

TERMS TO KNOW

If you're thinking about addressing your mental health for the first time, you may come across words that seem simple but you aren't *exactly* sure what they mean. Below is a list of terms used throughout the 2022 "Back to Basics" Mental Health Month Toolkit.

COPING SKILL:

a strategy to help you deal with difficult situations and lessen unpleasant emotions, thoughts, or behaviors

HEALTH INSURANCE:

a signed contract with a health insurance company that requires the company to pay for some of your health care costs

LIVED EXPERIENCE:

first-hand, personal experience dealing with a mental health or substance use challenge

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN:

anything that causes a person to believe their mental health may be suffering; could be a symptom, a group of symptoms, or a diagnosable mental health condition

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION:

a set of related symptoms that have been recognized by the mental health community; includes conditions defined in the DSM-V, ICD-11, and by people with lived experience

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL:

a licensed or certified mental health treatment provider (See mhanational.org/types-mental-health-professionals for a detailed list)

MENTAL HEALTH SCREEN:

an evaluation of your mental health and well-being through scientifically validated assessment tools (Visit mhascreening.org for free, confidential screening tools)

NEUROTRANSMITTERS:

chemicals that carry messages throughout your brain

OUTPATIENT:

treatment that takes place in an office, hospital, or other clinical setting but does not involve overnight stays

PEER:

someone who shares the experience of living with a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder

PROTECTIVE FACTOR:

something that decreases the chances of developing a condition and/or balances out an existing risk factor

PSYCHIATRIST:

a licensed medical doctor who has completed additional psychiatric training; can diagnose mental health conditions, prescribe and manage medication, and provide therapy

RECOVERY:

a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential

RISK FACTOR:

something that increases the chances of developing a condition

SELF-STIGMA:

negative attitudes and shame regarding an individual's own mental health, resulting from internalizing public stigma

SLIDING SCALE PAYMENT:

a payment model providers can use to make treatment financially accessible for those who would not otherwise be able to afford it due to income or lack of health insurance coverage

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH:

the conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play that impact their health and quality of life

STIGMA:

negative, judgmental, and/or discriminatory attitudes toward mental health challenges and those who live with them

STRESS:

a feeling of emotional or physical tension in response to being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental/emotional pressure

SYMPTOM:

a physical or mental feature that indicates the potential existence of a concern, condition, or diagnosis

THERAPIST:

a mental health professional trained to help individuals understand and cope with their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; may assess and/or diagnose mental health conditions

TRAUMA:

an emotional response to a disturbing, scary, or shocking experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope