



Mental Health Awareness

What to Look For and How to Respond

Mental health plays a vital role in how we think, feel, and act every day. Just like physical health, it can be influenced by stress, life events, work demands, and the support we have around us. Learning to recognize common symptoms can help you understand when you—or someone you care about—may benefit from additional support or resources. The following are common signs to watch for:

Stress:

- Feeling overwhelmed or constantly under pressure
- Trouble sleeping or persistent fatigue
- Irritability, frustration, or mood swings
- Headaches, muscle tension, or stomach issues

Anxiety:

- Ongoing worry, racing thoughts, difficulty relaxing
- Restlessness, tension, or feeling “on edge”
- Rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath
- Avoiding situations due to fear or discomfort

Depression:

- Persistent sadness, emptiness, hopelessness
- Losing interest in activities once enjoyed
- Difficulty focusing or making decisions
- Noticeable changes in sleep or appetite

Trauma Responses:

- Intrusive memories, nightmares, or flashbacks
- Feeling emotionally disconnected, or “shut down”
- Heightened alertness or being easily startled
- Trouble sleeping, concentrating, or staying present

Burnout:

- Emotional, physical, or mental exhaustion
- Loss of motivation, enthusiasm, or engagement
- Reduced productivity or feeling less effective in the workplace or at home

Mental Health Looks Different for Everyone. Symptoms of emotional distress can vary widely based on culture, age, identity, and personal experiences. Understanding these differences promotes empathy and helps create a more supportive USPS workplace.

- Some cultures express emotional distress through physical symptoms like pain, fatigue, or headaches.
- Children may show stress through behavior changes, irritability, or withdrawal.
- Older adults may focus on physical discomfort, memory issues, or sleep problems vs emotional language.
- Cultural norms and personal experiences influence how people discuss mental health or seek support.

Mental health symptoms can look different for everyone, and being aware of these differences helps us respond with respect, understanding, and compassion. If you or someone you know is struggling or feeling overwhelmed, the EAP is here to help—support is always available.