

Parish Nurse's Notes 2023

SIGNS YOU NEED TO TAKE A MENTAL HEALTH DAY

When your body and emotions are out of whack, it's important to recognize the signs that your overworked brain needs a mental health day. If you get the flu or an injury, you have no problem taking a sick day. But what if your mental health is suffering? Just like your physical health, it's important to take time off to focus on your mental well-being.

The day-to-day hustle and commitments of life can cause high levels of stress, which ultimately affect your mental state. It's hard to spot the symptoms because they're not all physical. Here are some signs you need a mental health day, plus a few things you can do to try to heal.

You're Exhausted All the Time

Everyone gets tired once in a while, but if you don't even have the energy to do simple tasks or your favorite activities, then you may need to take a mental health day. People can feel drained physically, mentally, socially, creatively, emotionally and spiritually.

Many people turn to caffeine when they feel tired. Sometimes, people knock back multiple cups of coffee to power through the day. However, relying on coffee won't help if you're exhausted and unmotivated. In fact, drinking too much coffee leads to dehydration, which slows you down.

Instead of coffee, try using a mental health day to have some fun and restore your energy. You could also take the day to identify the things that are draining you, such

as a stressful commute or a messy home. After creating a list of your stressors, figure out how to eliminate them.

You're Tired, but You Have Trouble Sleeping

After a long day at work, you may feel tired. However, what if you can't fall asleep when you go to bed, even when you're exhausted? High levels of stress can lead to insomnia, which causes fatigue, poor focus, physical pain and even more stress.

Work, financial or relationship problems can create stress.

It's basically a never-ending cycle until you reduce or get rid of the stressors. With a mental health day, you can sleep in, take a long nap or start setting a healthier sleep schedule for your mind and body. Experts have found that getting regular, good sleep helps people heal and recharge.

It's Hard to Focus

Are you struggling to concentrate, making mistakes or forgetting things more than usual? If the answer is yes, you may be under a lot of stress. "The basic idea is that the brain is shunting its resources because it's in survival mode, not memory mode," explains [Dr. Kerry Ressler](#), chief scientific officer at McLean Hospital and professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School

A mental health day away from the pressures at work or home might help you get back on track. Many health professionals agree that mental health days need to focus on relaxing and regrouping your thoughts. On regular days, there's pressure to finish projects or tasks. Mental rest can relieve pressure, lead to better concentration and help you regain your sense of control.

You Feel More Anxious Than Usual

Anxiety comes in many forms, such as panic attacks, worrying and fear, and high levels of anxiety can wreak havoc on the body. Physical symptoms include chest tightness, abdominal discomfort, shortness of breath, constant exhaustion, trembling, profuse sweating and a racing heartbeat.

If you're experiencing these symptoms, a mental health day may help you return to your normal mood. You can spend your mental health day practicing peaceful activities, such as yoga, meditation or massage therapy. Experts say reducing anxiety will help you reset and get back on top of things at work or in your personal life.

However, if overwhelming stress and anxiety are preventing you from living your life the way you want, it's best to check in with a doctor, therapist or psychiatrist.

You Get Sick Often

Occasionally getting a nasty cold is normal, but if you keep getting sick all the time, you may be more stressed than usual. According to [Medical News Today](#), chronic stress leads to frequent illness and infections. It's a sign that your overworked brain needs a mental break.

Use a mental health day to slow down, recover and make a plan to improve your health. "Leading a healthful lifestyle that includes exercise, stress management, adequate sleep and proper nutrition can help prevent a range of factors that cause people to keep getting sick," says Medical News Today.

Minor Issues Set You Off

From time to time, it's natural to feel angry in response to certain situations. However, overreacting or getting upset over little things can be triggered by extreme stress and anxiety. Minor issues like a long wait at the post office or running out of milk at home can set you off.

If you're unusually irritable and snapping at coworkers, friends or family, you may benefit from a mental health day. Take a step back from things that are setting you off to release your pent-up energy and emotions. Using a mental health day for a massage, hot bath or anything relaxing allows you to feel better. Take some time to pamper your body and mind.

You Keep Crying

Overwhelming stress can put people on the verge of tears. If you're getting teary or crying more than usual, it's worth taking a day off for mental rest. "Stress may trigger crying jags, sometimes seemingly without warning. Little things unrelated to your stress may leave you in tears.

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Your mental and emotional health might be crashing. A great way to bounce back is to figure out what is causing your high stress levels and manage it in a way that makes the most sense to you. Another option is to speak with a mental health professional to help you heal.