



THE SHORT GUIDE FOR YOUNG ADULTS ON MENTAL HEALTH (CONDENSED VERSION)

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WHAT IS THIS GUIDE?

This document serves as a shortened version of MHE's full Guide on Mental Health for Young People and is full of tips and tricks for young people on the experience with mental health issues.

We'll discuss what mental health is, what the process of recovery might be like. How you can take charge in your recovery. What to do if you might feel uncomfortable or ashamed about your mental health. Where you can go if you feel you might need help. How we should all be talking about mental health. And finally how and where you can find more info online.



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

“a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

- World Health Organisation (WHO)

Mental Health is an integral part of our general health and wellbeing. It is crucial that we take care of it as much as we would our physical health.

WHAT CAUSES MENTAL ILL-HEALTH?

Mental ill-health is actually most often caused by a mixture of factors, rather than just one thing. For young people this can include several compounding factors.



It is important for us all to talk openly about mental ill-health, without the need to feel embarrassed or ashamed.

THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

Your journey to recovery is very personal & will differ greatly from another person's own journey. It does not have to be a linear path, nor lead to a fixed and final destination.



1

Ask yourself what feeling better and what recovery looks like and feels like to you. This could be no longer having a diagnosis or no longer experiencing the challenges associated with the diagnosis or problem. For others, it could also mean feeling better and knowing how to live with mental health problems.

2

Secondly, it is good to think about who you trust to talk with about this and what has been proven to be helpful to you in the past, as well as what did not help.

3

Finally, you might want to pinpoint one thing that you could actually do that would make you feel better, even something really simple.

As these answers emerge, you will start to have a clear idea of your plan for personal recovery based on what you want and of who might support you in this. As this can be a complex and sometimes daunting process, you might want to find more information in the [MHE Short Guide to Personal Recovery in Mental Health](#).

THE JOURNEY OF RECOVERY

Medical Diagnosis

You might be looking to receive a psychiatric/mental health diagnosis and are wondering how to go about it or you might have already received one and are unsure how to proceed. There are a few things to keep in mind.

Health professionals will rely on your own feelings and thoughts, express as openly as you feel comfortable to about your situation. This will help in an accurate diagnosis.

Your expectations and concerns regarding treatment should be taken into full account when treatment is suggested. The principles of self-determination, empowerment and recovery can make all the difference.

More information on this topic can be found in [MHE's Short Guide to Psychiatric Diagnosis](#).

Psychiatric Medication

You may be prescribed psychiatric medication as a form of treatment.

Psychiatric medication can affect the way you think, feel and see the world. You might experience some of these effects as beneficial and they may even reduce symptoms of your condition. You may also experience less desirable effects. Halting medication usage may also cause unpleasant effects.

Psychiatric drugs are considered by many as a tool that may, or may not, be helpful for various people at different stages in their life. Psychiatric drugs can be lifechanging, but all the risks and benefits of a specific medication should be understood and considered before you make a decision on whether or not to take them.

Ultimately, the decision is yours. There is no shame or weakness in taking psychiatric medication, do not hesitate to seek support with this. You can find more information on this topic in [MHE's Short Guide to Psychiatric medication](#).

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

DISCOMFORT OR SHAME

The decision to talk about or discuss your mental health is your own personal choice and you should never feel forced to disclose information or feelings if you do not want to. Stigma and misconceptions may make it feel difficult to talk about your mental health. So what can you do?

1

Be comfortable with your own story before you share it. Writing down your experiences can be a good 1st step. This can also help you decide what you want to share, when and with who.

2

Find people with similar experiences and listen to their stories. This can help you become more comfortable and confident in talking about your own story, as well as create connections with peers that might help in your recovery. Organisations exist which can offer support and advice, one of these organisations may be a member of the MHE network, be sure to check if one of them operates near you.



WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?

If your struggling or feel the need to reach out, you might be wondering where to turn. There are a number of places you can find help.

School, University or Work

Your place of work or education likely has a counsellor or mentor that you can discuss your situation with. Be sure that this is someone that you can discuss with on a confidential basis. You might want to consider discussing how your situation at work or within your studies might need to change to accomodate for your recovery.

Health Professionals

You might decide to approach a health professional for help. In this case make sure your opinion and preferences regarding treatment are understood and respected by the health professional. It may take several attempts to find the right health professional for you.

If a health professional tells you that your condition is untreatable or that you will never study or work again, **seek a second opinion immediately.**

Friends and Family

Depending on your relationship with them, friends and family can be a fierce ally in your corner. Support and encouragement can be vital in the process of recovery. They can also act as an advocate, helping you in getting the care you feel is right for you.



TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

WORDS MATTER

When we do discuss mental health, it is important we do so in the right way. The right words can be an important tool in making sure no-one feels labelled, stigmatised or stereotyped.



One example to look out for is avoiding reducing a person living with mental ill-health to their

Focusing solely on the labels or symptoms of a persons condition may belittle the complexity of their ongoing experiences.

Though some believe that mental health problems are always caused by an underlying brain issue, this may not be the case for many conditions.

For many people, the distress that leads them to seek professional mental health help has roots in social disadvantage (e.g. poverty, poor housing, low-paid jobs, etc.)

However, language can also be a powerful tool for creating awareness and fighting stigma. MHE has put together an [infographic on the use of language and how to talk about mental health](#) (available in English and French). We also have a [guide to explain terminology used in the mental health field](#).

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFO?

Throughout this guide you've come across some links that might have helped you find what you needed, but you might still feel you need more. On this page you should be able to find your way to a resource or pack that will suit your needs.

The Full Guide

As mentioned earlier this shortened guide acts as a summary of the full Guide for Young Adults on Mental Health. You may be able to find more specific information in the full guide.

MHE's Sites

MHE's website and social media channels (i.e. [Twitter](#), [Youtube](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#)) contain information you might find useful.

MHE's Members

MHE's members focus on an array of issues and areas, check out our [members' page](#) to find something that might address your needs more directly.

Helplines & Support Organisations

In case you need more immediate support you can check out the [map of helplines and mental health support organisations](#).





ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE (MHE)

With 70+ organisations in 30 countries, MHE is the largest independent network working to advocate for positive mental health and wellbeing and to protect the rights of people with mental ill-health. We continuously champion social inclusion, deinstitutionalisation and respect for the human rights of people with psychosocial disabilities. We raise awareness to end mental health stigma throughout Europe.

Find the full version of the Guide for Young Adults on Mental Health on our website: www.mhe-sme.org

For more information, please see our website and social media channels.



www.mhe-sme.org



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