

9. Deal better with hard times

Most of us will face some particularly tough times in our lives, like a loss or divorce. Having ways to cope with these challenges can protect your health and well-being.

Some ways to deal with especially hard times:

- **Tackle problems.** Instead of just worrying, make a list of possible solutions. Pick one and break it into manageable chunks.
- **Get support.** People who've gone through similar situations can offer advice - and a real understanding of how you feel.
- **Write it out.** Writing about an upsetting event can make you feel better. It organizes your thoughts and helps you file the problem away.

10. Get professional help if you need it.

If the problems in your life are stopping you from functioning well or feeling good, professional help can make a big difference.

Some ways to get professional help:

- **Find names of mental health care providers.** You can ask your doctor, friends or clergy. You can also contact your health insurance for a list of providers.
- **Prepare a list of questions** for a possible provider, like "What experience do you have treating my issues?" and "Do you use a particular approach?"
- **Determine your coverage,** if you have insurance. If not, you can ask your local Community Health Center about free or lower-cost services.

TAKE A SCREEN



Mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety, are real, common and treatable. Recovery is possible.

Taking a mental health screening is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition.

Take a screen online today at:
bit.ly/take-a-screen-hawaii

If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis, help is available.

The Crisis Line of Hawaii
Oahu: 832-3100
Neighbor Islands: 1-800-753-6879

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-8255

MHA
Mental Health America
of Hawai'i

1136 Union Mall, Suite 510
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
P 808.521.1846
mentalhealthhawaii.org



10 Practical & Simple TOOLS FOR Mental Wellness

The 10 Tools are based on expert information about how people can better handle challenges and protect their overall health and well-being.

Just by setting aside a small amount of time each day, you can strengthen one of your greatest assets: your mental health.

1. Connect with others.

Humans are social animals. We tend to much better when we feel supported, valued and understood.

Some ways to build connections:

- **Join a book group, hiking club or other group.** To make your entry smoother, consider contacting the group's leader in advance.
- **Enroll in a class.** You and your classmates will already share a common interest.
- **Boost existing connections.** Commit to a certain amount of time with your loved ones each week - without cell phones, iPods or other distractions.

2. Stay positive.

Thinking negatively can drag down your mood and your health. But don't let that worry you. Experts say you can learn to be less gloomy.

Some ways to stay positive:

- **Don't assume the worst.** Our fears often don't materialize. Ask yourself how realistic yours are.
- **Keep a gratitude journal.** Write down anything that makes you smile, like great relationships or special occasions.
- **Remember your achievements.** If you think you'll flop at the office party, remember times when you were outgoing and confident.

3. Get physically active.

Our bodies were built to move, especially when they're pumping out stress-induced hormones.

Some ways to make sure you exercise:

- **Put it in your calendar.** Schedule physical activity as you would any important appointment, and keep it.
- **Work out with a friend.** It's harder to break a commitment to someone else than to ourselves.
- **Literally run your errands.** Try walking a bit faster or further while running errands.

4. Help others.

If you help your neighbor, it's good for them, but it's good for you too.

Some ways to help others:

- **Volunteer with a community organization.** You can make a great contribution while developing your skills and learning more about an area that interests you.
- **Volunteer a smile.** Helping doesn't require grand gestures or huge time commitments.
- **Tell someone what you admire about them.** Even if you think they already know, it's always nice to hear.

5. Get enough rest.

Sleep may seem like a waste when there's so much to do, but you're more likely to succeed at your tasks if you get enough rest.

Some ways to create good nights:

- **De-caffeinate yourself.** Caffeine lasts a long time, so stop about six to eight hours before bed.
- **De-stress yourself.** Turn off daytime worries by finishing any next-day preparations about an hour before bed.
- **Avoid frustration.** If you can't fall asleep after 15 minutes, get up until you feel more tired.

6. Create joy and satisfaction.

Go ahead, kick up your heels or just kick back. Feeling good is good for you.

Some ways to increase joy and satisfaction:

- **Watch or listen to something funny:** Videos of funny dogs, a funny podcast, or stream a comedy show.
- **Do something you loved as a kid.** Run through the sprinklers, hang from the monkey bars, make a mess with finger paints.
- **Identify the high points of your day.** Take note of what gets your "juices" flowing and then try to do those activities more.

7. Eat well.

Our bodies - and our brains - need good fuel to function well.

Some ways to promote good nutrition:

- **Eat regularly.** Skipping meals can make your blood sugar drop, which may leave you nervous or irritable.
- **Snack well.** Sustain your energy - and your ability to resist junk food - by packing healthy snacks like nuts or raisins.
- **Strive for balance.** Your brain needs a variety of nutrients to perform functions that affect your mood and your thinking.

8. Take care of your spirit.

Taking care of your spirit means connecting to whatever you consider meaningful and holy, whether that's God, nature, art or something deep within yourself.

Some ways to connect with your spiritual side:

- **Pray, or focus on your notion of God.** You can worship from a prayer book or from your heart.
- **Meditate.** Connect with your deeper self; find inner peace and balance.
- **Connect with nature.** Spend time outside in nature and consciously connect with it.