



The mental health system's best kept secret: Community mental health

Mental health support that you can get outside of hospitals and doctors' offices has existed for decades, but you might not know about it. It's called **community mental health**, and it supports people's wellbeing **before, during** and **after** medical care.

> Community mental health: the basics



Preventing mental health problems

Community mental health helps keep people from getting sick in the first place. This might include coaching, programs and courses that help people manage their mental health. It can also include campaigns that change attitudes about mental illness, because mental health is simply part of health. Community mental health also means everyone has safe housing, food on the table and enough money coming in, because our basic needs are key to mental health.



Strengthening our mental health

Our bodies are healthier when we eat and sleep well, and exercise. Mental health also needs that same level of care. This means teaching children how to manage feelings and to recognize when they're not doing well. It means that work is a place that protects our mental health and doesn't harm it. It means teaching people how to deal with stress.



Responding to crisis

Community-run crisis and distress lines and mobile crisis teams are trained to help prevent mental health crises. These teams are made up of trained mental health care providers and are dispatched instead of or alongside police.



Alongside medical care

Community-based therapies, supports, and education – delivered one-on-one or in groups, virtually or in-person – can work together with the care you get from a psychiatrist or doctor. They are free and can be led by people with lived experience of a mental illness, or a substance use disorder or addiction.



Keeping people well

People need ongoing care that the current healthcare system isn't set up to offer. That's where social workers, mental health workers, and peer supporters come in. They can provide one-on-one support to help people get well – and stay well. This can include counseling, teaching life skills, and linking people to who and what they need to get better.

>>>>
All of this is "community mental health" and it's key to our mental health.