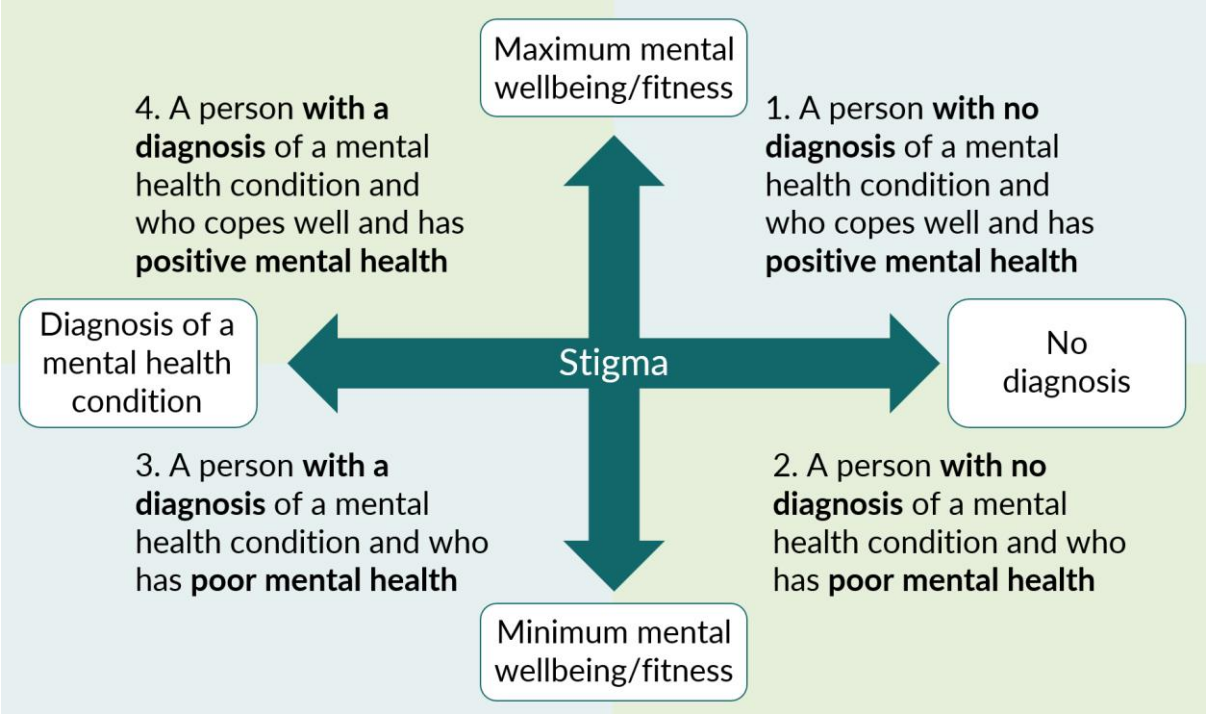
Understanding the Mental Health Continuum



This diagram shows that **mental health and mental illness are not the same thing**.

The horizontal line represents whether someone has a **diagnosis of a mental health condition** or **no diagnosis**. The vertical line represents a person's **mental wellbeing**, ranging from **poor mental health** to **positive mental health**.

This creates four possible situations:

1. **No diagnosis + positive mental health**
   A person is feeling well, coping with life's challenges, and experiencing good mental wellbeing.
2. **No diagnosis + poor mental health**
   A person does not have a diagnosed mental health condition but may be struggling, feeling overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, or unable to cope well.
3. **Diagnosis + poor mental health**
   A person has a diagnosed mental health condition and is currently experiencing poor mental wellbeing, perhaps finding daily life difficult.
4. **Diagnosis + positive mental health**
   A person has a diagnosed mental health condition but is managing it well, coping effectively, and experiencing good mental wellbeing.

Key Message
A diagnosis does **not** determine where someone sits on the mental health continuum. People with a mental health condition can experience excellent wellbeing, while people without a diagnosis can experience poor mental health.

The continuum reminds us that **everyone has mental health**, and our position on the wellbeing scale can move up and down over time depending on life events, support, coping strategies, physical health, and other factors. This is why it is important to focus on promoting mental wellbeing for everyone, not just those with a diagnosed mental health condition.