



## WELLNESS ACTIVITY

### Assessing mental health: When is it time to reach out for help?

Everyone feels down sometimes. Sadness and negative feelings are normal and are part of the way we cope with events, issues, and challenges.

But what happens when the feelings intensify and linger? When are blue feelings normal, and when is it time to get help?

It can help to look at how much the symptoms interfere with your daily life. The National Institute on Mental Health suggests considering:

#### Are the symptoms mild?

##### Have they lasted less than two weeks?

Mild symptoms may include:

- Feeling a little down
- Having some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to work
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of others

To help alleviate mild symptoms, practice self-care. If symptoms do not improve, talk to a health care provider.

Self-care can include:

- Physical activity
- Adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- A healthy diet
- Talking to a friend or family member
- Stress-relieving activities, such as meditation
- Being mindful and noticing how small activities (like preparing a meal) bring joy
- Writing down things you are grateful for



#### Are symptoms severe?

##### Have they lasted two weeks or more?

Severe symptoms can include:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes; unwanted changes in weight
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things that used to be enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily activities
- Unable to meet usual responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm

If symptoms are severe, seek professional help. Mental illness can be treated, and a professional can suggest options that make life better. You may turn to:

- Your health care provider
- A local mental health professional
- Your company's employee assistance program
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- The Crisis Text Line (text HOME to 741741) ♦

