

Men's Mental Health

SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Penn State Health



Disclaimer

The general views, thoughts and opinions expressed in this presentation are expressly those of the presenter. The presentation is intended to provide general tips, advice and coping skills, and may not entirely pertain to your circumstance or you as an individual in a professional or clinical capacity. For specific advice on your unique situation, please reach out to a licensed financial or clinical professional for a confidential, one-on-one consult. CuraLinc Healthcare and the presenter are not held responsible or liable for any consequences or damages due to an individual taking action based on the information presented herein.

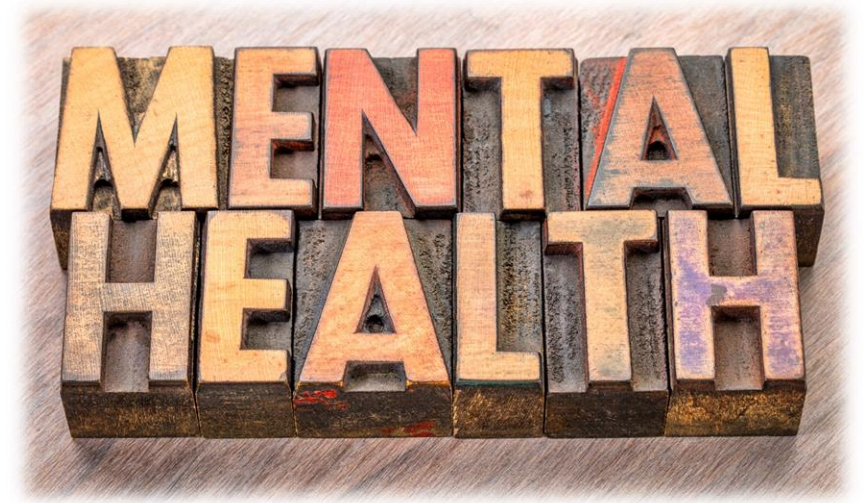
Objectives

This training is designed to help you:

- Understand what mental health actually is
- Identify and respond to barriers to support
- Access resources that can be integrated into your day-to-day life

What people think mental health is:

- Automatic
- Binary
- "It's all in your head!"
- Less important than physical health
- Issues are temporary: if you ignore it, it will go away



What mental health actually is:

A continuum

Awareness and acceptance of feelings

Ability to process emotionally and rationally

Maintaining healthy brain chemical levels

Enhancing neurological functioning

Managing stress

Building resiliency

Having a healthy sense of self and empowerment



Barriers

Toxic
masculinity

"Man up!"

"Boys
don't
cry!"

