

Stay mentally healthy

By Aker Care psychologist Jan-Martin Berge

What is good mental health?

Our mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.

Mental health problems and psychiatric disorders are common. More than one out of three will experience a mental health disorder throughout our lives. Mental health problems are common but highly treatable. People with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely. Being active and working contributes to faster recovery, and is also recommended as part of psychological treatment.

What characterizes good mental functioning? Let's highlight three important factors:

1. To feel **connected** to other people.
2. To find **meaning** in the challenges life brings
3. To **understand what is required of us** and **what resources** we need to deal with these challenges.

5 advice for increased quality of life and stronger mental health

1. Create relationships: Having a network of people around us, someone we can share our lives with and get support from, makes us feel safer and happier. Friends, colleagues, family and the local community form a foundation in life, and it should be maintained.
2. Be physically active: Activity promotes both physical health and mental health.
3. Practice mindfulness: Practice being present in the moment with an open mind
4. Continue to learn new things: Be curious and positive to learn something new. Those who continue to learn and challenge themselves often say they feel optimistic and have more hope and confidence. Setting goals and achieving them provides satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment.
5. Give to others: Giving is about doing something for others. Everything from giving a friendly comment to contributing to volunteer work strengthens the bond between people. It provides increased quality of life.

References: Antonovsky, 1987; *Unraveling the Mystery of Health*, www.Helsenorge.no, www.helsedirektoratet.