

Effective **Self-Help** Strategies and When Therapy is Still Needed



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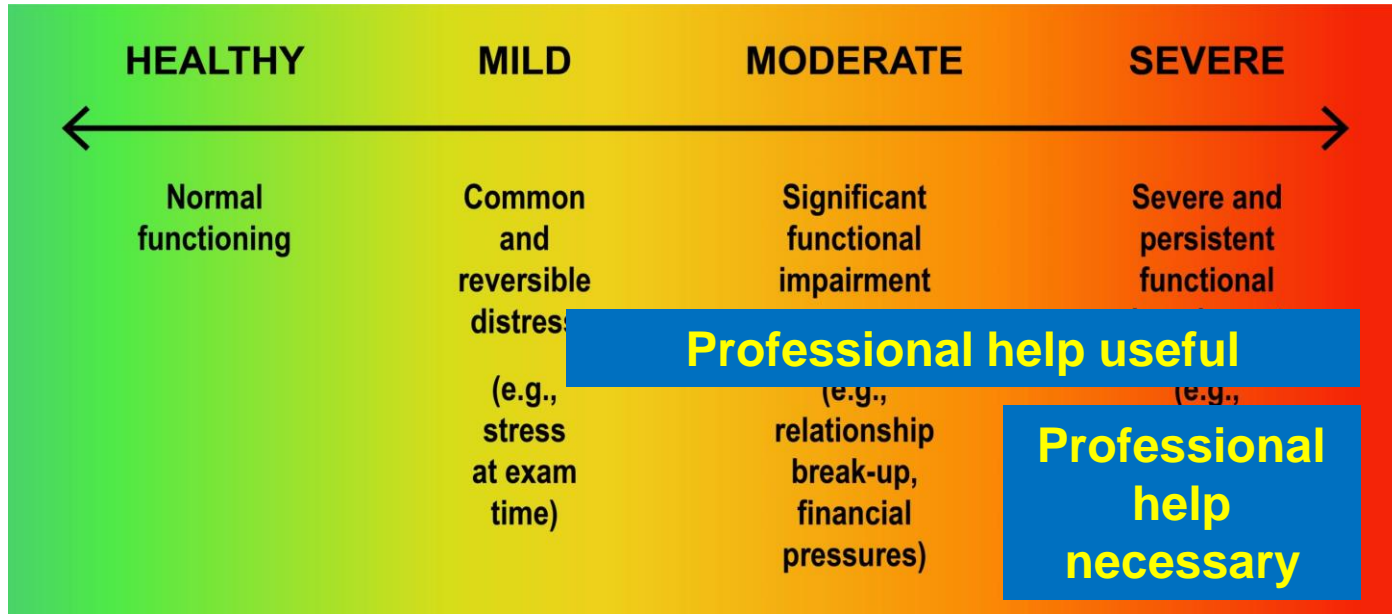
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Stress and Self-Help

The Continuum of Stress / / Self-Help Strategies



Continuum of stress







Self-help is as diverse as we are

Prime elements (DRAMMA):

Detachment

Relaxation

Autonomy

Mastery

Meaning

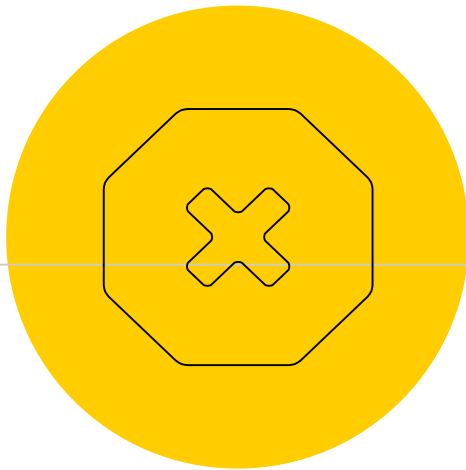
Affiliation





You are not alone |

1. Pick someone with whom you are comfortable and close
2. Share your personal wellness goals
3. If necessary, help each other with specifics / barriers
4. Encourage one another – “you are worth it.”



Self-Help is not always sufficient

Several signs let us know when it is time for professional help

2

When therapy is still needed

Screening tools and information about treatment



Self-Screening Tools

- Self-screening may help participants cope with anticipated stigma
- May nudge individuals through stages of change
- Ongoing study (contact me!)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/. The page features the MHA logo (Mental Health America) and navigation links for 'Mental Health Information', 'Resources', and 'About Us'. A prominent orange button labeled 'TAKE A MENTAL HEALTH TEST' is visible. Below the navigation, the main heading reads 'Take a Mental Health Test'. The text below the heading states: 'Online screening is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition. Mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety, are real, common and treatable. And recovery is possible.'

<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>



Screening Tools for Depression

- This should be a normal part of contact with patients in a primary care setting
- If you are not in a primary care setting, consider using it

| PATIENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE -9 (PHQ-9) | | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems? (Use "✓" to indicate your answer) | Not at all | Several days | More than half the days | Nearly every day |
| 1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Feeling tired or having little energy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |



Screening Tools for Anxiety

- GAD-2 and GAD-7 (right) offer efficient methods of screening for follow-up re: anxiety
- Not a diagnostic on its own; **requires clinician follow-up**

The GAD-7 Scale [18]

| Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7- item (GAD-7) | | | | |
|---|------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems | Not at all | Several days | More than half the days | Nearly every day |
| 1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Not being able to stop or control worrying | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Worrying too much about different things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Trouble relaxing | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

GAD-7 score obtained by adding score for each question (total points).

