emotions to show understanding.
-  Offer support options, like helplines, counsellors, or other professionals.
-  Protect your own wellbeing: set boundaries and seek help if the conversation is difficult.

Listen with empathy, focus on their experience, and guide them toward support while taking care of yourself.



List of contacts

Country	Organisation	Information or Contacts
Portugal	Ordem dos Psicólogos Portugueses	https://encontreumasaida.pt/
Portugal	SPMS – Shared Services of the Ministry of Health	<u>Lançamento da Linha Nacional de Prevenção do Suicídio e Apoio Psicológico – 1411 – SPMS</u>
Portugal	National Health System	<u>https://www.sns24.gov.pt/pt/servico/aconselhamento-psicologico-no-sns-24</u>
Portugal	National Coordination of Mental Health Policies	<u>Contactos de Saúde Mental – Infância e Adolescência – Saúde Mental</u>



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Final thoughts...





What's next?

3rd International webinar
February 2026

THANKS!



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