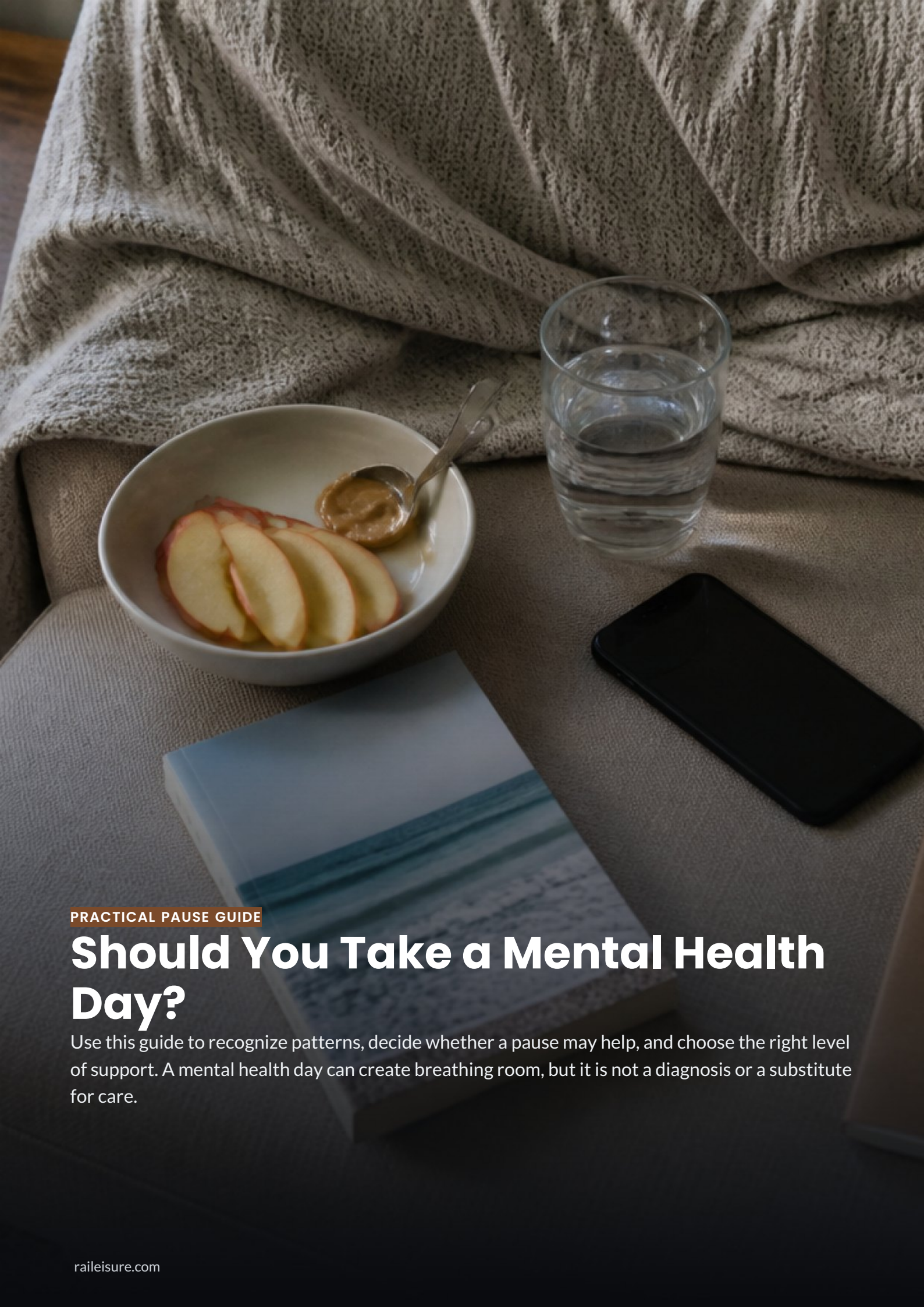




PRACTICAL PAUSE GUIDE

Should You Take a Mental Health Day?

Use this guide to recognize patterns, decide whether a pause may help, and choose the right level of support. A mental health day can create breathing room, but it is not a diagnosis or a substitute for care.

