



# STAYING MENTALLY HEALTHY

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WESTERN TIDEWATER  
COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD

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[WWW.WTCSB.ORG](http://WWW.WTCSB.ORG)

# INTRODUCTION

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## WHEN WE ARE MENTALLY HEALTHY, WE'RE BETTER ABLE TO STAY POSITIVE AND COPE WITH ADVERSITY.

We can connect with others, learn new things, be more open and creative, and find purpose and meaning. Good mental health usually leads to better overall health and a longer and happier life. With good mental health, we enjoy our lives more.

Having good mental health can:

- Improve your overall mood and view on life
- Reduce anxiety and depression
- Help you to manage your emotions
- Improve your relationships
- Increase self-esteem
- Help you to cope with daily stress
- Help you to achieve your full potential



# MAINTAINING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH INCLUDES

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## Taking care of your physical health

Your physical health impacts your mental health, and vice versa. Eating well, getting enough sleep, and getting regular exercise can improve brain health, help with and prevent symptoms of depression and anxiety, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve mood and self-esteem



## Stress management

When we experience stress, our body releases the “stress hormone” cortisol and activates our fight or flight response. This is a normal function and serves an important purpose. Stress helps us to be aware of and respond quickly to dangerous situations, but too much stress can cause anxiety or panic attacks, depression or unpleasant physical symptoms like chest pain, upset stomach or increased heart rate.

It’s crucial to manage our stress levels. Some ways you can manage stress include:

- Sharing your feelings by talking it out or writing in a journal
- Making some time for yourself
- Seeking help from a mental health professional
- Taking practical steps to manage stress, like using tools like planners, apps and calendars to manage your schedule and to-do lists

## Using positive coping skills

Coping refers to how we handle the negative things that happen to us or painful or difficult thoughts or feelings. Even when we don't realize it, we all use coping strategies. However, some are not healthy, and actually end up harming us further.

Some examples of unhealthy coping mechanisms often used to numb painful emotions include:

- Using substances like drugs or alcohol
- Over or under eating
- Sleeping too much
- Impulsive spending
- Avoiding the problem

Healthy coping skills include:

- Looking for solutions
- Talking to someone
- Doing something creative
- Participating in a sport or activity
- Seeking help from a mental health professional
- Unwinding with a book, movie, or game

## Practicing gratitude and positive thinking

Countless studies have shown that practicing gratitude and positive thinking regularly can have a major positive impact on both our mental and physical health. This doesn't mean that "just thinking positively" is the answer to all your problems. What it does mean is that routinely trying your best to look on the bright side and acknowledging the things you're grateful for can change your perspective. It can actually rewire your brain so that you think more positively - and become happier.

When you're struggling with your mental health, it can be difficult to think positively, but it's worth it.



## **Building and relying on a support system**

A support system is critical when it comes to taking care of our mental health. When you have a strong support system, you're better able to manage life's stressors.

To build a support system, start with at least one person you like, respect, and trust who will listen to you, give good advice, respect and understand your wishes, and help you through difficult times.

It's also helpful to have peers - people who share your experiences - in your support system. Talking to others who've been through what you've been through can offer you a unique and powerful type of support.

### **WTCSB Crisis Line -**

**(757) 925-2484**

### **Region Five Crisis Line -**

**(757) 656-7755**

### **National Helpline -**

**Dial or text 988**

### **Learn More -**

**[www.wtcsb.org](http://www.wtcsb.org)**

## **Prevention begins in the community**

Prevention is the process of proactively cultivating positive cultures, leading to a better future for individuals, families, and society as a whole. To create that future, we must challenge some of the ways that we view, discuss, and activate prevention.

Everyone who is part of a community is an active participant in creating that community's culture. What conversations are being had or need to be had in your community right now to prevent adversity and promote wellness?

From gun safety, mental health, to substance misuse, our prevention team and community expert partners are ready to help. Whether by training or presentations with a panel of experts, we are eager to support you.

