



**MOUNTAIN VALLEY**

# ***Understanding Mental Health: How Our Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors Impact our Lives***

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# ***Why “mental health”?***

## ***In the United States...***

- 23.1% of adults (18+) in the U.S. experienced a mental health condition this past year
- 20.1% of a teens (12-17) in U.S. experienced a mental condition this past year
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for those ages 10-34 in the U.S.

## ***Across the globe...***

- 1 in 8 people (of all ages) experience a mental health condition during their lifetime
- Depression is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of disability worldwide (anxiety is 4<sup>th</sup>)
- 1 person dies via suicide every 40 seconds



# ***What is “mental health”?***

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** *“Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development”*
- **American Psychological Association (APA):** *“Mental health is a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, good behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life.”*

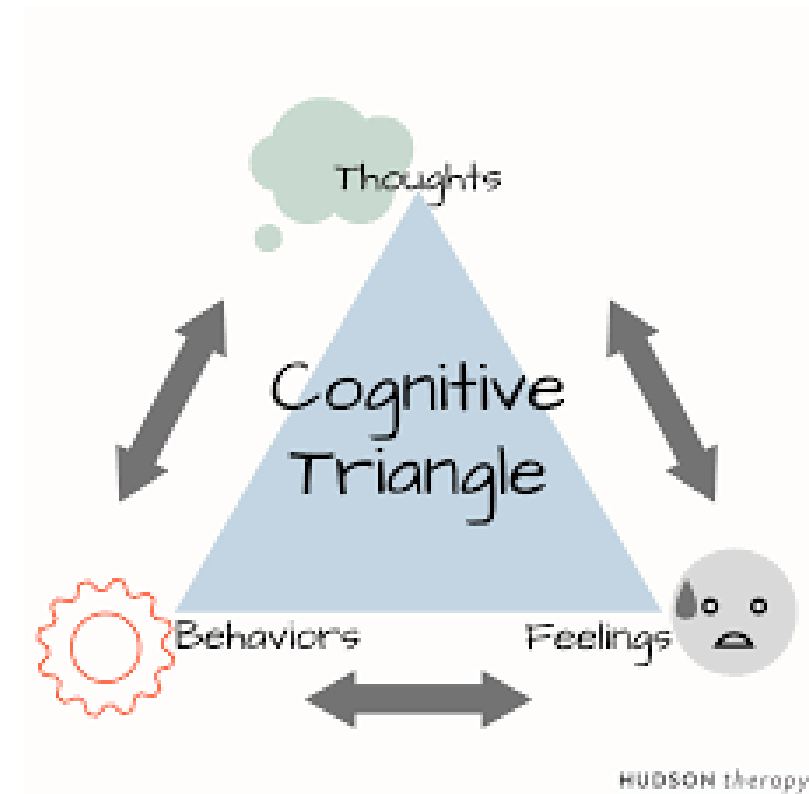
## ***Mental Health is...***

- On a continuum
- Transient, dynamic, and malleable
- Intertwined with physical health

# ***Cognitive Behavioral Theory***

A psychological approach that views *thoughts, feelings, and behaviors* as deeply intertwined and influential over one another.

“What we think...impacts how we feel...how we feel impacts what we do...what we do impacts what we think...what we think impacts...”



# ***What is a “emotion”?***

## **Emotions are...**

- *A physiological response in the body that in reaction to internal or external stimuli is received, interpreted, and labeled by our brains based on context*