Au sommaire

- 1 Start with the big picture
- 2 Notice what has changed
- 3 Make a grounded decision
- 4 Safety check before you pause

Start with the big picture

Look for patterns rather than counting isolated symptoms.

A pause may be worth considering when changes feel unusual for you or make ordinary responsibilities harder to manage.

A mental health day is intentional time away from usual demands to rest, reduce pressure, and attend to your well-being.

You do not have to wait until you reach a breaking point to consider reasonable recovery time.

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS. PROTECT YOUR WELL-BEING.

Stress is a normal part of life. But when it becomes constant, it can affect how you think, feel, act, and perform.

The signs below may indicate that stress or burnout is starting to take a toll.



These are **POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS**, not diagnostic criteria. Everyone's experience is different.

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS OR BURNOUT

EMOTIONAL SIGNS	COGNITIVE SIGNS	PHYSICAL SIGNS	BEHAVIORAL SIGNS	WORK-RELATED SIGNS
Irritability	Reduced focus	Sleep changes	Withdrawal	Lower productivity
Feeling overwhelmed	Forgetfulness	Headaches	Changes in eating	Difficulty keeping up
Anxiety or unusual sadness	Low motivation	Muscle tension or fatigue	More frequent alcohol or substance use	Thinking about work after hours



IMPORTANT

These signs can be related to many factors in life. They do not mean you have a medical or mental health condition. Only a qualified professional can determine that.



CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

Notice patterns and acknowledge how you're feeling.



TALK TO SOMEONE

Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or colleague.



PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Prioritize sleep, movement, healthy meals, and breaks throughout your day.



SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

If these signs persist or interfere with your daily life, consider speaking with a healthcare professional.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



You don't have to handle it all alone. | **Asking for support is a sign of strength**— and an important step toward feeling better.

INFOGRAPHIC Mental health day signs may show up in emotions, thoughts, physical comfort, behavior, and work-related recovery.

Notice what has changed

I feel emotionally drained before the day begins.

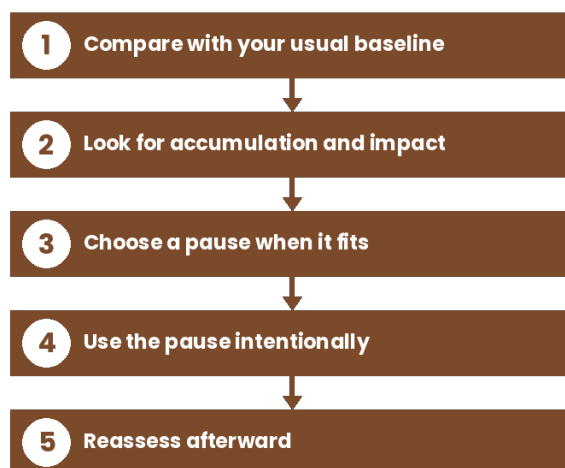
Notice persistent exhaustion, low motivation, reduced patience, or difficulty recovering after ordinary rest.

My focus or everyday tasks feel unusually difficult.

Look for forgetfulness, indecision, repeated mistakes, or difficulty starting routine tasks.

- I feel persistently irritable, overwhelmed, or on edge.**
Pay attention to stronger reactions, agitation, or the sense that ordinary requests feel like too much.
- My sleep, meals, routines, or physical comfort have changed.**
Examples include disrupted sleep, waking unrefreshed, skipped meals, muscle tension, headaches, stomach discomfort, or persistent fatigue.
- I am withdrawing or struggling with ordinary responsibilities.**
Consider whether the change is affecting relationships, work, school, self-care, or other daily functioning.
- I keep thinking about work or demands when I should be recovering.**
Repeated rumination can be a sign that your current demands are leaving too little room to recover.

Make a grounded decision



1 Compare with your usual baseline

Ask what is different from your normal functioning. One difficult day or one poor night does not automatically mean you need time off.

2 Look for accumulation and impact

Notice whether several changes are recurring, worsening, or making work, school, driving, finances, self-care, or relationships harder to manage.

3 Choose a pause when it fits

If temporary overload or emotional exhaustion is affecting your ability to recover, time away from usual demands may create useful breathing room.