Power or
control

Lack of
resources

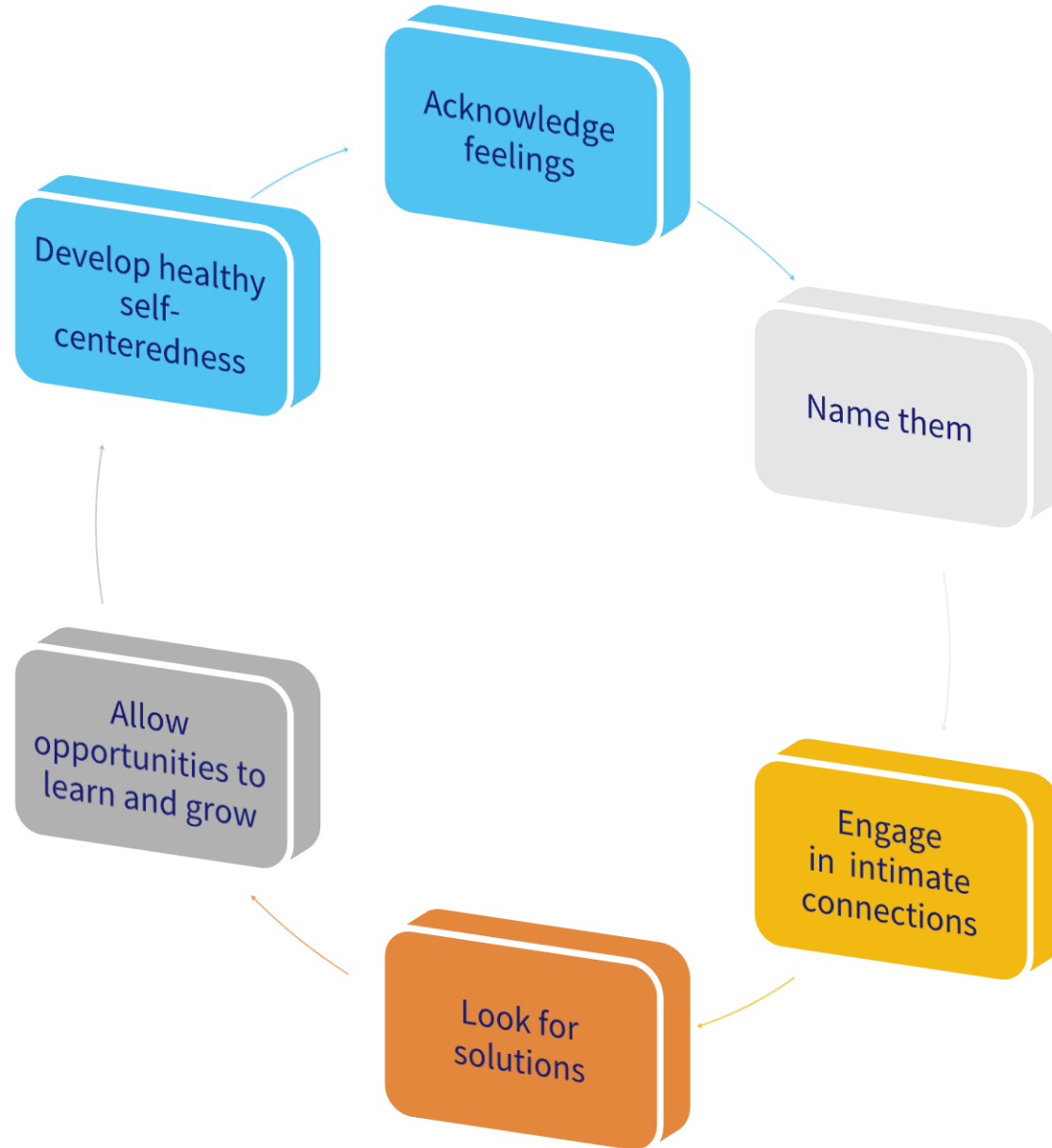
Trauma

Initial response



- ❑ Breathe and check-in
- ❑ **Focus on self-care**
- ❑ Look for healthy role models
- ❑ **Access support resources**
- ❑ Engage in a mental health process