## **Emotions include:**

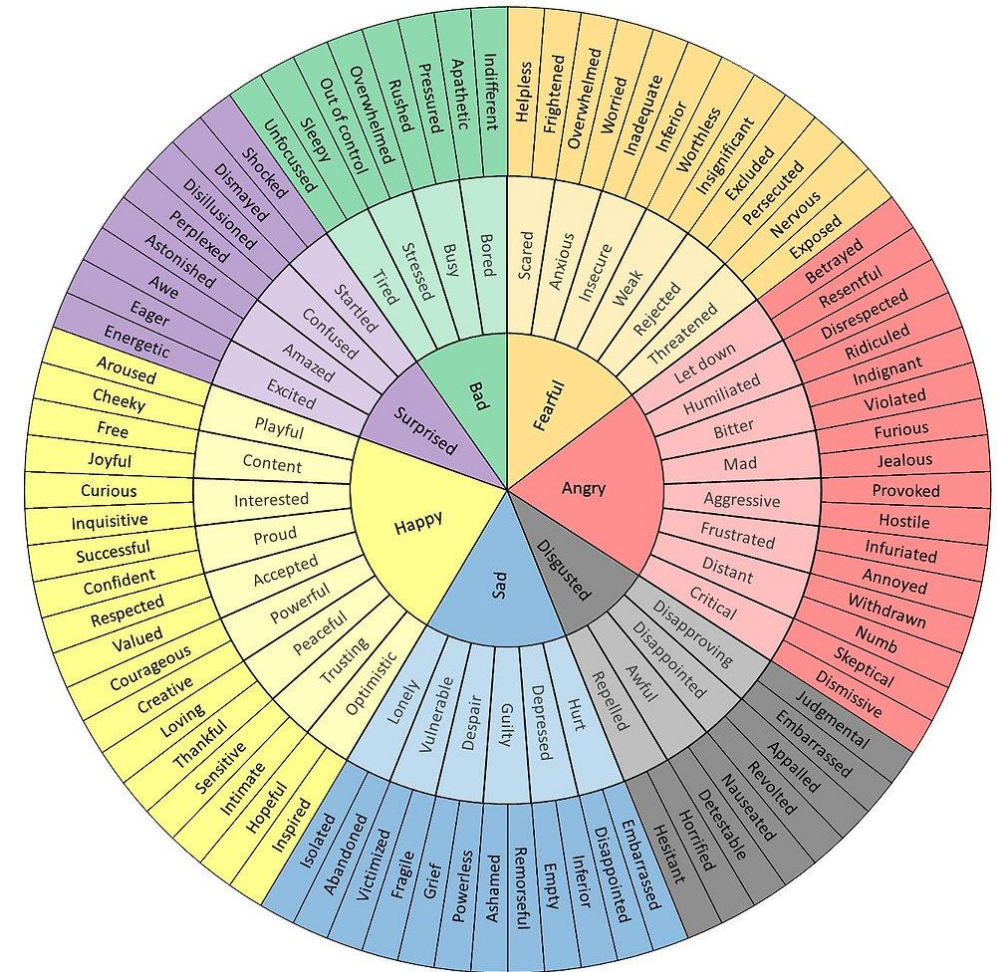
- A subjective experience
- A bodily/physiological response
- A behavior or expression





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- Emotional granularity improves
  - Emotional Regulation
  - The intensity of emotional experiences
  - Stress management and reduction
  - Empathy & connection
  - Decision making



# ***What are thoughts?***

***American Psychological Association (APA):*** “thoughts are mental processes or ideas that occur in the mind, including beliefs, opinions, judgements, and interpretations about oneself, others, and the world.”

- ***Automatic thoughts*** - quick and often unconscious interpretations of an event
- ***Core beliefs*** – deeply seated view points about ourselves, others, the world etc.

## ***Meta-Cognition***

“awareness and understanding of one’s own thought process”

# Common “Cognitive Distortions”



| Distortion                      | Description                                                           | Example                                                      |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>All-or-Nothing Thinking</b>  | Seeing things in black-and-white categories with no middle ground.    | "If I don't succeed completely, I'm a total failure."        |
| <b>Overgeneralization</b>       | Making broad conclusions from a single event.                         | "I failed once, so I'll always fail."                        |
| <b>Mental Filtering</b>         | Focusing only on the negative and ignoring the positive.              | "I got one criticism at work—I'm terrible at my job."        |
| <b>Discounting the Positive</b> | Rejecting or downplaying good things as insignificant.                | "That compliment doesn't count—they were just being nice."   |
| <b>Jumping to Conclusions</b>   | Making assumptions without evidence.                                  | "She didn't text back—she must be mad at me."                |
| → <b>Mind Reading</b>           | Assuming you know what others are thinking.                           | "He thinks I'm stupid."                                      |
| → <b>Fortune Telling</b>        | Predicting the future negatively.                                     | "I just know I'll mess up the interview."                    |
| <b>Catastrophizing</b>          | Expecting the worst-case scenario.                                    | "If I make a mistake, I'll lose my job and end up homeless." |
| <b>Emotional Reasoning</b>      | Believing that feelings reflect objective reality.                    | "I feel anxious, so something bad must be happening."        |
| <b>Should Statements</b>        | Using “should,” “must,” or “ought to” to pressure yourself or others. | "I should always be in control."                             |
| <b>Labeling</b>                 | Assigning global negative traits to yourself or others.               | "I'm a loser." or "He's a jerk."                             |
| <b>Personalization</b>          | Blaming yourself for events outside your control.                     | "It's my fault my friend is upset."                          |
| <b>Blaming</b>                  | Holding others entirely responsible for your problems.                | "I'm miserable because of my partner."                       |

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# ***What are behaviors?***

***American Psychological Association (APA):*** “observable actions of organism interaction with it’s environment”

## ***Behaviors...***

- Are observable and measurable
- Internal or external
- Voluntary or involuntary
- Influenced by internal and external environment

*“Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action.”*

**— Benjamin Disraeli**

# ***The Fundamentals of Mental Health***

## **1) Emotional Regulation**

- Know your emotions
- Label your emotions
- Develop personalized strategies to influence emotional states

