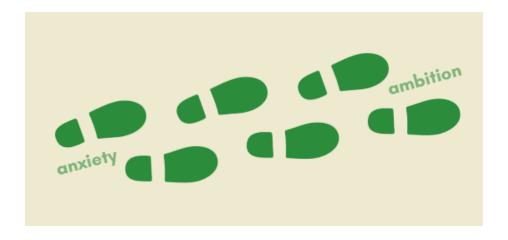# THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

by Stacy Feiner, PsyD
Article

The Mental Health Continuum: We are all on it.

Understanding the Continuum
Our mental well-being lies on a continuum shaped by our outlook on life, personality traits, and biochemistry. This continuum captures the natural ebb and flow of our mental health. For example, when balanced, we seek out developmental opportunities like mentorship, training, and enriching friendships. These proactive efforts drive personal and professional growth.

Therapy Lifts You Back to Baseline
When stress levels rise beyond manageable limits, our well-being can drop significantly below baseline, leading to distress. Persistent feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, or depression mark this phase. Therapy helps individuals navigate these challenging periods. Therapists support clients by helping them understand and address underlying issues causing distress. They provide tools and strategies to restore mental balance and improve overall well-being.

Coaching Elevates You to a New Baseline
On the other end of the continuum, we push our limits when driven by the tension to achieve new goals and reach higher performance levels. Ambition, restlessness, and a desire for self-improvement characterize this state. Coaching plays a role during this phase. Coaches work with clients to set and achieve specific goals, expand emotional capacity, and develop strategies for increasing bandwidth. They focus on leveraging strengths and overcoming obstacles to elevate performance and reach new benchmarks of success.

Conclusion
Both therapy and coaching play essential roles in maintaining and enhancing mental well-being. Therapy addresses distress and restores mental balance, while coaching ensures individuals push boundaries and achieve personal or professional growth. Understanding these differences empowers individuals to make informed decisions about the support they need along their mental health continuum. Remember, it's not all or nothing. It's both.