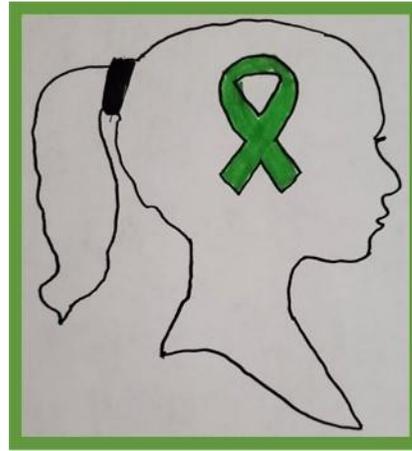




**Having a
healthy
mind is just
as
important
as having a
healthy
body.**



Mental Health Awareness

Everybody wants to take care of their bodies, but few people take active care of their minds. You want your brain to perform at its best. You want to reach your goals. Good mental health and mindfulness can help you do all that.

STEPS:

- Learn what Mental Health means
- Identify symptoms of Mental Illness
- Learn how to care for your Mental Health
- Equip yourself to help others
- Identify Help Resources

Purpose: When I've earned this badge, I will know how to take care of my mental well-being and will be able to identify common signs of mental illness.

Mental Health

Every step has three choices. DO ONE choice to complete each step.
Inspired? Do more!

IS...

ISN'T...

- As important as physical health
- Part of being human
- Something we need to look after
- Something that fluctuates over time
- Worth making time to cultivate
- Impacted by genetics and experiences
- Complex

- The same as mental illness
- Feeling good all the time
- All in your mind
- Something to think about only when it feels broken
- A sign of weakness
- Always something negative
- Constant
- Fake news



Step 1

What is Mental Health

Mental Health is the balance of all of your emotions. It affects how we think, feel, act, and it determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Your mental health affects your physical, emotional, and social well-being. Taking care of it should be a top priority.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

Self-Assessment: Find and complete a mental health self-assessment and see how you score. How did you score according to the assessment rules? Do you think you scored good or bad? Why? Develop one action step to improve your score.

OR -----

Interview a Professional: Interview a mental health professional or talk to your school counselor. Ask them to describe their role as it relates to mental health. Have them explain mental well-being versus mental illness. Ask them what you can do to promote good mental health in yourself and in others.

OR -----

Character List: Create a list of your habits and attitudes. What are your strengths? What are your areas for improvement? When considering your list, think about the kind of person you want to be. Are your current attitudes and habits helping or hindering your future goals?

Step

2 Identifying Mental Illness

A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, or mood. Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the United States. One in every two people and one in every three families will be affected by mental illness. It is important not only to take care of your mental health, but to recognize the signs of mental illness and seek proper treatment. Complete one of these exercises to further your understanding of mental illness.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

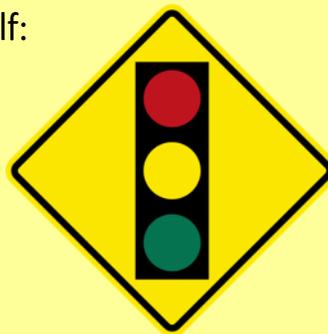
Media Portrayal: Find a book, television show, or movie that portrays a character who battles with mental illness. What challenges does the character face? How did it make you feel? Research the symptoms of mental illness that the character displayed. Do you think it was an accurate portrayal?

OR -----

Explore and Study: Research a specific mental illness and answer the following questions accordingly. How common is it? List three common symptoms. List three possible causes. How can it be treated?

OR -----

Scavenger Hunt: Circle the signs of mental well-being listed in the sidebar. Underline the signs of mental illness. List 3 signs you have observed in yourself:



Positive or optimistic attitude

Frequent interaction with other people

Having unexplained aches and pains

MAINTAINS GOOD HEALTH AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Thinking of harming yourself or others

Eating or sleeping too much or too little

Self-confidence

Having low or no energy

EXPERIENCING SEVERE MOOD SWINGS

Gets satisfaction out of what you do

1. Find a quiet/ comfortable place



2. Equip with music, activities, books, etc.



3. Decorate with calming pictures, encouraging words, calming instructions.



Step 3 Preparing Yourself

An excellent way for preparing yourself for stressful situations is to learn the art of mindfulness. Mindfulness is being aware of your thoughts and emotions and dealing with them in a positive way. This is a very important skill that can be learned, practiced, and developed just like math or soccer.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Calming Corner or Coping Toolbox: Develop a special “safe” place and a helpful collection of tools that can be used when you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed. See the sidebar for some design ideas.

