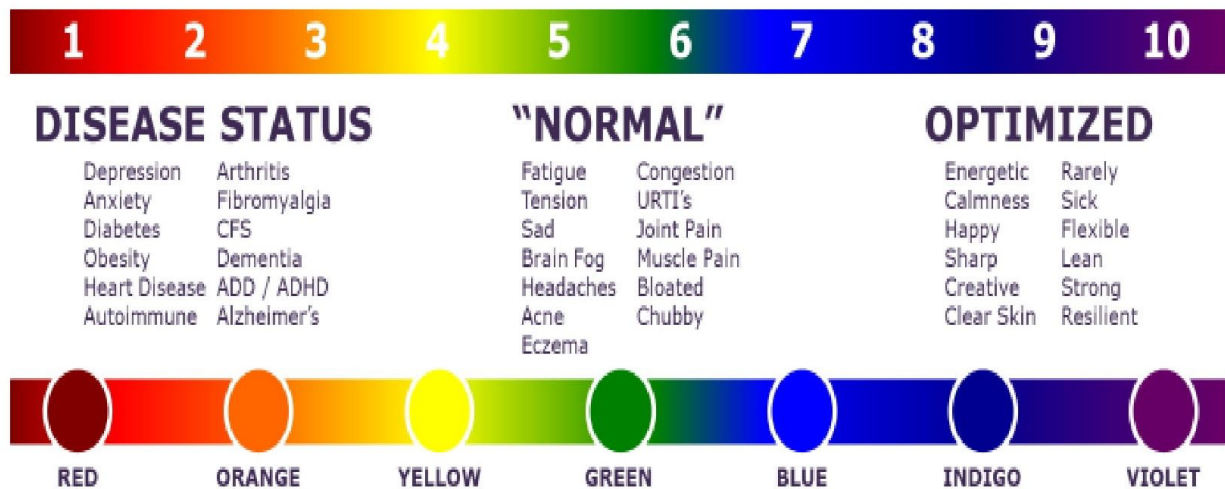


THE THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MENTAL WELLNESS

1. How you feel is not just in your head – it’s also in your gut.
2. Our “second brain” includes the Microbiome and plays a major role in mental wellness.
3. You can now DO something NATURALLY to improve your mental wellness.

WHERE ARE YOU ON THE MENTAL WELLNESS CONTINUUM? (Circle your current number)





CONNECT WITH OTHERS:

We are social creatures and being isolated for long periods can be harmful to our emotional and mental wellbeing. Be sure to [stay connected to loved ones](#) while continuing to practice social distancing. One common idea is virtual time through Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, etc. to enjoy shared dinners, happy hours and conversations with friends and family. This provides an opportunity to receive much-needed support from loved ones and be supportive of them as well. Being

helpful to others can often provide us with a sense of purpose and meaning. This time also offers a unique situation in which we can focus on boosting our relationship and being better connected with our partners. [Try some quarantine approved date night ideas.](#)

2. PRACTICE SELF-CARE:

Be sure to engage in [self-care activities](#). This is more important than ever! During times of high stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, it's critical to take care of your emotional, mental and physical health. Try reading a book, taking a bath, sewing, gardening, playing guitar, cooking, [journaling](#), listening to music, coloring, engaging in any hobby or activity that can serve as coping and distraction. Creative activities can also be helpful in processing and expressing emotions.

3. STAY HEALTHY:

[Physical health and nutrition](#) play key roles in mental and emotional wellbeing. Studies show that we have a higher likelihood of illness when we are not maintaining good mental health. Less stress can actually boost your immune system. There's a strong connection between gut health and mental health so eat whole nutritious fruits and veggies while avoiding processed, sugary and less nutritious foods as this can help us to feel better. Exercise also stimulates neurotransmitters in the brain that bring on positive feelings. Go for a hike, walk around your neighborhood, dance in your living room or take advantage of the many free and low-cost online exercise or yoga programs. You can even try sitting outside for some fresh air and sunshine. Just stay active!

4. BE MINDFUL:

[Practice mindfulness](#), meditation or prayer. Taking time for a mental break, to sit in silence and focus on your current state can bring about much needed inner peace. This will allow your brain a moment of calm. The heaviness of our situation is emotionally and mentally taxing and it's important to plug in some relief.

5. FIND THE GOOD:

In a time of so much negativity, give yourself time to [focus on something positive](#). It's important that we are getting a reprieve because facing a pandemic is scary and overwhelming. Try focusing on something positive every day. This could be reading a funny story, watching a comedy, or finding stories of recovery and hope. You can also try [practicing gratitude](#) and thanking our healthcare providers, grocery store workers, delivery drivers and many more who are working the frontlines to keep us

safe. Just make time to adjust your mindset to one of hope and positivity as this plays a role in how you feel.

6. BE KIND:

First and foremost, be kind to yourself. This is a tough situation. Monitor your expectations and cut yourself some slack. It's okay to struggle right now. During difficult times, we must focus on simply doing the best that we can. Next, **be kind to others**. You never know how someone may be impacted. Send a check-in text to a friend, FaceTime your family or check on a neighbor. Right now, being supportive of ourselves and those around us is more important than ever. We are a community of people impacted together and **kindness matters**.

7. SET A SCHEDULE:

Do your best to keep a regular and consistent schedule. This helps maintain some normalcy, predictability, and control in your life, which is especially important in times of uncertainty. When our world feels out of control, we need a consistent routine to **feel more in control of our daily life**. Try to wake at the same time, shower and dress as though you're leaving the house, start your day with something positive, and be sure to plug-in some "me time" for self-care practice throughout the day.

8. LIMIT NEWS:

It's important to stay informed about the current pandemic; however, when stress levels are high, **too much can be a bad thing**. Reading and watching all things-COVID19 can create and exacerbate feelings of fear and anxiety. Aim for a healthy balance of staying informed and also limiting harmful exposure. Try including some positive stories of hope, recovery, and strategies for your own health and safety.

9. STRIKE A BALANCE:

While these are incredibly challenging and uncertain times, it's important to find a bit of **balance in your life**. We need to balance safety, be socially distant, practice good hygiene, hand-washing, and protective techniques, while also not living in fear. This is difficult. We are faced with empty streets and stores, people wearing face masks and protective gear and reading stories of people dying from a virus that could impact us at any moment. It is scary. But we cannot function well by living solely in fear. We must also find space for things that bring us feelings of safety, security, and control.

10. SIT WITH YOUR EMOTIONS:

While this is uncomfortable, it's important to be aware of and process your feelings. This is a time of intense emotion and we can experience a variety: fear, stress, anxiety, sadness, frustration, trauma, and even grief. If we try to sweep emotions under the rug, they'll eventually find their way out and it's often in the most difficult of ways. [Sit with your feelings and identify](#) how this experience is impacting you as this helps with healing.

11. SEEK ONLINE SUPPORT:

Virtual therapy or coaching services can be helpful by having a professional and neutral person to talk with about feelings, frustrations and the current situation. There's been a huge boost in [teletherapy and online coaching](#). This is a service that can be done from the safety of your own home and provide some much-needed support. Check-out our [virtual services](#).

12. JUST SURVIVE:

Last, but not least - do the best you can! Maybe the best you can means you're barely making it through the day. Maybe your kids are driving you nuts and you haven't spent this much time with your partner in decades so it's exhausting. Maybe you don't create the latest Martha Stewart inspiration or Marie Kondo your entire house. Maybe you haven't become an expert, homeschool, stay-at-home parent or created a sensational educational project from an online kids program. Maybe you are just making it day-to-day. Maybe YOU, like the rest of us, are just trying to get by. And you know what? That's okay too. Just know you're not alone and we will all take it one day at a time

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing

