

**Aging and Disability Resource Center of  
Racine County**

# Empower Your Life

Tips for your emotional well-being



## **Topics Include:**

- Resources and information
- Self tests and scoring
- Activities



## Participating in life to the fullest

We all know that we need to exercise and eat right to maintain good physical health, but what about our emotional or mental health? When a person is emotionally healthy they have a zest for life, are contented, have greater self-esteem, have a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives, and importantly, are able to bounce back when bad things happen.

Helpguide.org offers several strategies for maintaining good emotional and mental health which include building your resilience, taking care of your physical health, and paying attention to your needs and feelings. It is also helpful to limit habits like worrying and to manage your stress levels. It is very important to maintain and develop supportive relationships as they are the foundation for emotional well-being. This means getting away from the TV or the computer and spending time daily face-to-face with people you like. Consider volunteering or joining a group with people who have similar interests.

Mental Health America has a campaign called “Live your Life Well” which has its own website at <https://www.mhanational.org/staying-mentally-healthy>. They offer 10 tools that anyone can implement to improve their own sense of well being and improve mental health. As they state -Mental health matters: “Some people think that only people with mental illnesses have to pay attention to their mental health. But the truth is that your emotions, thoughts and attitudes affect your energy, productivity and overall health. Good mental health strengthens your ability to cope with everyday hassles and more serious crises and challenges. Good mental health is

essential to creating the life you want. Just as you brush your teeth or get a flu shot, you can take steps to promote your mental health. A great way to start is by learning to deal with stress.”

## **The 10 Tools**

(see the website for expanded information and tips)

- ◆ **Connect with others**

Fight stress with friendship. Learn how to strengthen old bonds and build new ones.

- ◆ **Stay Positive**

Changing your thinking can change your life. Take steps to increase your optimism.

- ◆ **Get physically active**

Exercise can make you happier. Plan on how to get active, and stay active.

- ◆ **Help Others**

You may feel better serving soup at a shelter than sipping martinis at Happy Hour.

- ◆ **Get Enough Sleep**

Being tired can hurt your health and your relationships. Get advice for better sleep if necessary.

- ◆ **Create Joy and Satisfaction**

Feeling good is good for you. So have a laugh, find a hobby or just kick back.

- ◆ **Eat Well**

The right foods can fuel your mind, boost your mood and fight disease.

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◆ **Take care of your spirit**

Praying, meditating or just connecting with your deepest self can enrich your life.

◆ **Deal Better with hard times**

Coping tools can help you through a rough patch. There are tips on the website.

◆ **Get professional help if you need it**

Don't hesitate to seek professional help. Learn about therapy, medication and more.

Research has shown that stress and depression have the biggest impact on the mental health of older adults. In the June/July 2009 issue of *The Iris*, the newsletter of NAMI Wisconsin they write that according to HelpGuide.org, “older adults don't always fit the typical picture of depression. Many depressed seniors don't claim to feel sad at all. They may complain, instead, of low motivation, a lack of energy, or physical problems. In fact, physical complaints, such as arthritis pain or headaches that have gotten worse, are often the predominant symptoms of depression in the elderly. Older adults with depression are also more likely to show symptoms of anxiety or irritability. They may constantly wring their hands, pace around the room, or fret obsessively about money, their health, or the state of the world.”

There are many resources available to assist you with your emotional well-being – see the listing accompanying this article. If you are a caregiver for someone, also consider one of the support groups that are offered in the area, or contact the ADRC's Senior Services area. We can offer many tips and stress reducing ideas on caring for yourself.

The tips included here do not require a drastic change in your life, and by setting aside a bit of time each day for your emotional and mental health you can remain productive, energetic and more able to face life's challenges.

Are you concerned about your own alcohol or drug use, or that of someone you know? Deciding whether there is a problem can be challenging. A few steps you can take include; taking a self screen (see pg 9), attend a meeting of a recovery group like AA, speak to your doctor or a counseling professional, find treatment or other information, or call 1-855-DRUGFREE (855-378-4373).

Remember that you do not have to be alone in this. Have faith in yourself and you will find a way. It takes courage and responsibility to be happy. It's not easy, but it is possible to recover and lead a healthy life—you can do it.