Mental health process

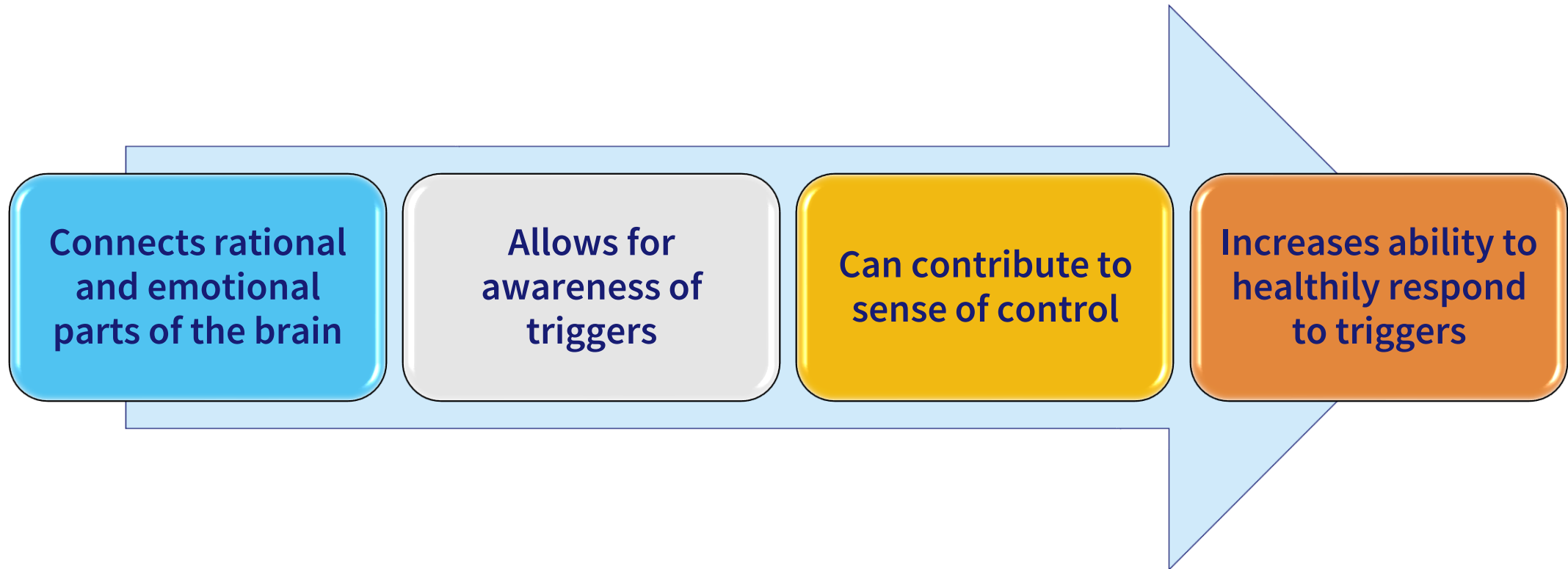


Acknowledge feelings

- Feelings are the only accurate indicator of emotional status
- Feelings are comfortable or uncomfortable: not good or bad
- Absence of feelings can be a sign of denial, suppression or repression
- Absence of feelings can be a trauma response
- More than one feeling can be present at any time
- Anger is a secondary emotion



Name them



Engage in intimate connections

Intimacy is the dynamic of trusting another person and feeling safe enough to be vulnerable.



Look for solutions

Identify the problem (as indicated by uncomfortable feelings)



Be open to feedback and others' ideas



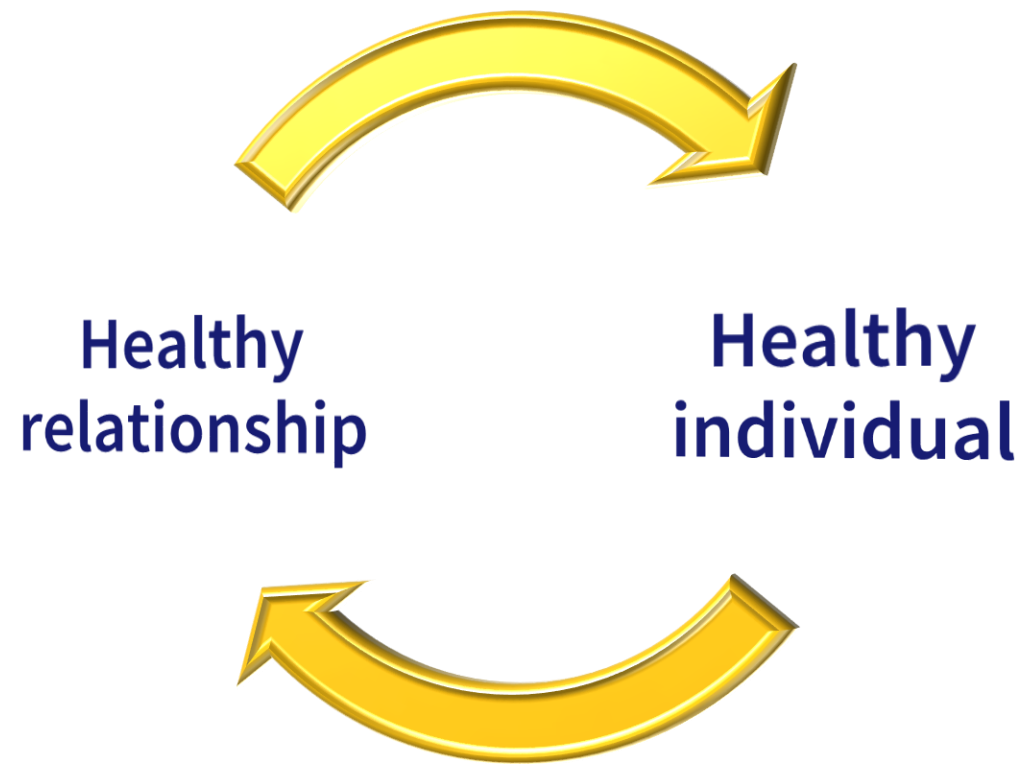
Use feeling check-ins to assess solutions

