

October Newsletter

The Health & Mind Club

This October, during **World Mental Health Month**, it's a moment to pause, learn, and remember that taking care of our minds matters. Amid school, social expectations, and the busy pace of everyday life, making time to care for our mental health can help us feel more balanced, grounded, and ready to take on each day.

When Every Voice Matters: World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day, which takes place on **October 10th**, gives us a chance to speak openly about mental health, challenge the stigma surrounding it, and build spaces where people feel safe to ask for help. Having a day dedicated to mental health helps bring attention to an area of well-being that may not always receive the same recognition as physical health.

The **WHO** says that more than one billion people around the world live with a mental health condition, highlighting the need to increase awareness, promote prevention, and improve access to support. It is also important to remember that mental well-being **exists on a spectrum and can change over time** depending on different personal, social, and environmental factors.



The theme this year for World Mental Health Day is “**Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change.**” It highlights the importance of listening to people who have personally experienced mental health challenges and ensuring that their perspectives have a role in shaping mental health care and support. By not passing judgment, engaging in open dialogue, and learning from each other, we can contribute to building a more supportive community that values and respects every person's experience.

But before we can truly care for our mental health, it is important to understand **what mental health actually means** and why it is just as important as our physical health.

Mental Health

refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, behave, handle stress, make decisions, and interact with other people. Good mental health helps a person cope with everyday challenges, build healthy relationships, and maintain a positive outlook.

Physical health

refers to the condition and proper functioning of the body. It includes having a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, maintaining fitness, and preventing or recovering from illnesses and injuries.

Although mental and physical health are different, **they work together to influence our wellbeing.** For example, lack of sleep or illness can affect our mood and concentration, while stress can sometimes cause physical symptoms such as tiredness or headaches. Therefore, both mental and physical health are important parts of overall well-being, and taking care of one can often **help support the other.**

With so many myths shaping how we talk about mental health, **which ones have you believed without realizing it?**

Myth: Mental health problems are a sign of personal weakness or a lack of willpower.

Fact: Mental health conditions are medical issues influenced by a complex mix of biological factors, genetics, life experiences, and environment. They have nothing to do with being "weak."

Myth: Children and teens don't experience real mental health issues; it's just moodiness or seeking attention. **Fact:** Children and young adults can experience clinical anxiety, depression, and other conditions. Validating their feelings early leads to much better long-term well-being.

Myth: People with mental health conditions cannot recover or hold regular jobs.

Fact: With proper support, therapy, lifestyle adjustments, and care, most people with mental health challenges live full, productive, and highly successful lives.



Value of the Month: *Acceptance*

How does recognizing that each person experiences emotions differently lead to **increased compassion, empathy, and support**?

When we are teenagers, we often think a lot about **fitting in**. Being accepted by other people. **Acceptance** begins with knowing that every person is different and that is okay. It means being kind instead of judging, listening instead of assuming, and supporting people even when we don't fully understand what they are going through. When it comes to mental health, acceptance can make a huge difference. A small gesture of understanding can help someone feel less lonely. By accepting ourselves and accepting others, we build a more peaceful and welcoming place for all of us.

No two people feel things in exactly the same way. Two classmates can face the same exam, the same argument, or the same change, and react in completely different ways. One may feel **nervous and quiet**, while another may seem **calm but feel overwhelmed inside**. Our emotions are shaped by our experiences, our personalities, our families, and our own personal story, which is why there is no "right" or "wrong" way to feel.

It also applies to how we treat ourselves. **Accepting that our own emotions are valid, even the difficult ones, helps us be gentler with ourselves and more open to asking for help when we need it.**



Ways to practice acceptance this month

- Listen without interrupting or offering quick solutions
- Avoid comparing your feelings with someone else's
- Replace judgmental thoughts with curious ones
- Check in with a friend who seems quieter than usual
- Speak to yourself with the same kindness you would offer a friend

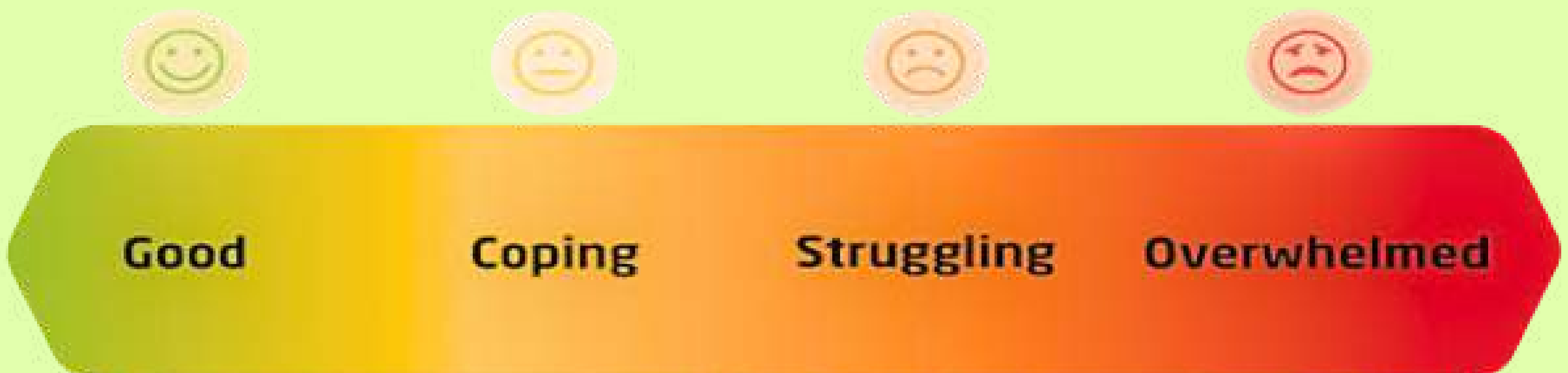


It's natural to go through ups and downs in life. Sometimes you **bounce right back**. Other times, you may **need help to recover and return**. So how can you tell when you need help?

Well, this is where the '*Mental Health Continuum*' comes into play. The Mental Health Continuum Model illustrates the different mental health phases you may experience throughout your life and career.

It's important to remember that you can move in either direction along the spectrum, which means there is always the possibility **to return to full health and functioning**.

The **spectrum encourages us to recognise signs of stress or distress** in ourselves and others, identify them early, and take steps to maintain our wellbeing. The model ranges from healthy and adaptive coping (green), to mild and manageable distress (yellow), to more serious and persistent difficulties (orange), and finally to clinical mental health conditions that may require professional support (red).



Try setting aside **just two minutes each day** to check in with yourself and identify where you feel you are on the continuum. There is no right or wrong place to be, and your position can naturally change from day to day. Maintaining balance is important, but so is recognising that some days may be more difficult than others.

Once you know where you are, how can you take care of your **mental health**?

Supporting our mental health does not **always** require a major change in our lifestyle. Sometimes, it's those small things we do between classes or making time to play a sport we love. The Five Ways to Wellbeing - **Connect, Learn, Take Action, Notice, and Give** - offer simple ways to check in with your wellbeing and daily life. These are five evidence-based actions developed by the **New Economics Foundation (NEF)** as part of the UK Government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing. Researchers reviewed findings from more than **400 scientific papers** across areas including psychology, neuroscience, psychiatry, education and economics to identify everyday activities associated with positive wellbeing

Connect:

Talk to someone without needing any advice or solving a problem. A simple conversation, laughing together, can be enough. Building meaningful relationships can help us feel supported, valued, and connected to the people around us.

Learn:

Learn something completely unrelated to school. Pick up a random fact, explore a skill you have always wanted to learn, or even learn how to make a new dish. Learning something new can provide a sense of curiosity, achievement, and confidence

Take Action:

When everything around you feels overwhelming and overstimulating, choose one small thing you can act on. Small actions like organising your desk, going for a short walk, or simply stepping away for a moment. Regular physical activity is associated with better mental wellbeing and can support mood and overall health.

Notice:

Pause for a second and notice something you usually don't pay attention to - the sky, the breeze, the atmosphere of the classroom, or even the movement of your body when you breathe. Taking notice encourages us to become more aware of our surroundings and our own thoughts and feelings, rather than moving through the day on autopilot.

Give:

Take a moment to check in on a friend and let them know how much their presence means to you. Help a classmate out and give someone a genuine compliment. Sometimes, even the smallest moments in your day can make a massive change and improve your wellbeing. Small acts of kindness can strengthen our connections with others while contributing to our own sense of wellbeing.

What's on Your Mind? Let's Talk It Out on the Page.

Here are some suggestions for journal prompts.

- 1) What are some emotions you find **easy to express**, and which ones are **harder to communicate**? Why do you think this is so?
- 2) What does "**taking care of yourself**" mean in your life beyond simply taking a break?
- 3) Think about something you are currently struggling with. What would you say about it if you were **speaking to a close friend instead of yourself**?
- 4) How can accepting where you are right now **coexist with wanting to grow and improve**?

TRIVIA for the DAY!

Ever wondered why green ribbons have become a symbol of mental health awareness?

Green is often associated with growth, hope, and renewal, making it a fitting colour for mental health awareness. The green ribbon has become a simple symbol of support, reminding people that mental health matters and that no one has to face their challenges alone.

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