



## MENTAL WELLNESS

Being mentally healthy is a vital part of our overall well-being. Just as it is important to have markers of our physical health such as checking our blood pressure or cholesterol levels and incorporating activities like eating well, exercising, and good sleep hygiene, so goes for having markers and activities for mental wellness.

Mental wellness means that we are incorporating healthy markers and activities into our daily life that allows for feelings of contentment, enjoyment, confidence, social engagement, and learning. It does not mean that we never experience feelings or situations that are difficult, but that we have the resilience and the coping skills to use when times are tougher than usual. According to Sarah Stewart-Brown\*, professor of public health at the University of Warwick in Coventry, England, and a wellbeing expert, mental wellness or mental well-being is about living in a way that is good for us and good for others around us. She says that evidence shows that it is the actions we take and the way we think that have the biggest impact on our wellness. Think about wellness as something you do, rather than something you are. She says no one can give it to you - you have to take action.

When taking stock of where we are now and then incorporating action items into our routines is what can enhance and support our mental wellness. Suggestions include:

- Using an after-work checklist of: Review, Reflect, Regroup, Re-energize.
- Revisiting our boundaries and coping skills for when we encounter hurdles, difficult situations, or time restraints.
- Engaging in something that is meaningful and brings joy.
- Allowing time to relax and recharge.
- Learning a new skill like cooking or exploring a new hobby.
- Planning a trip for fun or relaxation.
- Exploring one's creativity by writing, painting, drawing, or craft making.
- Visiting a new place to learn something new.
- Scheduling time to be with those we love and enjoy.
- Practicing gratitude.
- Drawing on our awareness of the moment, especially the positive.
- Building support networks or reaching out to someone we haven't heard from.
- Asking for help when we need it. It is a sign of strength to reach out for resources or support when our own mental wellness is suffering.

**SAMHSA** also offers a Step-by-Step Guide to Wellness called *Creating a Healthier Life* which you can [view here](#).

\*For more information/work of Sarah Stewart-Brown, go to: <https://wellbeing-ventures.co.uk/wellbeing/>