Allow opportunities to learn and grow



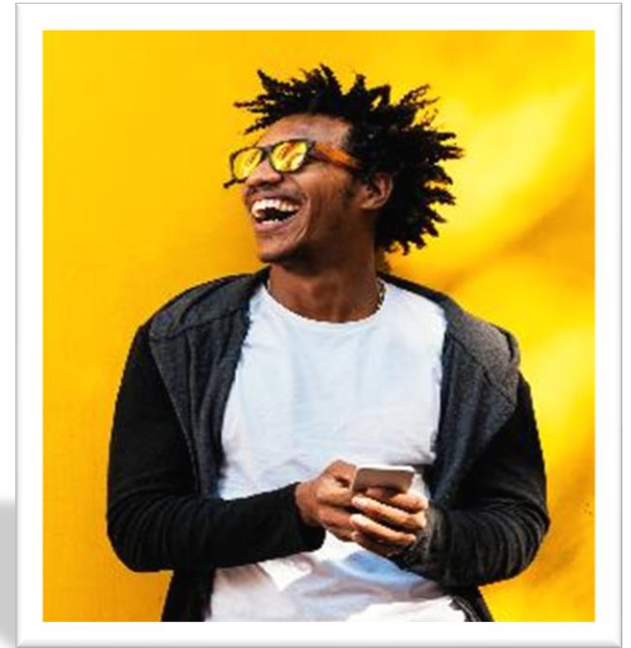
**“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”
- Albert Einstein**

Develop healthy self-centeredness



Signs of success

- Awareness and acceptance of feelings
- Ability to process emotionally and rationally
- Maintaining healthy brain chemical levels
- Enhancing neurological functioning
- Managing stress
- Building resiliency
- Having a healthy sense of self and empowerment



Interactive toolkits

Mindfulness

www.mindfulness.tools

Practical tools and exercises for incorporating mindfulness into everyday life.

Meditation

www.meditate.tools

Easy-to-use collection of resources that includes guided meditations, tip sheets and more.

Resiliency

www.resiliency.tools

Skill development resources to help you 'bounce back' from challenging situations.

Sleep fitness

www.sleepfitness.tools

Information and resources to help you learn good sleep habits and achieve healthy sleep.

What is SupportLinc?

The SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a health benefit, separate from your medical insurance, offered by your employer to help you manage life's daily challenges.

SupportLinc can refer you to professional counselors, services and resources that will help you and your eligible family members resolve a broad range of personal and work-related concerns.

What services are included?

Work-life benefits



Legal consultation

Free in-person or telephonic consultation with a licensed attorney

No employment law



Dependent care referrals

Expert referrals to child and adult/elder care providers, facilities and other resources



Financial consultation

Expert guidance and consultation from financial professionals



“Convenience” referrals

Guidance and referrals to a variety of daily living resources: home improvement, entertainment services, pet care, auto repair, wellness, travel, handymen, volunteer opportunities etc.



Identity theft consultation

Free consultation with an identity theft recovery professionals

Tailored recovery action plan

Getting started



Call: 1-888-881-LINC (5462)



QR Code:



Visit: www.supportlinc.com



Log in or create account
(code: psh)

SupportLinc

Support for everyday issues. Every day.

Additional resources

Men's mental health resources

According to adaa.org, over six million men suffer from depression each year. NAMI reports that around 60% of men experience a traumatic event in their lifetime, while the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) says men are almost four times more likely to die by suicide than women.

Unfortunately, stigma around men's mental health still leads to many not receiving care. Many men feel shame for seeking treatment which can lead to worsening conditions. Learning the signs of mental health concerns in men and understanding when and how to seek help is the first step toward improving men's mental health globally.

Men face unique mental health challenges and might handle common health concerns like illness or headaches differently than women. Here are a few common symptoms to look out for in yourself and others:

- Anger or aggressiveness
- Mood swings or appetite changes
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Feeling distracted or anxious
- Increased stress levels
- Substance use
- Sadness or feeling hopeless
- Bottling up emotions
- Suicidal thoughts
- Feeling numb to your surroundings
- Engaging in activities that put your life at risk
- Aches, headaches or digestive problems seemingly without cause
- Compulsive behavior
- Destructive behavior at work or in relationships
- Other people expressing concern for your wellbeing

While therapy is an excellent option for support, it isn't your only option. Struggling to open up or finding it unhelpful isn't uncommon for men. If therapy isn't for you, but you'd still like to boost your mental health, give these methods a try.

