To establish a common language for this training, it is necessary to simplify and agree on terminology. For clarity, we have developed a diagram of the mental health-mental illness continuum employing the terms we will use today. Along the continuum are three major mental health states in which individuals can be located at various times in their lives.

**WELL-BEING**: At the “healthy” end of the continuum are individuals experiencing well-being, a state of good mental and emotional health. These individuals may experience stress and discomfort resulting from occasional problems of everyday life, but they experience no impairments to daily functioning.

All other individuals, for whom problems are more serious or prolonged, and for whom coping becomes progressively more difficult, are described as having “mental health problems.” Within this range are 2 categories of mental health conditions

**EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS**: discomfort has risen to the level of distress with the beginning of impairments in functioning (insomnia, lack of concentration or loss of appetite). As distress levels increase, individuals may seek professional help; situational depression or general anxiety or ADD with mild but long term impairment may also be found in this group.

**MENTAL ILLNESS**: Emotional problems raised to the level of “illness” by increase in distress and level of impairment. Mental Illness is characterized by changes in thinking, mood, or behavior. It may include relatively common disorders such as depression and anxiety as well as major disorders such as schizophrenia. The distinguishing factor in MI is typically chronic or long-term impairments that range from moderate to disabling in nature.