4 Use the pause intentionally

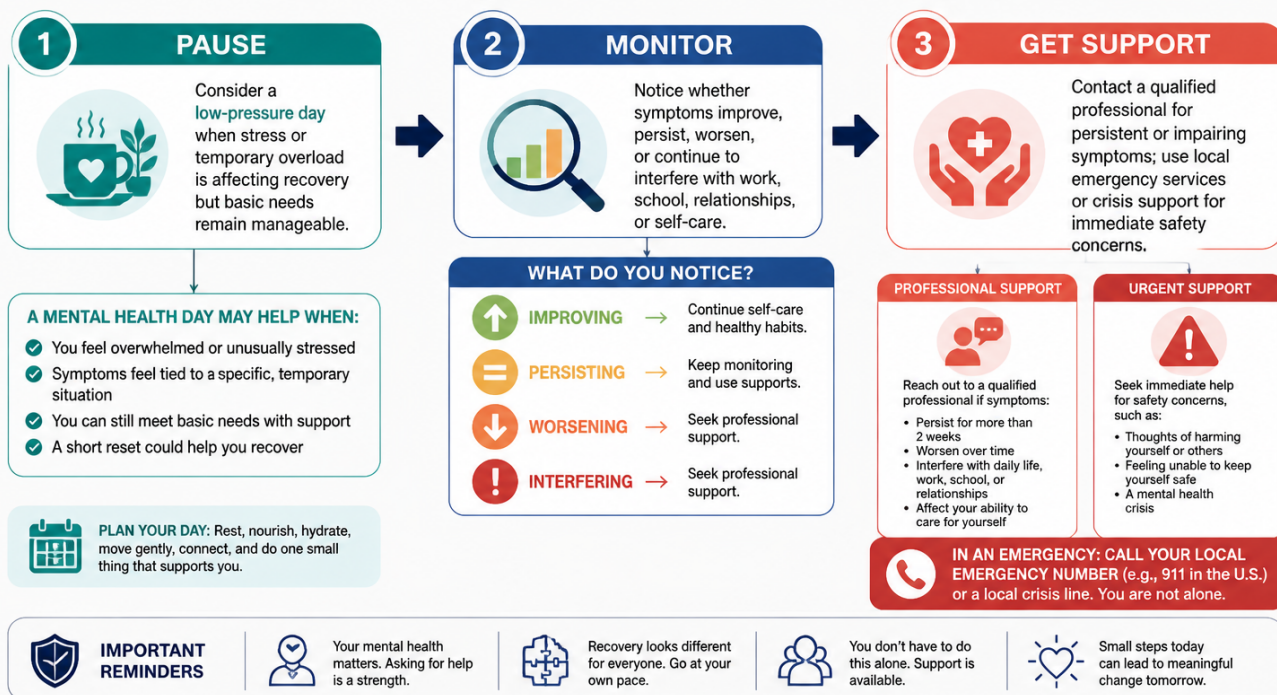
Reduce pressure and make space for rest and basic well-being rather than treating the day as another performance target.

5 Reassess afterward

If low mood, anxiety, sleep disruption, reduced functioning, or other concerns continue after rest, arrange an assessment with a qualified mental health professional.

How to Decide: Mental Health Day, Monitor, or Get Support

— A simple process to help you respond to stress, overload, and changing symptoms. —



♥ If you're unsure at any step, it's okay to reach out. | Help is here. You matter. 🌿

DECISION GUIDE A pause may help with temporary overload; persistent, worsening, or unsafe symptoms call for additional support.

! Know when a day off is not enough

A mental health day does not treat depression, anxiety, trauma, burnout, substance misuse, or another persistent concern. Seek qualified professional support when symptoms persist, worsen, interfere with daily life, or remain after rest. New, severe, concerning, or unexplained physical symptoms also deserve medical evaluation.

Safety check before you pause

I am not using time off to postpone an urgent physical assessment.

Immediate concerns such as chest pain, fainting, severe breathing difficulty, or sudden neurological symptoms require urgent help.

I know who I can contact if my symptoms continue or worsen.

Consider a doctor, therapist, counselor, or other qualified mental health professional.

I will seek urgent support if there is an immediate safety concern.

Contact local emergency services or an appropriate urgent support resource.

This guide is for general information and self-reflection, not diagnosis or medical advice. A qualified professional can help assess persistent, worsening, or concerning symptoms.