



Types of Therapy

Mental health is often viewed simply as the presence or absence of a condition that negatively impacts an individual's life. But this perspective is an oversimplification of a more intricate experience.

Mental health is not a black and white state, where you are either mentally healthy or mentally ill. Just like with physical health, we each have days when we feel better, feel average, or feel worse.

Viewing mental health from the perspective of being well or well has the potential for individuals only to seek support when they need to take action.

The idea of mental health as a continuum provides a broader view of the human experience of mental health. It acknowledges both the negatives and positives while viewing the human mind from a continuous linear perspective. This perspective offers a closer look into the differing states of wellbeing, which, in turn, allows for a deeper focus on certain signs and symptoms of each experience.

This provides insight into even small shifts in mental wellbeing. Noticing small shifts increases the potential for proactive steps to be taken while also providing a guide to the support we may need.

The Four Core Zones

The mental health continuum commonly looks at four core zones; however, as it is a sliding scale there are also less defined areas in between each.

Thriving:

Individuals will often feel "normal". They experience good sleep routines, participate in a healthy lifestyle, are capable of moving through difficult emotions, engage well socially, and exhibit usual levels of self-confidence and performance.

Surviving:

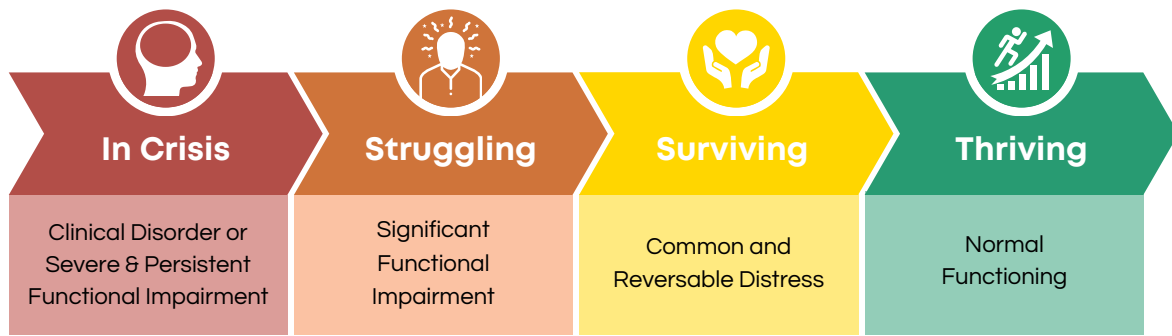
Individuals may experience a rise in irritability or agitation, nervousness, procrastination, sadness, or forgetfulness. This is often accompanied by a lack of sleep and energy, as well as difficulty in relaxing and enjoying social interactions.

Struggling:

Individuals progress to significant functional impairment. These individuals experience prolonged states of anger, sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, or worthlessness. Their work quality may have dropped significantly and they may withdraw from social situations. Sleep quality declines further.

In Crisis:

Individuals have reached the threshold of what may be considered a clinical disorder, resulting in persistent and severe functional impairment. They likely experience extreme difficulty in regulating emotions, possibly including panic attacks, constant feelings of being overwhelmed, depressive moods, and continuous fatigue. The individual's contact with reality may be disturbed and thoughts around self-harm or suicide may increase in intensity or severity.



Understanding the continuum is a great first step, but it is just as important to know what to do when you aren't living a life aligned with where you want to be along the continuum.

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Our EAP Professionals take on a brief, solution-focused approach to support to support you, regardless of where you are on the mental health continuum. The unique style of the intervention or therapy itself varies across professionals, however, some common therapies include:

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT works from the perspective that an individual's thoughts, feelings, physical experiences, and actions are all connected and, therefore, impact one another, both positively and negatively. The aim is to view which negative experiences are leading to unhelpful behaviours and form plans to break these down and create more helpful alternatives. Treatment plans may include cognitive reframing, journaling, activity scheduling, behavioural experiments, or relaxation techniques.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

ACT looks to support clients to live a life that is more consistently aligned with their values. It assists clients in utilising acceptance and mindfulness skills when they find themselves impacted by uncontrollable experiences.

ACT holds the view that most psychological suffering is caused by trying to avoid or remove unwanted experiences. ACT guides clients through six core stages: acceptance, cognitive defusion, connecting the present moment, the observing self, values, and committed action.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness intervention focuses on improving the client's awareness of thoughts and feelings, without analysis or judgement. When an individual is better at identifying without getting caught up in their negative thoughts and feelings, they have more control over how they respond to or interact with certain stimuli. Engaging in mindfulness can involve breathing exercises, guided meditation, imagery, sensory experiences, or grounding techniques.

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing

EMDR therapy is unique in the way that it does not rely on talk therapy as the previous therapies do. EMDR is a structured form of therapy that requires the client to focus briefly on traumatic memories while simultaneously engaging in rapid rhythmic eye movement which consequently reduces the emotional impact and vividness of the trauma.

The phases of EMDR treatment are history taking, client preparation, assessment, desensitisation, installation, body scan, closure, and finally assessing the progress of the intervention. The aim is for the client to complete the treatment with a sense of empowerment after gaining control over the trauma that once impacted them.

