

# GOOD NEWS!



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



Hello from your teachers and program staff in the Personal Development department at Contra Costa Adult School!

This is our first newsletter dedicated to Personal Development, and this issue is focused on Mental Health.

The whole world has been navigating a pandemic for over 2 years. We've been learning how to live very differently than ever before and that has had a huge impact on every single one of us, never mind those who are incarcerated. There is more mental illness now than ever before.

Mental illness is real. Most people experience some struggles with their mental health during their lifetime and there is NO shame in that. It is simply an aspect of being human, and if you are human then you will likely have struggles from time to time. Let's encourage one another to seek help and remove the stigma (shame) of needing help once and for all.

(Ms. Barbara)

*"The brain is an organ. Mental illnesses are illnesses of that organ. Brain scans show that there is a physical difference between a healthy brain and a sick brain. Telling someone 'you're not really sick - it's all in your head', is like telling someone with asthma, 'it's not real - it's all in your lungs'. The brain is an organ that can malfunction as much as any other organ."*

(corduroy-jackalope from [internal-acceptance-movement.tumblr.com/post/109934073324](https://www.tumblr.com/internal-acceptance-movement/post/109934073324))

### Did you know about these Mental Health Statistics?

- In 2021, the percent of people in state and federal prisons diagnosed with mental illness is over 37% and in local jails it is over 44%
- 1 in 4 people in jail are experiencing serious psychological distress
- 66% did not receive mental health care in Federal prisons
- 27% of police shootings in 2015 involved mental health crisis
- There are lasting effects of incarceration such as post-traumatic stress, anxiety and impaired decision-making (a strong reason to get help and not come back)
- Suicide risk was 62% higher among previously incarcerated individuals compared with the general population

(Erin Renee Morgan et al, January 2022 [priosnpolicy.org/research/mental.health/](https://www.priosnpolicy.org/research/mental.health/))



CONTRA COSTA  
ADULT SCHOOL

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  
Office of Education

## Let's Start by Defining Mental Health



It is good mental and physical health; the state of being free from illness and distress but, more importantly, of being filled with vitality (strong, active, good energy) and functioning well in one's personal and social life.

*(American Psychological Dictionary)*

## What Causes / Contributes to mental illness?

There is no single cause for mental illness. A number of factors can contribute to one's risk for mental illness, such as:

- Biological factors or chemical imbalances in the brain such as alcohol / substance use disorders
- Early life experiences such as trauma or a history of abuse (for example, child abuse, sexual assault, witnessing violence, emotional abuse). Neglect, especially for long periods of time, can deeply affect someone psychologically.
- Dysfunctional family, poor / inadequate parenting
- Grief and loss; having feelings of loneliness or isolation
- Experiences related to severe ongoing medical conditions, such as cancer or diabetes

*([mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health](http://mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health))*

## How do I NOT catch what everyone else's got?

How to NOT get affected - how NOT to personalize other people's issues - how to separate yourself from others' issues.



## Become aware! utilize good habits.

Awareness is a form of education. The more you know, the more power you have.

## Tips for Mental Health Awareness: How to look after your mental health

It's important to take care of yourself and get the most from life. Below are 10 practical ways to look after your mental health. Making simple changes doesn't need to cost much or take up loads of time. Anyone can follow this advice. Why not start today?

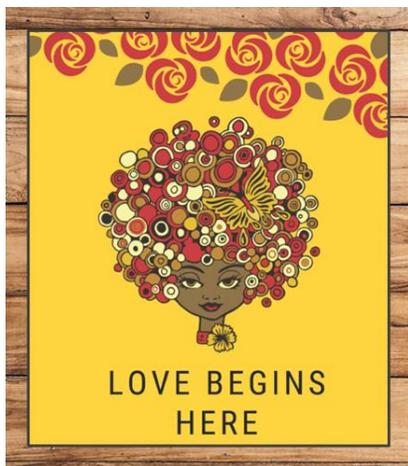
1. **Talk about your feelings with someone you trust**
2. **Keep active/ Exercise:** Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and can help you concentrate, sleep, and feel better. Exercise keeps the brain and your other organs healthy and is also a significant benefit towards improving your mental health.

