

Mental Health Literacy — Workbook

This workbook turns the Mental Health Literacy course into practical tools you can use on yourself and to support others. Each section mirrors a course module, moving from understanding what mental health is, to reading the signs of anxiety, depression, and burnout, to supporting people and navigating care. Work through the exercises honestly, fill in the worksheets, and keep the templates somewhere you will actually return to them. This is an educational resource and not a substitute for professional assessment or care; if you are in crisis, contact 988 (US and Canada), Samaritans at 116 123 (UK and Ireland), or your local emergency number.

What Mental Health Actually Is

Locate yourself on the health continuum, learn to separate ordinary distress from a condition, and map your own contributing factors.

Worksheet: Where Am I on the Continuum

Reflect on the past two weeks and fill in each field honestly. There are no wrong answers; this is a private snapshot to compare against later.

My current state (flourishing / struggling / languishing / in crisis)

Sleep over the past two weeks (hours per night, quality)

Energy level (1 to 10)

Interest and pleasure in things I usually enjoy (1 to 10)

Sense of connection to others (1 to 10)

Sense of purpose or meaning right now (1 to 10)

One thing that is going well

One thing that feels harder than it should

Exercise: Apply the Three Ds

Think of something you have been struggling with lately. Run it through the three filters from the course (duration, distress, dysfunction) to gauge whether it is ordinary distress or worth screening.

- Duration: how long has this lasted, and is that beyond what the trigger would normally warrant?
- Distress: how intense is the suffering on a 1 to 10 scale, and can you shake it off on your own?

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- Dysfunction: is it affecting your work, relationships, sleep, or daily tasks, and how?
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- Based on these three answers, is this ordinary distress, worth screening, or something to take to a professional?
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Worksheet: My Biopsychosocial Map

List the factors currently in play for you across the three domains. Mark each as changeable or fixed. This shows where you have leverage.

Biological factors (sleep, family history, physical health, substances)

Psychological factors (thinking patterns, coping style, self-criticism, past trauma)

Social factors (relationships, work, finances, isolation, recent life events)

Which of these are changeable

Which one changeable factor would help most if I improved it

A small first step toward changing it this week

Reading the Signs: Anxiety, Depression, and Burnout

Use validated screening tools and symptom checklists to recognize anxiety, depression, and burnout in yourself or someone you care about.

Exercise: Self-Screen with GAD-7 and PHQ-9

Look up the free GAD-7 and PHQ-9 questionnaires online (both are public domain). Answer each item for the past two weeks, total your scores, and record them below. Treat the result as a thermometer, not a diagnosis.

- My GAD-7 total and severity band (0-4 minimal, 5-9 mild, 10-14 moderate, 15-21 severe)
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- My PHQ-9 total and severity band (0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-27)
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- How did I answer PHQ-9 item 9 about thoughts of self-harm, and if anything above zero, what is my next step?
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- Which specific symptoms drove most of my score?
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Checklist: Anxiety Across Three Systems

- Physical: I notice racing heart, tension, stomach upset, or sleep trouble
- Cognitive: I notice constant worry, catastrophizing, or expecting the worst
- Behavioral: I am avoiding situations, over-preparing, or seeking reassurance
- My worry is hard to control and happens most days
- The avoidance is making my world smaller over time
- It has persisted for weeks rather than passing with the trigger

Checklist: Burnout Dimensions (Maslach)

- Emotional exhaustion: I feel drained and normal rest no longer restores me
- Cynicism: I feel detached, negative, or callous about work or caregiving
- Reduced accomplishment: I increasingly feel ineffective, like nothing I do matters

- My symptoms are tied to a specific domain (work or caregiving) more than to all of life
- I feel noticeably better on a genuine, extended break
- Cynicism and shrinking weekend recovery have been creeping in for a while

Worksheet: Symptom Tracker

Use this to track key indicators over one to two weeks so you can see trends rather than relying on a single bad day. Re-score the GAD-7 or PHQ-9 weekly if relevant.

Date

Mood (1 to 10)

Anxiety level (1 to 10)

Sleep hours and quality

Energy (1 to 10)

Notable event or trigger that day

What helped, even a little

Supporting Yourself and Others

Practice first-aid conversation skills, build a personal toolkit of evidence-based techniques, and draft your own early-warning plan.

Exercise: Practice the ALGEE Conversation

Think of a real person you are concerned about, or rehearse generally. Plan a supportive conversation using the Mental Health First Aid steps. The goal is to connect and bridge them to help, not to fix or diagnose.

