

# Simple tips to improve mental health

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In the darkness of the winter months, it's a good time to consider ways to reduce anxiety, stress and depression.

Kimberly Lindsay, executive director of Community Counseling Solutions, shared some advice during a wide-ranging discussion on the topic of mental health.

Lindsay is one of those thoughtful, optimistic individuals who seems to pass on her calm demeanor through osmosis to anyone nearby. Her agency provides mental health services for four Eastern Oregon counties, helping clients cope with a wide array of mental illness. Off work, she enjoys a thriving home life with her rancher husband and children. Mental illness has touched her family personally with the suicide deaths of Lindsay's cousin, father and grandfather.

So Lindsay knows different sides of mental health — the good, bad and the ugly.

Those experiencing severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression, should get professional help. However, she said, most of us can boost our own mental health by taking simple steps. One way is through positive social interaction.

Lindsay believes relationships affect mental health big time — and it can go either way. Bad relationships damage the psyche while good ones

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**Sally Brandsen, owner of The Sally Script, works on a project for the Pendleton Dancing with the Stars charity on her laptop at Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co. Jan. 17 in Pendleton. Mental health professionals believe there are many positive help benefits to limiting the amount of one's screen time.**