## **2) Thought Management**

- Develop awareness of your thoughts
- Create separation from your thoughts
- Challenge your thinking when appropriate

## **3) Establish Core Values**

- Values are our compass
- Values are our anchor

## **4) Lifestyle Habits & Routines**

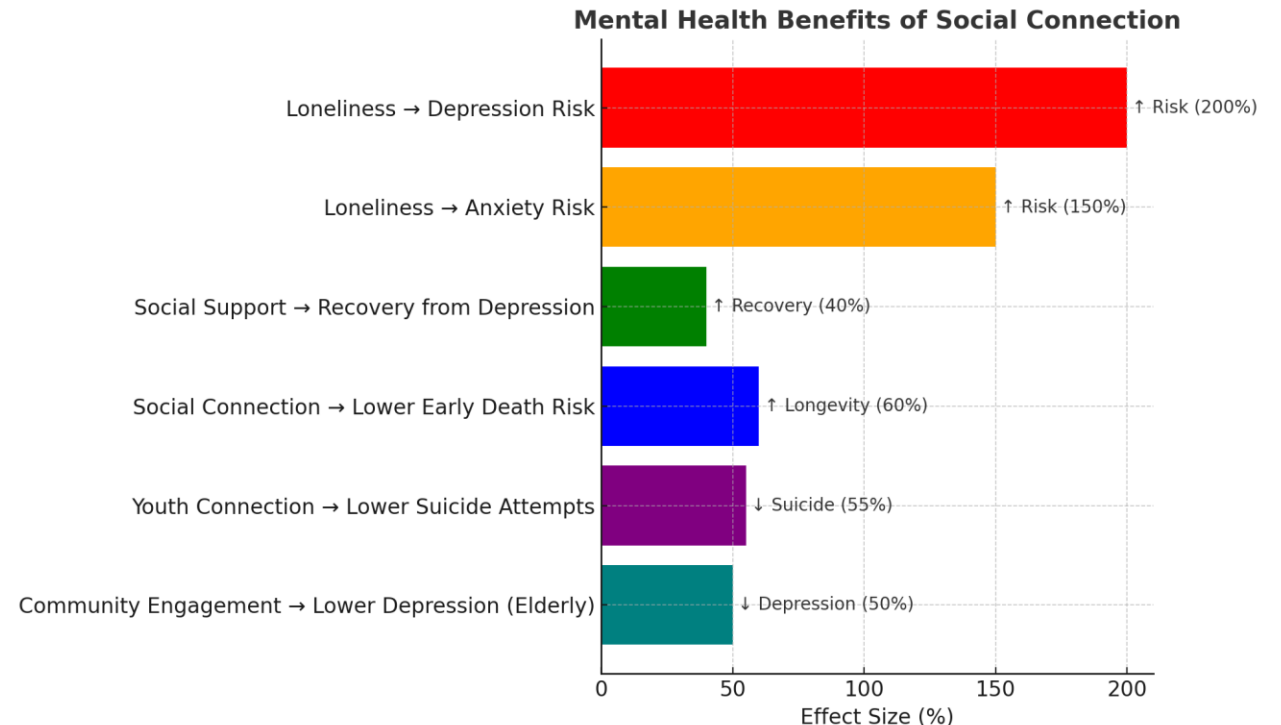
- Address the “Big 3” (sleep, nutrition, and exercise)
- Align routines and lifestyle with your values

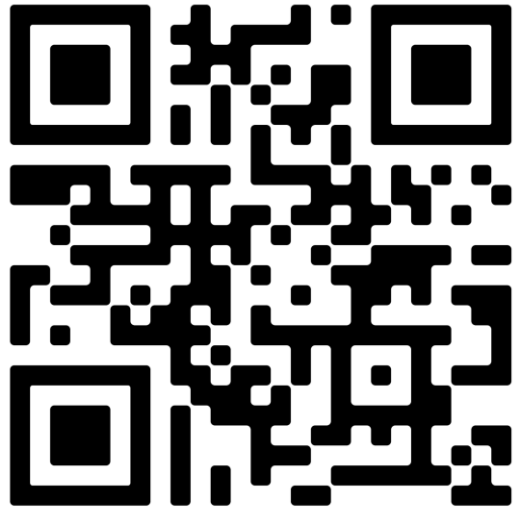
# *The Fundamentals of Mental Health*

## 5) Foster Community and Connection

- Connect to people, places, and things
- Connect to something “bigger than yourself”
- Connection ***promotes*** good mental health and ***prevents*** poor mental health

“Connection is why we’re here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives.”  
— **Brené Brown**





Fear Less Podcast



***THANK  
YOU!***



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