- How and where could you open the conversation privately, with a low-pressure observation?
- Write one non-judgmental, open question you could ask, then a second to go deeper
- What reassuring information could you offer (that help works, that what they feel is common)?
- If you genuinely feared for their safety, how would you ask directly about suicide, in your own words?

Worksheet: My Thought Record

The next time you feel a spike of distress, complete one row of this record. Doing it on paper, not just in your head, is what interrupts the automatic loop.

Situation (what was happening)

Automatic thought (exact words in my head)

Emotion and intensity (0 to 100)

Cognitive distortion at play (catastrophizing, all-or-nothing, mind reading, overgeneralization, emotional

reasoning)

Evidence for the thought

Evidence against the thought

Balanced alternative thought

Emotion intensity now (0 to 100)

Worksheet: My Behavioral Activation Plan

List small valued or pleasurable activities, then schedule them and do them regardless of motivation, rating mood before and after. Action comes first; feeling follows.

Activity (small and specific)

Day and time I will do it

Mood before (0 to 10)

Mood after (0 to 10)

Did the action nudge my mood up? (yes / no / a little)

Checklist: My Daily Maintenance Habits

- I got daylight and some movement today, even a short walk
- I kept a roughly consistent sleep and wake time
- I connected with at least one person
- I kept caffeine and alcohol within limits that help me
- I did one thing that gave me a sense of pleasure or accomplishment
- I checked in with myself for early warning signs

Knowing When and How to Get Help

Match your level of need to the right level of support, prepare for accessing care, and build a crisis plan before you need it.

Worksheet: My Stepped-Care Decision

Use your screening scores and the three Ds to decide where to start. The principle is the least intensive support likely to work, stepping up if it is not enough.

My most recent GAD-7 / PHQ-9 scores and bands

Severity read (mild / moderate / moderately severe / severe)

Any positive answer on the self-harm item? (yes / no)

Step I will start at (1 self-help, 2 low-intensity, 3 therapy, 4 medical, 5 crisis)

Concrete first action for that step

When I will reassess (date) and what would tell me to step up

Checklist: Getting Ready for My First Appointment

- I have noted how long symptoms have lasted and how they affect daily life
- I have my recent GAD-7 / PHQ-9 scores written down to share
- I have listed current medications, alcohol and substance use, and family history
- I have written 2 or 3 questions I want to ask
- I have checked low-cost routes: family doctor, community services, EAP, campus, sliding-scale
- I have booked the appointment or know exactly how I will

Worksheet: My Crisis Plan

Complete this while you are well and share it with one trusted person. It exists so that at your worst you do not have to think clearly, because you already did.

My personal early warning signs that things are becoming a crisis

Things that help me feel safer (people, places, activities)

People I will contact and their numbers

Crisis line: 988 (US/Canada) or Samaritans 116 123 (UK/Ireland)

Local emergency number

Steps to make my environment safer (reducing access to means)

The trusted person who has a copy of this plan

Exercise: Recognize and Rehearse a Crisis Response

Read the crisis warning signs from the course, then rehearse mentally so that if it ever happens, you act rather than freeze.

- List three warning signs that would tell you someone is at immediate risk
 - Write the exact words you would use to ask someone directly if they are thinking of suicide
 - What would you do in the first five minutes (stay, remove means, call 988)?
 - What is one follow-up action for the days after a crisis passes?
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Your Action Plan

1. Take a private baseline: complete the Where Am I on the Continuum worksheet and the GAD-7 and PHQ-9 self-screens, and write down your scores with today's date
2. Run your main current struggle through the three Ds to decide whether it is ordinary distress, worth screening, or worth a professional conversation
3. Fill in your Biopsychosocial Map and pick the single changeable factor that would help most, then take one small step on it this week
4. Track mood, anxiety, sleep, and energy daily for one to two weeks using the Symptom Tracker, and re-score the questionnaires weekly if relevant
5. Choose two body-based regulation techniques (such as box breathing and the 5-4-3-2-1 scan) and practice them so they are ready when you need them
6. Start one tiny behavioral activation activity on a schedule, rating your mood before and after, then gradually add more
7. Identify your personal early warning signs and three protective factors, and put them where you will see them
8. Decide your stepped-care starting point from your scores, and book the first concrete action (for many people, a family doctor appointment)
9. Complete your Crisis Plan and give a copy to one trusted person, including the crisis line and local emergency numbers
10. Reassess in two to four weeks: compare your new scores and tracker to your baseline, and step up your level of support if there has been no meaningful improvement

