

8 ways to boost your emotional health

Your emotional health is important to your well-being and your overall health. When you are emotionally healthy, you usually have better awareness of and control over your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. You are also more likely to be resilient and better equipped to deal with the challenges of everyday life.

Emotionally healthy persons have an overall feeling of contentment. They are able to laugh and have fun, and have developed coping skills that work toward a healthy work/life balance. They tend to be flexible, managing the ups and downs of life using those coping skills. They find meaning and purpose in life and in their relationships – and are able to build and sustain successful long-term relationships. During difficult times, they continue to be focused and hopeful that they will be able to resolve the situation.



Potential benefits of good emotional health

According to the American Psychological Association and other mental health resources, good emotional health may help provide the following potential benefits:

- More work success
- Stronger relationships
- Better physical health
- Greater ability to cope with stress
- Self-confidence and healthy self-esteem
- A good balance between work and play
- Greater ability to work toward goals
- Enhanced energy and optimism that attracts others

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Interested in improving your emotional health?

Below are **eight strategies** that may help:



Start moving

Exercising is good for both the body and the mind. Just 30 minutes of exercise a day can stimulate brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier and help you sleep better.*



Hit the sack

Get enough shut-eye by sticking to a regular sleep schedule and shooting for seven or more hours of sleep each night. Keep to this same sleep schedule even on the weekends. A dark, quiet and relaxing bedroom is very helpful. It may be good to silence your smartphone during the night.



Make connections

Stay in touch with friends and family and find ways to connect with them in person. Socialization, in whatever manner that works for you, is important throughout one's life. For most people, feeling connected to others is one of the keys to increased happiness in life.



Eat a healthy diet

Fill half your plate at each meal with fruits and veggies. Limit the amount of sodium, sugar and solid fats in your diet. Make at least half of your grains whole grains and enjoy a variety of seafood, lean meats and poultry. Consider nutrient-dense snacks such as fruits, or a small handful of unsalted seeds or nuts.



Express your feelings

Keeping feelings of stress, sadness or anxiety bottled up can make you feel worse. Acknowledge your emotions and try to sort out the causes of sad, stressful or anxious feelings. Find a way to share your feelings and concerns appropriately, whether that's with a supportive friend, family member, clergy or a behavioral health professional recommended by your personal health care provider. Bonus: Most people are flattered when others trust them enough to reach out and talk.



Become more involved

Engaging in fulfilling activities can bring meaning and purpose to your life. Consider networking, volunteering or joining an organization that interests you.



Check your stress

In small doses, stress can be good, but experiencing stress for too long can cause physical and emotional harm. To help relieve stress, make time for social, recreational and relaxation activities. Use your support network to help you through stressful times.



Calm yourself

Take time to slow down and calm down regularly. You can listen to music, practice yoga, or try meditation or deep breathing techniques to clear your mind and relax your body.

** Always check with your health care provider before significantly increasing your activity level or starting any exercise program.*



If you've tried these steps to improve your emotional health and still find yourself struggling with negative feelings, it may be time to seek help. A good place to start is with a visit to your primary care physician. They can be an excellent resource for finding behavioral health professionals in your area. Be sure to check your health benefits for behavioral health coverage in your network.