

Resource 2

Definitions of mental health

Mental health is ...

Negative definition of mental health: the concept that mental health is the absence of mental illness or disease.

Positive definition of mental health: the concept that mental health is a state of psychological well-being.

(Coombes, 1998, p. 197)

Mental health is the emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and to survive pain, disappointment and sadness. It is a positive sense of well-being and an underlying belief in our own and others' dignity and worth.

(Health Education Authority, 1997)

Mental health is essentially about how we think and feel about ourselves and about others and how we interpret the world around us. It affects our capacity to manage, to communicate and to form and sustain relationships. It also affects our capacity to cope with change and with major life transitions such as having a baby, going to prison, or experiencing bereavement.

(Mentality, 2003, p. 2)

References

Coombes, L. (1998) 'Mental health' in Chadwick, R. (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Applied Ethics*, San Diego, CA, Academic Press, vol. 3, pp. 197–212.

Health Education Authority (1997) *Mental Health Promotion: A Quality Framework*, London, Health Education Authority.

Mentality (2003) *Briefing 24: Mental Health Promotion – Implementing Standard One of the National Service Framework for Mental Health*, London, Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health.

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