

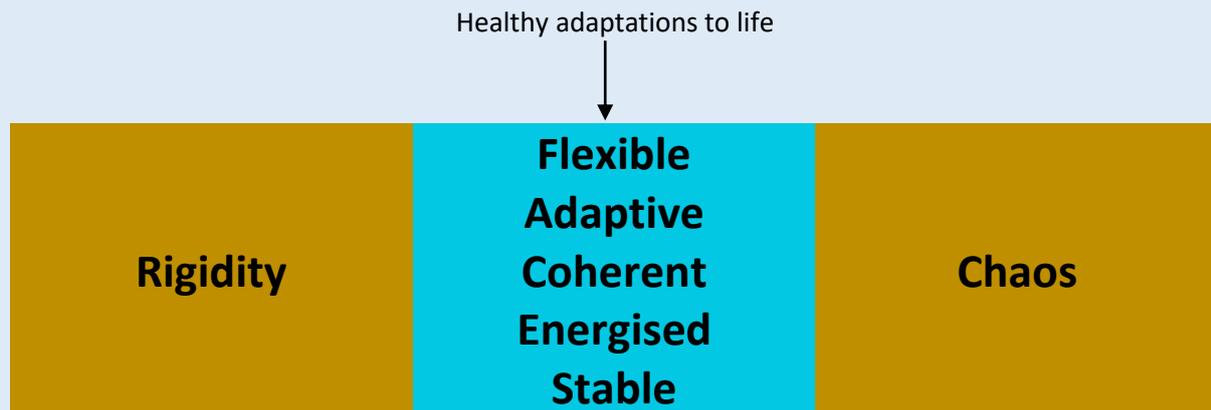
## Will Mental Health Week 2017

### Mental health V Mental Illness

Often the focus of Mental Health Week is the identification of illness and directions on how to get help. This is an important part of recognition of the problem, acceptance of human variance, and motivation to move towards health.

The focus of our mental health week is the promotion of well-being.

Daniel Siegel's work: **The River**



**The concept is if we stay in the blue part, the river, we will avoid rigidity and chaos. Of course in the human experience, when we are stressed we all regress to our underlying tendency of rigidity or chaos, or both. Flexibility, adaptiveness, coherence, energised and stable states are higher functioning states that are difficult to access once we become stressed.**

It seems it is far more important to talk about the maintaining of well-being and what it is to live life in a way where mostly you feel energised and well.

The adequate maintenance of mental health consists of the following behaviours:

- **Regular exercise (particularly aerobic activity – a 30 min walk a day can make a difference)**
- **Healthy relationships (honest sharing and emotional support from others)**
- **A sense of identity**
- **A sense of security = can I see security in the foreseeable future**
- **Good nutritional intake (avoidance of super loaded foods e.g. fats, salts, sugars)**
- **A sense of purpose, work, and creativity (participating in things that bring a sense of joy)**
- **Effective stress reduction when necessary**
- **An ability to deal with life on life's terms (an ability to stabilise ourselves when things don't go as planned)**
- **Physical health (physical is a blessing to us, some of us need more maintenance and attention in this area than others)**

It is far more important for us as individuals, to be able to identify the way we care for ourselves, (effective self-nurturing and love) than it is for us to be able to identify mental health symptoms. We can identify markers that we are moving away from mental health. Why be an expert on breakdowns when they can be avoidance through preventative maintenance? Healthy people are constantly developing their resilience to deal with the inevitable changes in life and grief, loss, or

trauma that may emerge. We will all at some stage in our lives be blindsided by things we didn't expect.

As you'll see in the following information, the most effective way to deal with mental health symptoms is effective reduction in stress and move towards healthy living, in order to stabilise ourselves.

Depending on the way we have developed in the world, our attachment to our caregivers, the stress in our normal everyday lives, and the trauma we have experienced we all develop personality traits and ways of being in the world.

Some of us will need to pay extra attention and put in extra effort in order to stabilise ourselves. In this there is a certain level of unfairness as many of us are not responsible for the hand we're dealt. Our responsibility is what we do now in order to develop our path forward. There will be some of us who will need to develop extra awareness in the areas of getting our attention needs met, dealing with timetable and planning, regulating our moods/emotions and regulating our behaviours. There will be others who just seem to have natural resources and need to pay less attention to these things. There are those who have a life gift of natural resilience. Others will need to work harder for it. Developing a sense of well-being seems to have much to do with understanding your own ability to deal with stress, recognising your own thought processes should one become stressed, and developing a story or a narrative about your life in order to understand yourself and be able to share that story with others. It's through acceptance of self and acceptance from others that identity is developed. Wellness and a sense of well-being do not seem to be bestowed upon us, it is something that comes and goes from life. Our work as individuals is about developing effective self-nurturing and re-stability when we are pushed away from balance. Balance seems for many of us to be something we strive for, it does not seem to be human experience to attain it. It's an area where we progress not necessarily achieve.

#### Why Mental Health Week is important?

In any given year 20% of the population is experiencing mental health issues, 45% in their lifetime. Mental Health Week is the perfect time to have an open discussion on mental health. Mental health week is an opportunity to gain more understanding of mental health issues. It is a yearly reminder to check up on friends, family, and peers/co-workers. Mental health week is a prompt to connect with the people around us and see how they are doing. Questions such as 'How are you going? Would you like any help/support?' can let the person know you care and are keen to help. You don't have to have all the answers to their problems, just being there for someone and showing you care is extremely helpful. You should not neglect your own mental health. Questions such as 'How am I feeling? Have I been looking after myself? Are there any stressors in my life, and what help can I access?' can help you to check in with yourself. If you feel like some help/support, please reach out to someone you can talk to like family, friends, doctors, counsellors and helplines.

#### **Helplines:**

Lifeline 13 11 14

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Headspace Ipswich (07) 3280 7900

Address: 26 East St, Ipswich QLD 4305