



ALLARD SCHOOL OF LAW

CONTINUUM
MODEL OF
MENTAL
HEALTH

The Student Wellbeing Program

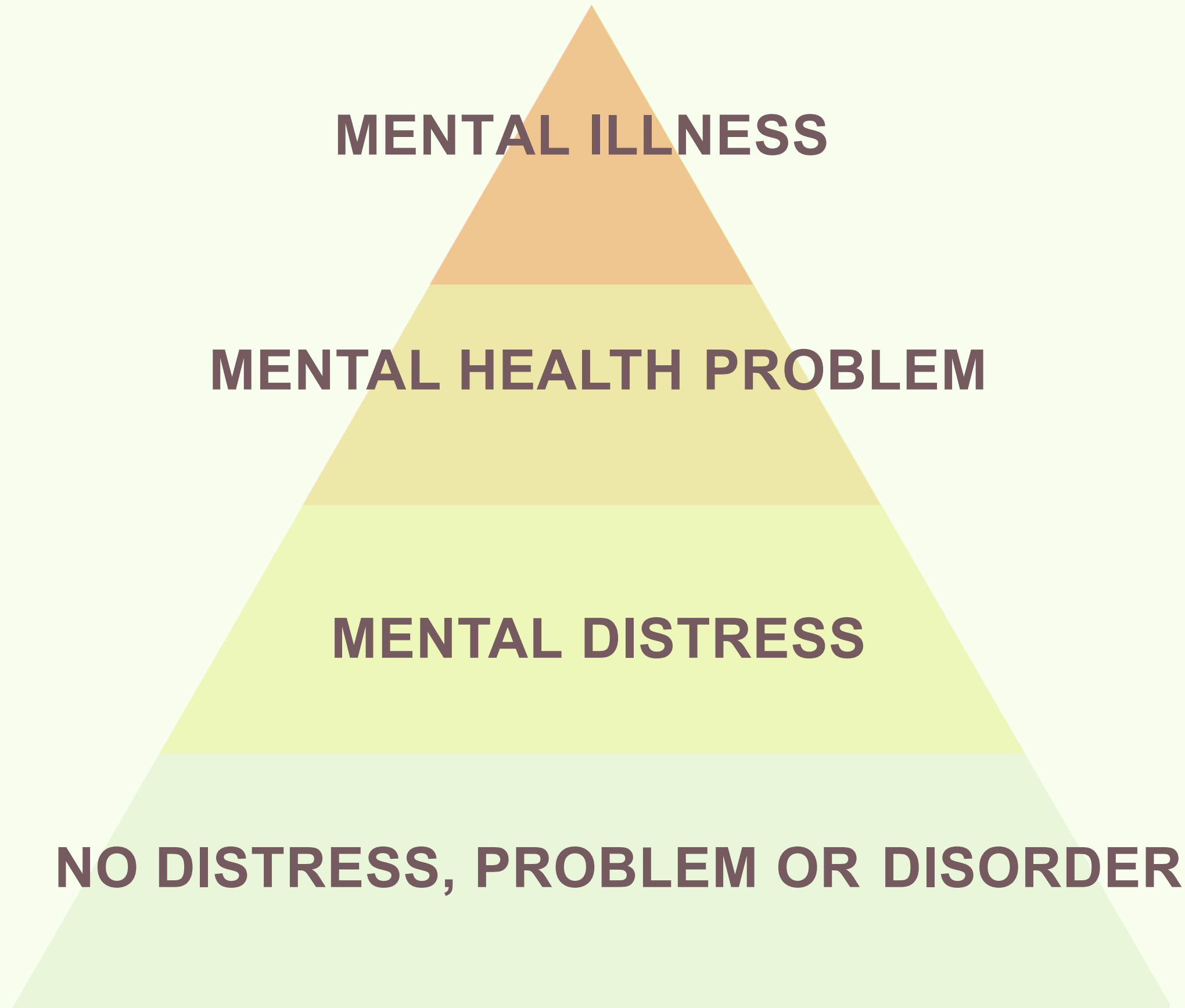


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CONTINUUM MODEL OF MENTAL HEALTH

- Defines “mental health” as neutral term – good mental health to mental illness range
- Important as it helps to normalize that human experience comes with challenges and it’s very normal to experience discomfort and stress from challenges without a clinical diagnosis.
- Validates normal human responses without pathologizing normal responses, and that there are a range of symptom intensity, eg. can be feeling depressed without a diagnosis of depression.



NO DISTRESS, PROBLEM OR DISORDER

**HEALTHY EATING, MAINTAINING WELLNESS, IMPROVING
STUDYING SKILLS**

A place of good mental health. It's important to remember that “no distress” doesn't mean not feeling sad, unhappy, annoyed, angry, etc. Often the ability to experience a full range of negative and positive emotions is an indication of good mental health.

MENTAL DISTRESS

RELATIONSHIP BREAKUP, FAILED EXAM, GRIEF, ACADEMIC STRESS,
ROOMMATE/FRIENDSHIP CONCERNS, TRANSITION AND RELOCATION,

Mental distress occurs when the brain signals to us that we have a problem or stressor in our environment that we have to deal with, eg. studying for an exam, going on a first date. This signal in our brain tells us we need to adapt in order to solve the problem, eg. you are late for your morning class. Your brain signals that this is distressing and that you need to figure out how to solve this. The next morning, you might set your alarm earlier or catch a bus instead of walking. You adapt!



MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

PANIC ATTACKS, SUICIDAL THOUGHTS, HEARING VOICES,
ISOLATION, THOUGHTS OF HURTING OTHERS, FAMILY VIOLENCE

Occurs when a substantial emotional, mental, or behavioural difficulty (or all three) causes you significant life challenges and usually requires you to invest lots of resources including help from friends, family or people you trust. These also elicit a stress response and this stress response is also normal. It can look like: Not being able to fulfill day-to-day tasks, significant change in sleep or eating patterns, not feeling like yourself for a sustain period of time, high emotional reactivity. It is important to seek professional mental health support when the impact of stressors are sustained and significant.



MENTAL ILLNESS

BIPOLAR DISORDER, GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER, MAJOR
DEPRESSIVE DISORDER, SCHIZOPHRENIA, ANOREXIA,
BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Means you've received a diagnosis from a professional mental health provider and are currently trying to manage the symptoms.

It's important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive. They are all aspects of mental health and can be experienced at the same time.

An individual can have Generalized Anxiety Disorder, grieve the loss of a family member, feel distressed for not making a team, and enjoy watching a movie with friends all in the same day. We can move from level to level depending on circumstances.