

# HD Awareness Continuum

*“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”  
- Hamlet by William Shakespeare*

The human brain invokes behaviors it believes necessary to remain safe (to survive). Rather than thinking of the below markers as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, consider them as indicators of the brain learning, evolving and acting to keep the individual ‘safe’ - in the moment. The markers are functions of the body, mind and heart that move an individual away from threat or pain and towards a state that serves them in the short term (for survival). However, if these functions continue on a regular basis, will they also serve the individual in the long term?

This continuum looks at various physiological, emotional and behavioral markers that when observed by the individual or third party, may invite introspection or compassionate enquiry. It is in becoming aware of these markers existence that an individual can take action to prevent degradation of function to unsafe levels, and instead move from Distress to Calm. The context (both personal and professional) is essential to determine if these markers are significant. Markers are significant if they represent a deviation from a mean (normal) state of being for the individual.

	Calm	←	←	←	Distress
<b>Feelings/Mood</b>	Resilient Self Compassion Arousal awareness and control More happy than not	Appropriate mood fluctuations Patience Contextual flexibility Calm and confident	Sadness Impatient Nervousness Irritable	Pervasive sadness Self loathing Rigidity Anger	Depression Blunt and numb mood Excessive anxiety Easily enraged
<b>Demeanor/Thoughts</b>	High respect for others Good sense of humor High emotional intelligence Self agency	Responsive to others Concentrate and focus on tasks Manages anxiety Takes things in stride	Reactive to others Indecisiveness Occasional intrusive thoughts Displaced sarcasm	Disinhibited Constantly distracted, cannot focus on tasks Recurrent intrusive thoughts Decreased motivation	Highly reactive Thoughts of self-harm/suicide or harming others Consuming intrusive thoughts Overwhelmed
<b>Performance/Behavior</b>	Highly motivated Passionate about work Regular meaningful connection Superior cognitive functioning Steady hands always Strong impulse control	Consistent high performance Present and active at work Socially active High focus and problem solving Nerves in the moment Responsible risk taking	Low motivation Procrastination Decreased social activity Lapses in memory focus and problem solving Slight, occasional tremors Occasional negative risk taking	Decreased performance Presenteeism Relationship troubles Memory, focus and problem solving compromised Regular tremors with some impact on activities Impulsive	Can't perform duties/tasks Absenteeism Withdrawal/isolation Impaired cognitive functioning Significant shaking and/or prevents normal activities Unmitigated risk taking
<b>Physiology</b>	Protective of sleep routine Energized by challenges Physically healthy and fit Positive use of food to fuel body and mind	Good sleep quality and quantity Feeling energetic Weight stability Informed food choices	Trouble sleeping Some lack of energy Weight fluctuations (loss or gain) Poor eating/nutrition habits	Disturbed sleep Physical fatigue, low pain threshold Malaise Loss of appetite	Unable to fall or stay asleep/exhaustion Physical illness Excessive unexplained weight gain/loss No appetite or binge/overeating
<b>Substance Use</b>	Very limited/nil alcohol consumption No addictive behaviors No substance use	Alcohol consumption within national guidelines Limited addictive behavior No trouble/impact due to substance use	Regular alcohol consumption, occasional binge drinking Regular addictive behavior Occasional trouble/impact due to substance use	Dependent on alcohol to cope, regular binges Regular loss of control of addictive behaviors Regular and/or moderate impact due to substance use	Frequent drinking, including binges Addiction Frequent and serious impact due to substance use
<b>Burnout</b>	Symptoms in blue font above Predisposing personality trait: PERFECTIONISM		Defined as:	* Exhaustion * Loss of empathy towards service recipients or cynicism directed toward one's job * Reduced professional accomplishment	

## If you need help, please call:

<b>Emergencies</b> 911	<b>SAMHSA</b> 1800 985 5990
<b>Mental Health America</b> 988    mhanational.org	<b>Veteran Crisis Line</b> 988 (Press 1)    veterancrisisline.net