## **Additional information about Mental Health**

Mental health is a state of well-being in which a person understands his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Both physical and mental health are the result of a complex interplay between many individual and environmental factors, including:

- ◆ family history of illness and disease/genetics
- ◆ lifestyle and health behaviors (e.g., smoking, exercise, substance use)
- ◆ levels of personal and workplace stress
- ◆ exposure to toxins

- ◆ exposure to trauma
- ◆ personal life circumstances and history
- ◆ access to supports (e.g., timely healthcare, social supports)
- ◆ coping skills

When the demands placed on someone exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health will be negatively affected. Two examples of common demands are working long hours under difficult circumstances, and caring for a chronically ill relative. Economic hardship, unemployment, underemployment and poverty also have the potential to harm mental health.

Brief screenings are the quickest way to determine if you or someone you care about should connect with a mental health professional - they are a checkup from your neck up.

<https://www.racinecounty.com/departments/human-services/aging-disability-services/behavioral-health-services-of-racine-county>

- ◆ Be sure to access the articles tab for many articles that can be of assistance to you.

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

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Also included are some paper assessments you can take for your own information. There is further information and resources beginning on page 19.

## Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D Scale)

The following is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved over the past week. Tell us how often you have felt this way during the past week.

	Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)	Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)	Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)	Most or all of the time (5-7 days)
1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.	0	1	2	3
2. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.	0	1	2	3
3. I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.	0	1	2	3
4. I felt I was just as good as other people.	0	1	2	3
5. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.	0	1	2	3
6. I felt depressed.	0	1	2	3
7. I felt that everything I did was an effort.	0	1	2	3
8. I felt hopeful about the future.	0	1	2	3
9. I thought my life had been a failure.	0	1	2	3
10. I felt fearful.	0	1	2	3

Continued...

	Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)	Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)	Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)	Most or all of the time (5-7 days)
11. My sleep was restless.	0	1	2	3
12. I was happy.	0	1	2	3
13. I talked less than usual.	0	1	2	3
14. I felt lonely.	0	1	2	3
15. People were unfriendly.	0	1	2	3
16. I enjoyed life.	0	1	2	3
17. I had crying spells.	0	1	2	3
18. I felt sad.	0	1	2	3
19. I felt that people dislike me.	0	1	2	3
20. I could not get "going."	0	1	2	3

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### **Scoring the CES-D Scale**

The Score is the sum of the values of the responses to the 20 questions with a possible range of 0-60

A score of 16 points or more may indicate a need for further assessment.



## **CAGE Adapted to Include Drugs (CAGE-AID)**

Please circle “yes” or “no” for each question. When thinking about drug use, include illegal drug use and the use of prescription drugs used other than prescribed.

Have you felt you ought to cut down on your drinking or drug use?

Yes    No

Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking or drug use?

Yes    No

Have you felt bad or guilty about your drinking or drug use?

Yes    No

Have you ever had a drink or used drugs first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover.

Yes    No

**See scoring next page**

*Source: Reprinted with permission from the Wisconsin Medical Journal. Brown, R.L., and Rounds, L.A. Conjoint screening questionnaires for alcohol and drug abuse. Wisconsin Medical Journal 94:135-140, 1995.*

## **CAGE-AID Introduction and Scoring**

The CAGE questionnaire is used to test for alcohol abuse and dependence in adults. The CAGE-AID version of the tool has been adapted to include drug use. These tools are not used to diagnose diseases, but only to indicate whether a problem might exist. The questions are most effective when used as part of a general health history and should NOT be preceded by questions about how much or how frequently the patient drinks or uses drugs. The reason for this is that denial is very common among persons abusing alcohol or other drugs; and therefore, the CAGE/CAGE-AID questions focus the discussion toward the behavioral effects of the drinking or drug use rather than toward the number of drinks or drugs used per day.

**Scoring:** Item responses on the CAGE-AID are scored 0 for "no" and 1 for "yes" answers. A higher score is an indication of alcohol problems. A total score of 2 or greater is considered clinically significant.

## Caregiver Self-Assessment Questionnaire

### How are you?

*By the American Medical Association -  
Physicians dedicated to the health of America*

Caregivers are often so concerned with caring for their relative's needs that they lose sight of their own wellbeing. Please take just a moment to answer the following questions. Once you have answered the questions, turn the page to do a self-evaluation.

