



Tips for Managing Mental and Physical Health

For the LGBTQIA+ Community

According to the CDC, up to 60% of LGBTQIA+-identified persons deal with anxiety and depression at some point in their lives—that is 2.5 times higher than the rate of anxiety and depression in the general population. Mental health plays a key role in our overall physical health. It can impact things in our daily life such as sleep, concentration, motivation, and even preventable diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease and more. Mental health is health and it's important to treat it that way.

There are small steps you can take each day to improve your mental health and even prevent issues in the future. Working to improve your lifestyle can help you increase energy, reduce stress, reduce your risk of illness and overall help you feel better.

When building a healthy lifestyle, it's best to choose one or two lifestyle changes to start at a time to avoid feeling overwhelmed. A great place to start is identifying which area makes the most sense for you based on your current lifestyle habits.



Stick to a schedule: Eat, sleep, take medications and complete tasks at the same time each day. Regulating your day can help your mind and body feel calmer.



Get more sleep: Deep sleep restores the brain's ability to regulate emotions. Establish a bedtime schedule, turn off devices early or try meditating. Getting sleep is one of the most foundational habits to address that can affect attitude, whether you eat healthy, or feel good to move or help others.



Stay connected: Stay in touch with people you value and who value you, and keep connected to people in your LGBTQIA+ communities and support networks. Use social media to find LGBTQIA+ affirming groups and persons to connect with.



Limit screen time: Staring at screens can heighten anxiety, especially while processing troubling news. Take frequent screen breaks, especially if you're feeling more anxious than informed.



Eat as well as you can: Food plays a major role in your mood. Reducing sugar and eating regular, balanced meals will improve your brain function and help decrease anxiety. To start try eating healthy for five days in a row and see how you feel.



Limit alcohol: Alcohol is a depressant that affects the central nervous system. Limiting your alcohol intake and replacing it with other activities—walking, meditating, yoga or a hobby—will help your endorphins (happy hormones) take charge.



Get moving: Bilateral stimulation—reconnecting the two sides of your brain through movement—has been proven to decrease stress. Move in a way that feels good to you for 15 to 30 minutes a day.



Lend a hand: Doing something for others feels good. Volunteer, visit a neighbor who lives alone, or deliver a meal or groceries to someone who needs it.

When to seek additional help

Talk with your primary care doctor or another helpful resource if any of these symptoms interrupt your day-to-day life:

- Withdrawal from others
- Loss of interest in activities you used to love
- Feelings of hopelessness that won't go away
- Drinking or drug use to cope with emotions
- Anxiety that makes daily functioning difficult
- Thoughts of ending your life

Helpful resources for improving your mental health

Phone

Michigan Community Mental Health: 800.749.7720

Call 211 for Resources

Apps

Insight Timer* – Use to help fall asleep or for meditations to feel calmer.

CBT-i Coach* – Use to help with insomnia.

What's Up?* – Provides tips for coping skills.

Headspace – Helps with meditation, sleep solutions, exercise ideas and more.

*Free in your app store.

Phone

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

Call, text or chat 988 to connect to a trained counselor

LGBT National Help Center (Adults): 888.843.4564

LGBT National Help Center (Seniors 50+): 888.234.7243

Trans Lifeline: 877.565.8860

Thrive Lifeline: Text THRIVE to 1.313.662.8209

Web

nowmattersnow.org – Website for crisis situations, including strategies to safely cope with suicidal thoughts.

suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/lgbtq

mybandanaproject.org – For support of transgender and gender diverse people who are thinking of suicide

glbthotline.org – For online peer support chats, chatrooms, and more info about local resources

translifeline.org – Trans peer support (run for and by trans people)

thetrevorproject.org – An online community for LGBTQIA+ persons up to the age of 24 and other resources.