

Tips to Improve Your Mental Health

WA State Employee Assistance Program

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The holidays are over and some of us have set resolutions for 2016. Typical resolutions tend to focus on our outward physical self. What about focusing on mental health this year? Mental health affects how we think, feel, act and influences how we handle stress and connect with others. Even if you don't have a mental health disorder or diagnosis, you can still work on your emotional well-being. This could make 2016 your best year yet. Here are some tips to help you get started:



1. **Take care of your body.** Exercise at least a few times a week. Not only does exercising release endorphins that improve your mood, but can also help with self-esteem. When your body is transforming this may improve your feelings about your self- image.
2. **Practice gratitude.** Research has shown that when you are practicing gratitude this may boost your mood, improve health and help adopt a better outlook. This may be as simple as just writing down a few things every day that you are thankful for. Pay attention to what is good, positive, and beautiful throughout the day.
3. **Hang out with positive people.** Simply being around positive minded people can help alter your mood and give a more uplifting attitude.
4. **Turn to supportive friends and family.** Having a social connection can help improve mental health and stress.
5. **Start a journal.** Writing in a journal can help boost your mental wellbeing by allowing you to express your feelings and get emotions out that you could be holding in.
6. **Learn to say NO.** This small word can have a powerful effect on your emotional self. Saying no sets boundaries and allows you to take time and care for yourself.
7. **Be aware of the effects of alcohol and cigarettes.** These may improve your mood in the short term, but may have long term consequences on your health. You can have a better frame of mind and live longer if you limit these vices.
8. **Get plenty of healthy foods in your diet.** Watch your intake of processed foods and refined sugar and add in more fruits and vegetables. Unhealthy foods can affect the body and moods and may have a negative impact on your emotional well- being.
9. **Laugh!** We've all heard laughter is the best medicine. It can help reduce stress and improve your mood. A good laugh just makes you feel good.
10. **Contact your EAP.** A comprehensive EAP assessment will include resources and referrals designed to meet your needs in moving forward. [Hr.wa.gov/eap](http://hr.wa.gov/eap)