1. Had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing  
 Yes  No
2. Felt that I couldn't leave my relative alone.  
 Yes  No
3. Had difficulty making decisions  
 Yes  No
4. Felt completely overwhelmed  
 Yes  No
5. Felt useful and needed  
 Yes  No
6. Felt lonely  
 Yes  No
7. Been upset that my relative has changed so much from his/her former self  
 Yes  No
8. Felt a loss of privacy and/or personal time  
 Yes  No
9. Been edgy or irritable  
 Yes  No
10. Had sleep disturbed because of caring for my relative  
 Yes  No
11. Had a crying spell(s)  
 Yes  No

*Continued...*

12. Felt strained between work and family responsibilities  
Yes No
13. Had back pain  
Yes No
14. Felt ill (headaches, stomach problems or common cold) .  
Yes No
15. Been satisfied with the support my family has given me  
Yes No
16. Found my relative's living situation to be inconvenient or  
a barrier to care  
Yes No
17. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not stressful" to 10  
being "extremely stressful," please rate your current level of  
stress. \_\_\_\_\_
18. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very healthy" to 10  
being "very ill," please rate your current health compared to  
what it was this time last year. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: (Please feel free to comment or provide  
feedback)

### **Self-evaluation: To Determine the Score:**

1. Reverse score questions 5 and 15. (For example, a "No" response should be counted as "Yes" and a "Yes" response should be counted as "No")
2. Total the number of "yes" responses.

## To Interpret the Score:

Chances are that you are experiencing a high degree of distress:

- ◆ If you answered “Yes” to either or both Questions 4 and 11; or
- ◆ If your total “Yes” score = 10 or more; or
- ◆ If your score on Question 17 is 6 or higher; or
- ◆ If your score on Question 18 is 6 or higher. Next steps:
- ◆ Consider seeing a doctor for a check-up for yourself.
- ◆ Consider having some relief from caregiving. (Discuss with the doctor or a social worker the resources available in your community.)
- ◆ Consider joining a support group

## Resources for Caregivers

**Aging and Disability Resource Center** 262-833-8777

**Eldercare Locator:** (a national directory of community services) 1-800- 677-1116

<https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>

**Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Programs**

<https://wisconsincaregiver.org/>

**Family Caregiver Alliance** 1-415- 434-3388

<https://www.caregiver.org/>

**Medicaid Hotline** Baltimore, MD 1-800-638-6833

**National Center on Caregiving** 1-301-718-8444

<https://www.caregiving.org/>

**Caregiver Action Network** 1-800 896-3650

<https://www.caregiveraction.org/>

## **General Hotlines and Helplines**

Most hotlines are available 24/7, 365 days per year

**Community Resources 211** dial 211 or 866-211-3380

**AIDS** (National) Hotline (also HIV and sexually transmitted diseases) 800-342-AIDS (2437)

**Adult Protective Services** –Racine County  
262-833-8777 after 4:30 pm call 262-638-6741

**Racine County Crisis Services** and 24-hour line  
262-638-6741

**Domestic Violence** – National Hotline 800-799-7233

**BeLeaf (Sexual Assault Services)** 262-637-SAFE (7233)

**Women’s Resource Center** 262-633-3233

24-hr crisis **Poison Control** 800-222-1222

**Parent Hotline/Youth Crisis line** 800-840-6537

**Suicide/ Crisis** (National) 800-273-TALK (8255)  
Or call 988

**Veterans Crisis Line** 800-273-8255 Press #1  
Or text to 838255

# Empower Your Life

Word Search Puzzle

J O Y E V I T I S O P M V L J  
N Y H G P L E H F T S G I G D  
O S G R E U P C R I Y E N C G  
I A U E X G R W I R U Y F H O  
T T A L E R A J E I L K O T O  
O I L A R D Y F N P J I R G D  
M S G T C E S G D S T A M N N  
E F E I I L T Y S L E A E E E  
A A T O S I L C H D A Z D R S  
C C S N E G O O I P T A E T S  
T T C S O H V P P Q W H R S R  
I I R H A T E I C M E P U U E  
V O E I B P H N L A L I T S L  
E N E P S P N G F M L T A Y A  
Y G N S S C O N N E C T N V X

Active  
Connect  
Coping  
Delight  
Eatwell  
Emotion  
Exercise  
Friendship

Getscreen  
Goodness  
Help  
Informed  
Joy  
Laugh  
Love  
Nature

Positive  
Pray  
Relationships  
Relax  
Satisfaction  
Spirit  
Strength

## Changing the way People Think about Mental Health

Mental Health America had a previous campaign called B4Stage4 which addressed how we, as a community and as individuals think about mental health.

“When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don’t wait years to treat them. We start way before Stage 4. We begin with prevention. And when people are in the first stage of those diseases, and have a persistent cough, high blood pressure, or high blood sugar, we try immediately to reverse these symptoms.

This is what we should be doing when people have serious mental illnesses, too. When they first begin to experience symptoms such as loss of sleep, feeling tired for no reason, feeling low, feeling anxious, or hearing voices, we should act.

These early symptoms might not ever become serious. Like a cough, they often go away on their own, and are nothing to fear. But when they do not go away, it typically takes ten years from the time they first appear until someone gets a correct diagnosis and proper treatment.

This means that by ignoring them, we lose ten years in which we could intervene in order to change people’s lives for the better. During most of these years most people still have supports that allow them to succeed - home, family,

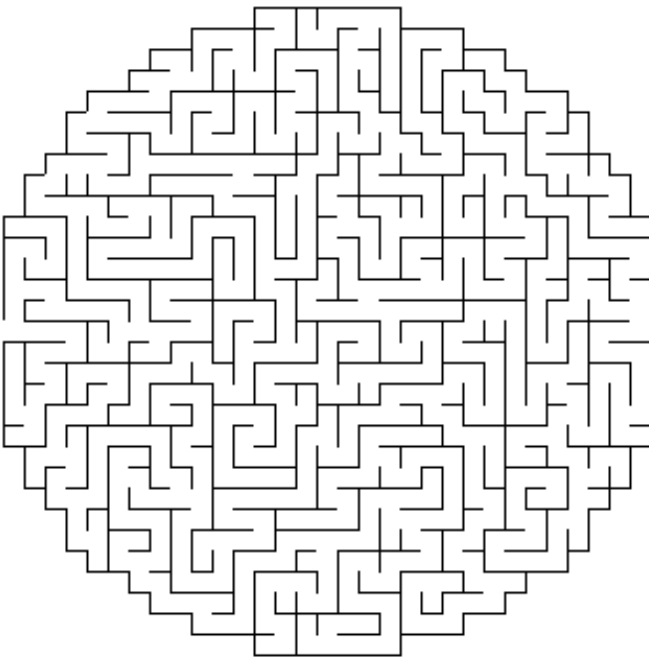
Continued on pg 18



## Find Your Way

*It is good to have an end to journey toward;  
but it is the journey that matters, in the end.*

-Ernest Hemmingway



friends, school, and work. So people can often recover quickly, and live full and productive lives.

Even when we don't intervene right away, and serious mental illnesses get worse and disrupt people's lives, we can act effectively. We can offer people choices and supports to help them recover. These include clinical services, drugs, peer supports, counseling, family supports, and other therapies that also help them manage their thoughts and emotions. These all help keep people connected to their families and their community. Intervening as early as possible preserves education, employment, social supports, housing – and brain power!"

See this and further information and tools at:

<https://mhanational.org/>

Or call them at: 800-273-TALK (8255)

There is also information available about treatment options and tools for recovery. Getting treatment for your mental health condition is the first of many things you can do for your own recovery. See resources listed on the next page.

## Other Resources

### **American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry**

301-654-7850

<https://www.aagponline.org/>

### **HelpGuide.org**

<https://helpguide.org>

### **Mental Health America**

800-969-6642

<https://www.mhanational.org/>

### **Mental Health America—Wisconsin**

414-276-3122

<https://www.mhawisconsin.org/>

### **NAMI—National Alliance on Mental Illness**

<https://www.nami.org/Home>

**Racine:** <https://www.namiracinecounty.org/>

262-637-0582

**Kenosha:** <https://www.namikenosha.org/>

262-605-9038

### **National Institute of Mental Health**

866-615-6464

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

### **National Library of Medicine Medline Plus**

<https://www.medlineplus.gov/>

### **National Institute on Aging Information Center**

800-222-2225

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>

### **SAMSHA** (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

## **Articles:**

Maintaining Good Mental Health as We Age

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/alzheimers-dementia-aging/staying-healthy-as-you-age.htm>

Mental Health: What's normal, what's not

By Mayo Clinic Staff

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/mental-health/MH00042](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mental-health/MH00042)

Access the articles tab for many articles that can be of assistance to you: <https://www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org/>

## **Definitions**

Get the facts on common mental disorders;

### **Anxiety Disorders**

**Anxiety:** feelings of worry, anxiety, or fear that are strong enough to interfere with one's daily activities. Examples of anxiety disorders include panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Symptoms include stress that's out of proportion to the impact of the event, inability to set aside a worry, and restlessness.