3. **Eat well:** Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health.
4. **Remember to drink 8 glasses of water:** We often drink alcohol to change our mood. Drinking is not a good way to manage difficult feelings, but water is the most helpful!
5. **Keep in touch:** Keep the lines of communication open with the positive people in your life.

6. **Ask for help:** None of us are super-human. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things don't go according to plan. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, reach out for help.

~ See below for helpful resources.

7. **Take a break:** A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health. Find a place if you can. A five-minute pause can be enough to de-stress you. Give yourself some 'me time.'



8. **Do something you're good at:** What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Doing something you enjoy boosts your self-esteem. Try art, creative writing, poetry, reading. Check out the library for positive and creative resource books.

9. **Be Kind to Yourself:** Accept you are a unique person! Use positive self-talk. Feeling good about yourself boosts your confidence to learn new skills, visit new places and make new friends. Good self-esteem helps you cope when life takes a difficult turn.

10. **Care for others:** Caring for others is very important! We help each other whenever we can and supporting others uplifts me.

([mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health))

**Classes:** Commitment to Change, DEUCE, Parenting

**Teachers:** Ms. Aster, Ms. Barbara, Dr. Dorothy, Ms. Monika, Dr. Roxanne

**Programs:** AOD: Lacreena, MAT: Phillip, Office: Doña

### English Resources:

- Suicide Crisis Hotline: 1(800) 833-2900
- Mental Health Access: 1(888) 678-7277
- Homeless Hotline: 211
- Send an inmate request form for:
  1. Game Plan for Success (GPS)
  2. Medical Assistance Treatment (MAT) - Phillip
  3. Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) - Lacreena,
  4. The Chaplain for Spiritual Help

### Recursos de Español:

- Línea para Prevenir el Suicidio: 1(800) 833-2900
- Línea de Acceso de Salud Mental: 1(888) 678-7277
- Línea para Crisis de Vivienda: 211
- Mande una solicitud de recluso a:
  1. Programa Plan para el Exito (GPS)
  2. Tratamiento de Asistencia Medica (MAT) - Phillip
  3. Consejeros de Abuso de Drogas y Alcohol (AOD) - Lacreena
  4. Capellan para Ayuda Espiritual

## Newsletter Participation Wanted!

You matter! We want YOU to share your thoughts too. If interested, submit a short self-improvement related poem, success story, drawing, etc.

Send it to Schools - Personal Development Newsletter

(It must be appropriate for school. Printing depends on available newsletter space.)

For Fun!

**DURING THIS TIME OF UNCERTAINTY... LET'S TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES**

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

1. BOND	7. ENJOYMENT	13. KINDNESS	19. OVERCOME	25. SMILE
2. CARE	8. ENTHUSIASM	14. LAUGH	20. PEACE	26. STRETCH
3. COMMUNICATE	9. EXERCISE	15. MEDITATION	21. RELAX	27. TALK
4. CONNECTED	10. HEALTHY	16. MINDFULNESS	22. REST	28. TRUSTING
5. CREATE	11. HOPEFUL	17. NEIGHBORLY	23. SAFETY	29. UNIFY
6. EAT	12. HYDRATE	18. ORGANIZE	24. SLEEP	30. UNWIND

**• WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER •**

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[Love-Begins-Here-Gratitude-Mindfulness/dp/1077057946](https://www.Love-Begins-Here-Gratitude-Mindfulness/dp/1077057946)

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[minutes.co/how-to-build-strong-friendships-while-working-full-time/](https://www.minutes.co/how-to-build-strong-friendships-while-working-full-time/)  
[Blackstonevalleypreventioncoalition.com](https://www.Blackstonevalleypreventioncoalition.com)