

# Mental Wellness

## Across The Lifespan

**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**  
*Mental Wellness Across The Lifespan*



Click to explore the life stages →



## Good Mental Health Is Integral To Overall Health & Well Being<sup>1</sup>

*A person's mental health and many common mental disorders can be shaped by various social, economic, and physical environments operating at different stages of life.<sup>1</sup>*

It is of major importance that action is taken to improve the conditions of everyday life, beginning before birth and progressing into early childhood, older childhood and adolescence, during family building and working ages, and through to older age. Action throughout these life stages could provide opportunities for improving population mental health.<sup>1</sup>

Use the icons on the timeline above to explore the stages of life.



1. Social Determinants Of Mental Health. [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/112828/9789241506809\\_eng.pdf;jsessionid=FF4F6924D4E198928D7377F224F758FE?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/112828/9789241506809_eng.pdf;jsessionid=FF4F6924D4E198928D7377F224F758FE?sequence=1). Accessed March 31, 2021. 2. A Whole-of-lifespan approach to mental health and mental illness. <http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/resources/a-whole-of-lifespan-approach-to-mental-health-and-mental-illness.pdf>. Accessed March 31, 2021.

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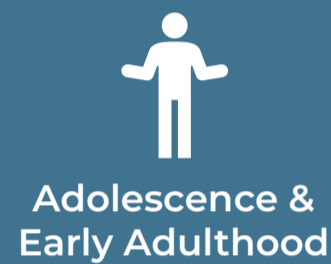
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## Childhood (~ages 0-12)

*Experiences in childhood lay the foundation for mental health later in life.<sup>2</sup>*

There is very clear evidence showing the continuity of disorders between childhood, adolescence and into the adult years. Many prevention activities for mental health problems are therefore ideally placed in childhood.<sup>2</sup>

Adverse conditions in early life are associated with higher risk of mental disorders. Family conditions and quality of parenting have a significant impact on risk of mental and physical health.<sup>1</sup>

Schools play an integral role in nurturing development in terms of social, emotional, academic, and cognitive ability; the effects of which can influence children's short- and long-term mental health.<sup>1</sup>



### Major Life Changes & Developmental Tasks:

#### Infancy & Toddlerhood (~ages 0-5)

- Being born health and normal birth weight
- Acquiring language skills
- Developing impulse control

#### Childhood (~ages 6-12)

- Entering school
- Learning to read and write
- Developing social skills

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## Adolescence & Early Adulthood (~ages 13-24)

*Many first episodes of mental disorder occur in mid to late adolescence and young adulthood.<sup>2</sup>*

Mental disorders account for a substantial **55 percent of disease burden** in young people aged 15–24 years.<sup>2</sup>

Most mental disorders—depression, substance use, anxiety disorders and psychosis—have their peak period of incidence at this stage of the lifespan.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to ensure that adolescents have the knowledge to make informed decisions, and that they have protective factors including social and emotional support and positive interactions with peers, family, and the wider community.<sup>1</sup>



### Major Life Changes & Developmental Tasks:

#### Adolescence (~ages 13-17)

- Entering puberty
- Dating
- Adolescence
- Developing identity and independence

#### Early Adulthood (~ages 18-24)

- Leaving home
- Pursuing higher education
- Choosing a vocation
- Finding a partner
- Having children

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## Adulthood (~ages 25-64)

*After peaking in late adolescence and early adulthood, the prevalence of most mental disorders decreases with age.<sup>2</sup>*

The incidence of new mental disorders also declines, and many disorders in adulthood are a recurrence of earlier mental health problems.<sup>2</sup>

Mental disorders account for **17 percent of the disease burden** in adults aged 25–64 years. For adults, stressful life events are strongly associated with the onset of mental health problems and mental disorders.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note that adult mental disorders have impacts beyond the individuals concerned: they also influence children, partners and wider family, communities, economic development, and subsequent generations.<sup>1</sup>



### Major Life Changes & Developmental Tasks:

- Parenting a primary-school child
- Parenting an adolescent
- Achieving vocational success
- Parenting a child who is leaving home
- Parenting adult children
- Providing care for an ill parent
- Becoming a grandparent

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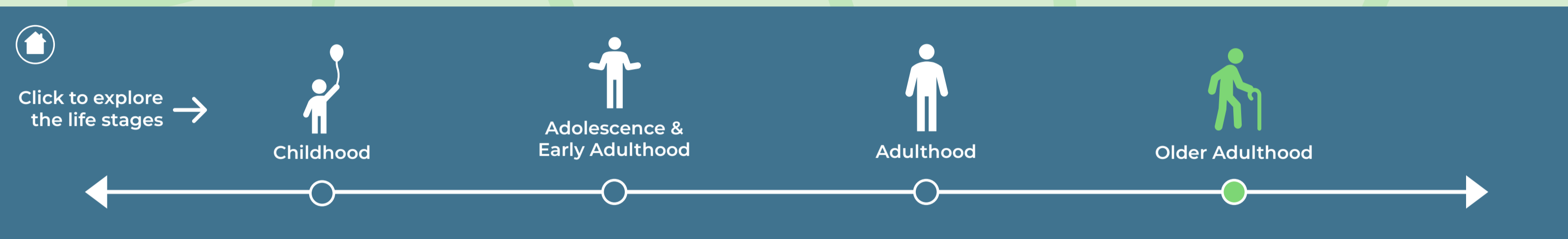
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### Older Adulthood (~ages 65-80+)

*Older people's mental health relates both to earlier life experiences and also to particular experiences, conditions, and contexts specific to aging and the post-retirement period.<sup>1</sup>*

Experiences of mental and physical health differ throughout the older age period.<sup>1</sup>

Systematic reviews indicate that interventions which prolong and/or improve older people's social activities, life satisfaction, and quality of life can significantly reduce depressive symptoms and protect against risk factors, such as social isolation.<sup>2</sup>



#### Major Life Changes & Developmental Tasks:

- Coping with illness or disability
- Providing care for an ill spouse
- Coping with the death of a spouse
- Coping with the death of peers

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