### **Bipolar and Related Disorders**

**Bi-polar:** A disorder associated with episodes of mood swings ranging from depressive lows to manic highs. Each episode usually lasts days to weeks at a time. Episodes may occur several times a year or throughout the year. Mania symptoms include periods of elevated mood or irritability.

When experiencing a manic episode, a patient often has high energy levels with reduced need for sleep. Less often, people may experience psychosis. Depression symptoms include feeling sad, low energy, low motivation, or loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities.

Symptoms include mood swings, sadness, elevated mood, anger, anxiety, apathy, apprehension, euphoria, general discontent, guilt, hopelessness, inability to feel pleasure, loss of interest, irritability, risky behavior, disorganized behavior, aggression, agitation, crying, excess desire for sex, hyperactivity, impulsivity, self-harm, unwanted thoughts, delusion, lack of concentration, racing thoughts, slowness in activity and thought, or false belief of superiority, difficulty falling asleep or excess sleepiness.

## **Depressive Disorders**

**Depression:** A mood disorder causing a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Causes may include chemical imbalance in the brain and stressful life events, such as the loss of a loved one. The persistent feeling of sadness or loss of interest that characterizes major depression can lead to a range of emotional and physical conditions. Symptoms include inability to sleep or concentrate on tasks. Changes in appetite, decreased energy level, and thoughts of suicide are also seen.

## **PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)**

**PTSD:** A condition triggered by experiencing or seeing a terrifying event. The condition may last months or years, with triggers that can bring back memories of the trauma

accompanied by intense emotional and physical reactions. Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, and anxiety.

## Substance Use

Get the facts on common substance use disorders

<https://www.samhsa.gov/disorders/substance-use>

**Alcohol use:** A pattern of drinking that interferes with day-to-day activities. With alcohol abuse, a person is not yet physically dependent on alcohol but still has a serious drinking problem.

Symptoms include a failure to fulfill major work, school, or home responsibilities, legal or social problems, or drinking in situations that are dangerous, such as while driving.

**Drug use:** The routine practice taking of addictive or illegal drugs. From prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications to street drugs and alcohol, virtually any drug can be abused. While illicit drugs like heroin and cocaine are abused any time they are used, prescription drugs are abused whenever they are used in a manner other than as intended, or by someone other than to whom they were prescribed.

Symptoms include sudden mood swings, changes in normal behavior, lack of hygiene and grooming, withdrawal from friends and family, loss of interest in normal social activities and hobbies, changes in sleeping patterns, bloodshot or glassy eyes, or constant sniffles or runny nose.

## Other Resources to consider

You do not have to go it alone - if you have the option to talk to a licensed therapist or a specialist who can really help you with the issues you're facing, you should do so. Many insurance plans cover mental health services even if you think they don't. Many of the options below can help you through moments of crisis or give you a shoulder to lean on, but if the issues you're facing are serious and on-going, it's time to get a professional involved. There is help in Racine County – call 262-638-6741. This includes free walk in help at 1717 Taylor Ave in Racine. Here are some other options:

### **Dial 211 or 988**

Connect to info on a variety of human services including meeting information for AA, and narcotics anonymous.

### **Check with Your Church or Employer for Free Counseling Options**

Most churches have their own counseling programs; those services often range from someone to talk to all the way up to grief counseling after a loss and help with drug and alcohol abuse issues. Even if you're not a member of the church they may offer counseling or be able to refer you to someone who does.

Check with your HR department to see if your company has an EAP, or Employee Assistance Program. EAP hotlines often provide support to employees looking for help with their mental health, someone to talk to, drug and alcohol issues, or even nutrition and physical health concerns.

### **Try an Online Counseling or Listening Service**

You can find free and paid services online, but be aware that this may not be at the professional level you may be in need of, and you may need to pay for some of the services offered. A few well regarded self help options include:

**7 Cups of Tea** - <https://www.7cups.com/>

**Blah Therapy** – <https://blatherapy.com/>

**Talkspace** – <https://www.talkspace.com/>

**Aging and Disability  
Resource Center of Racine  
County**

14200 Washington Ave  
Sturtevant, WI 53177

Phone: 262-833-8777

Toll Free: 866-219-1043

<https://adrc.racinecounty.com>

[adrc@racinecounty.com](mailto:adrc@racinecounty.com)

