

5 Signs Your Mental Health Is Trying to Tell You Something



When we think of a mental health crisis, we often imagine it hitting like a car crash. Loud, obviously traumatic, and completely paralyzing. But, as we've discussed before, [mental health exists on a sliding scale, and just because we're not in obvious collapse doesn't mean we're not struggling](#). In fact, our bodies and brains often signal trouble long before any (metaphorical) four-car pile-up.

Those signals might show up as a bad night's sleep or an ice cream binge — sort of like an internal “check engine” light. Though easily dismissed, they're here to let us know that something is off with our mental health. The sooner we address those misfires, the better chance we have of preventing further damage down the line.

These are five of the more common signs that your mental health needs some attention, and a few simple ways to respond before a full-on system breakdown.



1

YOU'RE RUNNING ON EMPTY

The sign: You're exhausted, but even a good night's sleep doesn't recharge your battery. Everyday activities like answering texts feel like they need a full strategy meeting. This is your low fuel light going off.

Try this:



The 10-minute rule — Show up for something you've been dodging, like organizing files or going to the gym, and give it ten minutes. If ten minutes go by and you're not feeling it, take the exit ramp.



One pass — Pick one thing on your to-do list you've been dreading (e.g., laundry) and just drop it. You don't have to fix everything at once, and you can always double back to it later.



Nature micro break — [Step outside](#) and use this mindfulness exercise to recharge: See = look at three distinct things. Hear = listen for two unique sounds. Feel = identify one internal sensation or emotion.

2

YOU'RE STALLED IN A HOPELESS FOG

The sign: You have a full tank and a clear idea of where you'd like to go, but it feels pointless to even start the drive. It's less about having a pessimistic view of the road ahead, and more about having run out of purpose.

Try this:



Add the word "yet." — When your thoughts tell you things are pointless through phrases like, "The team never goes with my ideas," or "I can't figure out this new software", try hitching a "yet" to the end. "The team hasn't gone with one of my ideas...yet." "I can't figure this software out...yet." It reminds your brain that present challenges don't dictate future growth, and what's hard today can become easier tomorrow.



Find your fine — Jot down three things that just went fine today. There was no traffic on the way to work. The barista didn't burn your coffee. This helps your mind shift lanes and remember that for every traffic jam, there are dozens of quiet roads running smoothly.

3

THERE'S NO JOY IN YOUR JOYRIDE

The sign: You're doing what you usually love, but it's falling flat. The pickup pickleball game feels empty; the outdoor hikes don't inspire like they used to. It's like you're moving forward just fine, but your radio is stuck spitting out boring white noise.

Try this:



Kid around — Do something you loved when you were ten years old. Fill in a coloring book. Break out the LEGO set. Forget mastery. [Just try to rekindle that childlike joy.](#)



Play the waiting game — Plan something small this week, like going to the movies or trying that new hotpot restaurant. Putting a date on the calendar builds expectation and anticipation, which can breathe life back into your routine.



4

YOUR APPETITE IS ON AUTOPILOT

The sign: You're either forgetting to eat entirely, or you keep reaching for food whenever you're stressed. [Eating habits are both strong indicators and influencers of our mood.](#) Intentional eating is one of the most accessible ways to impact mental wellbeing.

Try this:



Check the why — Before you reflexively grab those potato chips, ask yourself: Am I hungry, or just bored/anxious/tired? If it's the latter, take a sip of water or a quick [activity snack](#) to help shake the craving.



Anchor your day — Aim for consistent, scheduled, daily eating moments. They can be breakfast, lunch, or dinner, but snacks count too. Even a scheduled granola bar break at 10 a.m. can anchor an erratic eating schedule and get you back on track.

5

YOU'RE NODDING OFF BEHIND THE WHEEL...OR NOT NODDING OFF AT ALL

The sign: Can't fall asleep because your brain won't quiet down? Do you sleep ten hours but wake feeling like you've been hit by a Mack Truck? Ever doze off at inappropriate times? [Sleep disruptions or disturbances are one of the most common signs of underlying mental health conditions.](#)

Try this:



The 20-minute rule — If you wake in the night and can't get back to sleep, don't lie there trying for more than 20 minutes. Instead, get up and leave your bedroom. Avoid screens and look for calming distractions: read a physical book or do some light meditation in dim light until you feel sleepy again. This keeps your bed from becoming a stress zone.



Morning light — Within an hour of waking, get 10 to 15 minutes of direct sunlight. It gets your internal clock back in sync. And unlike that UV lamp, it's entirely free.

By responding in real-time to common mental health signals like these, you'll be making small changes that can help avoid a full-blown "car crash" crisis down the road.

And remember that you never have to make this drive alone. Concern offers support for every stop on your wellbeing road trip, including coaching, work-life resources, and counseling that work individually or in tandem to help you steer clear of—or more quickly recover from—mental health collisions.

For customized tools and resources, visit Concern's Digital Hub by logging in to employees.concernhealth.com, and selecting the "Get Services" button in the upper right menu.

This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice.

If you find your level of stress is impacting your wellbeing, you can contact us for additional help and support.

Call: 800.344.4222
employees.concernhealth.com