

Section I: Foundations of mental health education and literacy

Welcome to Unit 1

In this unit, we will explore the key principles of mental health literacy, the nature of mental health and well-being, and the impact of stigma.

This module as a whole is designed for adult and community-based educators who want to create inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Section I: Foundations of mental health

education and literacy

What is mental health?

Mental health refers to a state of well-being where individuals can cope with normal stresses, work productively and contribute to their community.

It is more than the absence of mental illness, but rather, it includes emotional, psychological and social well-being.

Section I: Foundations of mental health

education and literacy

Principles of mental well-being

The principles of mental well-being include:

- ✓ Emotional resilience
- ✓ The ability to form positive relationships
- ✓ Self-awareness
- ✓ The capacity to manage feelings.

These can be supported through education, community connection and access to services.

Section I: Foundations of mental health

education and literacy

Understanding mental health literacy

Mental health literacy is the knowledge and beliefs that enable recognition, management or prevention of mental health problems.

This literacy helps to support individuals to understand their mental health and support others effectively.

Educators with high mental health literacy can create psychologically safe spaces most effectively.

Section I: Foundations of mental health

education and literacy

The importance of mental health literacy

According to WHO, low mental health literacy is a barrier to early intervention.

Educators can play a very important role in improving access to information, reducing stigma and signposting learners to support services where they have the mental health literacy to recognise an adult learner in distress.

Section I: Foundations of mental health

education and literacy

Common mental health conditions

Some common mental health disorders include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Bipolar disorder



Click the links to
find out more
about each mental
health condition

Symptoms may vary but often affect mood, behaviour and functioning.

Risk factors include trauma, social isolation, poverty and discrimination.

Section I: Foundations of mental health

education and literacy

Stigma and misconceptions

Mental health stigma can prevent people from seeking help.

This type of stigma can stem from fear, misinformation and cultural beliefs.

Educators can help to challenge stigma through respectful language, inclusion and sharing stories of recovery.