A score of 8 points or higher is a reasonable is the cut-off for needing further identifying evaluation to determine presence and type of anxiety disorder^{23, 24}



Indicators for Referral

Sudden Changes

Appearance, eating, sleeping habits, treatment adherence / motivation.

Excessive avoidance

or fixation on particular aspects of a problem (in context of medical history)

Hopelessness

that persists for an extended period of time (weeks)

Self-help ineffective

Patient reports that their own attempts to improve their mood have not yielded sufficient progress

Emotions

Flat, constricted, or inappropriate

Suicidality

Emergency services may be necessary if patient indicates intent, plan, and means to act

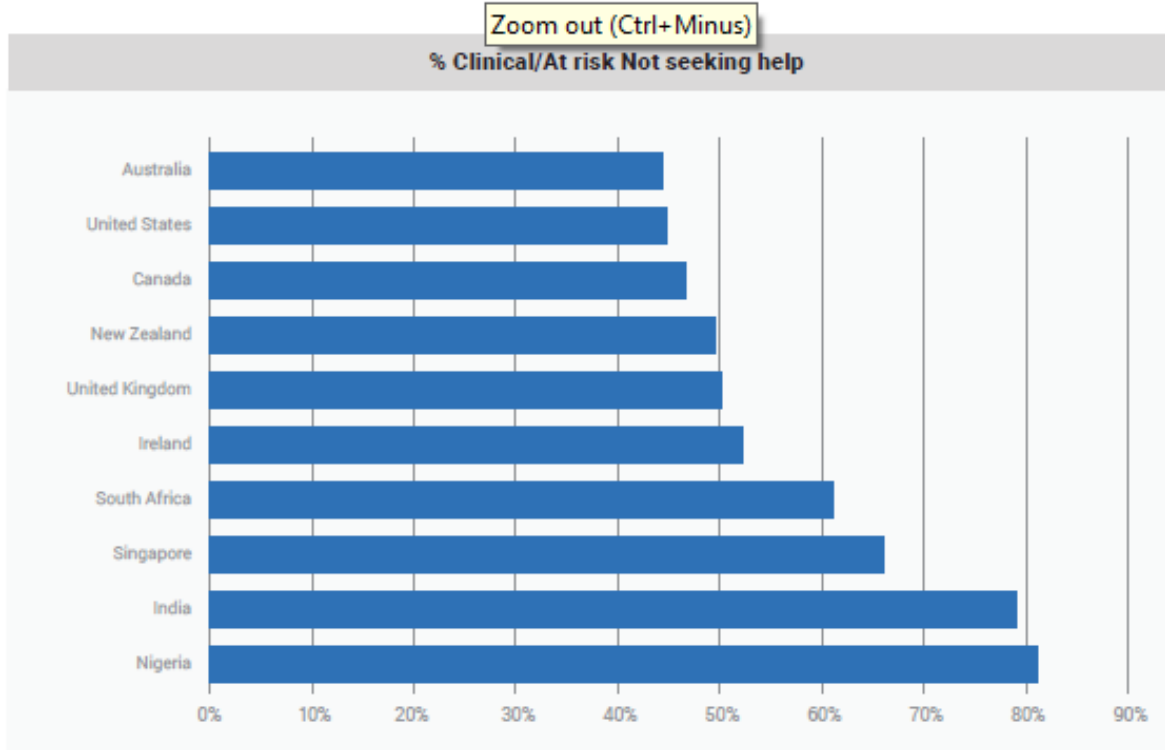
45%

Of individuals with clinical levels of mental illness symptoms are not seeking treatment in the US (Mental Health Million Project 2021)



Top 5 Reasons for Not Seeking Treatment:

1. Lack confidence in treatment
2. Lack of knowledge (what treatment options/providers are available)
3. Prefer self-help
4. Lack of affordability
5. Stigma



Professionals who can help



Medical Doctors

A white medical cross icon on a blue background.

Advanced Practitioners

A white first aid kit icon on a grey background.

Psychologists

A white icon showing two people with a question mark above them, on a purple background.

Social Workers

A white icon showing a group of people connected by lines, on a blue background.

Counselors and Therapists

A white icon showing three people sitting together, on a grey background.

Crisis Support Specialists

A white icon showing a person's head with a headset, on a purple background.

Substance Use Professionals

A white icon showing a person's head with a pill bottle, on a blue background.

Certified Peer Specialists

A white icon showing four hands reaching towards the center, on a grey background.



Types of professional treatment

Individual Therapy



Meetings between just the adult and therapist.

Family Therapy



Meetings with spouse, parents, children, or other family members involved in the adult's life.

Group Therapy



Meetings involving a group of adults with similar diagnoses and one or two therapists.

Medication



Psychiatric medications may reduce or eliminate the negative effects of a mental health disorder.

Rehabilitation Programs



Help people regain skills and confidence to live and work more successfully in their communities.



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CME Disclosures

- Presenters and Planners: Aliya Jones, MD and Steve Whitefield, MD have reported no relevant financial relationships to disclose. Alex Chan, PhD and Hinda Dubin, MD have reported no relevant financial relationships to disclose.
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Thanks!

Any **questions** ?

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