- **Learn your triggers.** Triggers are situations that can cause a painful event from the past to resurface. This can cause anxiety and stress, making moving forward difficult. When this happens, try to pay attention to what caused it. That way, you can mentally prepare yourself the next time you encounter a similar situation.
- **Get creative.** Creativity is vital for work-life balance and can be expressed in many ways. Video games, woodworking, cooking, reading or anything that allows you to explore your creative side can help relieve stress and boost your mood.
- **Spending time outdoors or with a pet.** Getting out into nature or playing with your pet can be a great way to relieve stress and boost your emotional wellbeing. Try getting active by going for a jog or taking your pet outside for a walk or to a park.
- **Healthy food and exercise.** A well-rounded diet is vital for improving brain activity and stabilizing your mood. Exercising regularly gives you an endorphin (a feel-good hormone) boost to keep you feeling your best.
- **Talk to your primary care doctor about your symptoms.** If you have been experiencing symptoms for over two weeks, talk to your doctor or seek support from a psychiatrist. Your mental health is important, so be sure to enlist the help of a professional when necessary.

The tips and ideas above are just a starting point. Pay attention to how you feel and get to know what activities work best for you, keeping in mind that they may change from day to day, and that is okay.

Additional resources

Reducing stigma around mental health conversations

Bringing up the topic of mental health to someone can seem intimidating. You may feel uncomfortable, unsure of what to say or be afraid of offending them. And yet, these discussions are key to reducing stigma and breaking down barriers that keep individuals from seeking support and treatment. Explore some of the tips below for helpful word choices and conversation starters.

- **Ask, “Are you okay?”** Sometimes, asking someone how they feel can open the door to providing support. Rather than immediately asking about a difficult subject matter that may make someone uncomfortable, this simple check-in can help all parties ease into the conversation.
- **Avoid stigmatized word choices.** Choosing words wisely can help with expressing thoughts and ideas respectfully. Certain words and phrases such as “addict,” “crazy,” or “suffering from” have negative connotations that reinforce mental health stigma. Instead, opt for neutral word choices such as “experiencing” or “has a history of.”
- **Say, “I’ve noticed that…”** Open the conversation by explaining behavior changes you’ve noticed. Then, express genuine concern and really listen to the other party’s response. Use the technique of repeating back what you’ve heard to ensure your understanding is clear.
- **Use “person-first” language.** People are not defined by their mental illness. Instead of saying “someone is mentally ill,” which equates person and illness, use person-first language such as “someone has a mental illness.” If you’re not sure what word choices might be best, ask the other person. Follow their lead and ask for their guidance if you have concerns.
- **Show empathy and offer support.** This might seem intuitive, but showing respect, compassion and empathy for someone’s feelings can help them feel understood and be more willing to share. Try responding with phrases such as, “that sounds hard to manage” or “I’m sorry things are difficult right now.” Watch for reactions during the discussion and slow down or back up if the person seems upset or confused.

The 1 in 5 campaign focuses on normalizing the need for mental health resources and removing stigma for those who want to access care. Increasing comfort and confidence with talking about mental health concerns is key to reducing stigma. Visit the 1 in 5 website at www.1in5.info to explore a variety of helpful resources including flash courses, educational tip sheets, a mental health self-assessment, external links to podcasts and more.

For further resources, please go to your portal and use the search bar to type in “Building Better Mental Health Flash Course”, “Challenging Negative Thoughts Flash Course”, “Healthy Living: Strategies to Improve Your Overall Wellbeing Flash Course”, “Healthy Relationships Flash Course”, “Mental Health First Aid Basics Flash Course”, “Preventing Burnout Flash Course”, “Self-Care Strategies for Emotional Wellbeing Flash Course”, “Stress Management Flash Course”, “Suicide Awareness Flash Course”, “Time Management Flash Course”, “Understanding Anxiety Flash Course”, “Understanding Depression Flash Course”, “When It’s Time to Seek Support Flash Course”, and “Work-Life Balance Flash Course.”

Moving ahead



What did you get out of today's presentation?

Which concepts are working in your life and why?

Who can be a support for you to make change?

Which concepts are *not* working in your life and why?

What 3 ideas are going to be the most helpful for you?

How can you support someone else with change?

What can you do in the next 24 hours to apply these concepts?

What are your biggest barriers for change?