



# Mental Health FAQs

## What is mental health?

Mental health is related to our feelings, emotions, and social needs. It impacts how we think, feel, act, and interact with other people in our lives.

## What factors impact our mental health?

Our life experiences and environment impact our mental health. For example, how we grew up, everyday stresses, serious challenges like discrimination or violence, and even global issues.

Some mental health conditions are also influenced by genetics and can be more common in some families. The effects of traumatic experiences—like war, racism, poverty, and abuse—can also be passed down through generations.

## How do I know if I need help?

Mental health conditions can have many different signs—from changes in mood, appetite, sleeping habits, or even unexplained aches and pains. If your thoughts or behaviors are getting in the way of your daily life, then you might want to reach out to someone you trust like a friend, family member, or your doctor.

## If I ignore it, will it go away?

Everyone feels negative emotions from time to time. But if those feelings last for a long time without improving or are severe enough to create problems in your regular activities and relationships, then it might be time to consider getting mental health support.

## I think I might need help, but I'm scared that people will judge me. What should I do?

Many Asian cultures value group harmony, so people often worry about seeming weak or like a burden—but group harmony also means other people will want to help.

You can turn to someone you trust to talk about how you're feeling, or even to a local organization. Many will have social activities and confidential support groups where people can connect with others and share their experiences in a non-judgmental space. Those organizations can also connect you with trusted therapists in your community.

**Did you know?** 81% of Asian New Yorkers experience headaches, fatigue, insomnia, and other symptoms often associated with mental distress. **You are not alone.**





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## What kinds of mental health professionals are there?



**Counselors, therapists, and clinicians** are mental health professionals who are trained to help identify, evaluate, and treat mental conditions through therapy.



**Psychologists** have a doctorate in psychology and can evaluate someone's mental health, make diagnoses, and provide therapy treatments.



**Psychiatrists** are a type of medical doctor who can prescribe medication, in addition to diagnosing and treating conditions.



**Licensed clinical social workers**, in addition to providing mental healthcare, also connect people to community resources and government services.

## What are the treatments like?

Western treatments will involve private conversations with a therapist, which are covered by most insurance plans. But it's possible to also integrate Asian health practices. Acupuncture, herbal medicine, meditation, and exercise in combination with Western therapies can be part of a balanced mental health treatment plan as guided by your provider.

## Will I have to take medication? What if it makes me feel bad or I become addicted?

Prescription drugs can be an important treatment option that helps some people feel better. Most medicines prescribed for mental illnesses don't have the potential for addiction, but there may sometimes be negative side effects. Your therapist and doctor will answer any questions you have and help you figure out the right treatment plan for you, with or without medicine.

## What should I do if I'm worried about a friend or family member's mental health?

Let them know that you care about them and want to help them feel better. It can be hard to admit or even realize that they may be going through a mental health issue and that they may need treatment. Be respectful and compassionate and encourage them to speak with you about how they feel. Let them know there are people and resources available to support them.



**Mental health issues can happen to anyone.** They're not a sign of weakness or being "crazy." They're just as real and serious issues as physical conditions.