OR -----

Happy Place: Everyone has a place where they feel relaxed, whether that’s the beach or a bookshop, or even an ice cream parlor. When you think of these places you feel calm. This mental hideaway is your Happy Place. Try going there whenever you’re experiencing negative emotions.

OR -----

Breathing Exercises: Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. Try these breathing exercises and keep them in mind for when you need to relax and unwind.

- **Belly Breathing:** Lie or sit comfortably. Place your hands on your belly. Breath in, feeling your hands rise. Breath out, letting your hands fall with your steady breaths.
- **Metronome breathing:** Using a metronome app set to a comfortable rhythm, breath in and out with the beat.

- **Box Breathing:**

Breath IN for a count of 1-2-3-4
HOLD for a count of 1-2-3-4
Breath OUT for a count of 1-2-3-4
HOLD for a count of 1-2-3-4

Step 4

Equipping Yourself To Help Others

Since 1 in 2 people struggle with mental illness, it is likely that you already know someone who may benefit from your newfound knowledge of mental well-being. Being prepared now will give you the tools and the confidence you'll need to help others. There is a lot you can do to help your friends, family, and community.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Pass it along. Teach something you've learned while earning this badge to younger Girl Scouts. Ask your troop leader if you can give a short presentation to your troop about something you find interesting about mental health. Teach them a healthy habit to promote mental well-being.

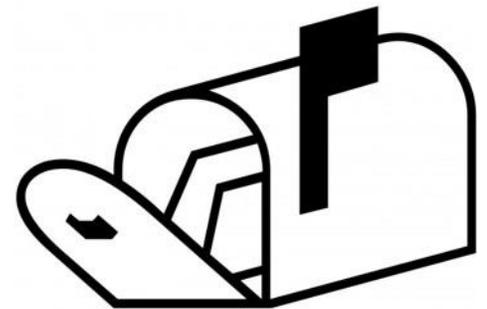
OR - - - - -

Mental Mailbox. Take an old shoe box (or similar container), decorate it as you like, and place it somewhere in your home as a way for your family to share emotions and ideas. Encourage family members to share thoughts, feelings, and encouragements with one another.

OR - - - - -

Brain Breaks. Talk to your teacher about implementing brain breaks in your classroom, such as:

- “Lazy 8’s”-draw an imaginary figure 8 with each arm.
- “Double Doodle”-draw a flower with each hand *at the same time*.
- “Fingers-to-thumb”-tap each finger to your thumb—pinky, ring, middle, pointer, and back again, repeating as quickly as possible. Try both hands at the same time.



Step 5 Identifying Resources for Help

There are many institutions dedicated to mental health. Some are national and some are local. Identifying these resources will help you a great deal if you or someone you know is struggling with mental health. If you have any other questions on the things you've learned working on this badge, here is a chance to expand your knowledge.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Identify 3 local resources that support mental well-being. Create a way to share these resources with your peers.

OR - - - - -

If you want to learn more about a particular mental illness find several resources that elaborate on your chosen area of study.

OR - - - - -

In case of a mental health crisis add an emergency helpline to your phone's contact list. Better yet, memorize it along with 911. This could save your life or someone else's.

National Helplines:

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

LGBTQ TrevorLifeline: 1-866-488-7386

Crisis Text Line: Text NAMI to 741741

NAMI Information Helpline: 1-(800)-950-6264

SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline: 1-877-726-4727





Add the Badge to Your Journeys



Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Developing healthy habits to increase my own mental well-being.
- Educating others about good mental health.
- Lending my time and attention to a service promoting wellness in my community.

I'm inspired to: