Language Matters

Using clear, shared language to talk about our states of mental health can help reduce stigma and take action. This is mental health literacy.

Mental Health

Mental Disorder or Illness

Mental disorder or illness: clinically diagnosed, requiring evidence-based treatments from trained professionals

Mental Health Problem

Mental health problem: larger life events or challenges which may require our resilience skills, support network or resources

Mental Distress

Mental distress: common, normal and expected response to the stresses of everyday life

No Distress, Problem or Disorder

No distress, problem or disorder: generally, everything is going well and we are enjoying our daily lives, relationships, activities, etc.

We all have mental health. Mental health can be understood as the capacity to adapt to life's challenges. Too often, mental health is defined as 'feeling happy' or 'feeling good,' when in reality mental health consists of a wide range of states that include negative, neutral and positive thoughts and emotions.

The Mental Health Literacy pyramid shows four distinct, yet interrelated states that help us understand and act on our mental health.

The pyramid is not a continuum – we do not progress from one level of the pyramid to another, and we can even experience each state simultaneously.

Recovery Alberta
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

mental health **literacy**

Learn more at **MentalHealthLiteracy.org**