

Mental Health: How to Find Help



Mental health conditions affect everyone, whether directly or indirectly. 1 in 5 people in America experience a mental health condition, so it's likely that you or someone you love is living with one. If you or someone you know is struggling, you are not alone and help is available. There are many supports, services and treatment options that can help.

A change in a person's behavior or mood may be the early warning sign of a mental health condition and shouldn't be ignored. There are many different types of mental health conditions, and it isn't always easy to determine what they are. One way to learn more is to make an appointment with a primary care doctor or mental health specialist.

Mental Health Specialists

Clinical social workers and counselors are trained to make diagnoses and help with individual and family problems, including mental health conditions.

Psychologists are trained in mental health issues. They provide counseling (therapy).

Psychiatrists are medical doctors, so they can prescribe medications. They specialize in mental health conditions.

Here are some things to consider when you reach out for help for yourself or a loved one:

- If it's an emergency and you or someone you know is suicidal, you should immediately call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room. Do not leave a suicidal person alone.

- If you or your loved one's condition seems mild or moderate and can wait, make an appointment with a primary care doctor or pediatrician first.
- If the symptoms are more severe, make an appointment with a specialized doctor such as a psychiatrist. You may need to ask your primary care doctor for a referral.
- Seek out support groups and mental health education programs in your community and learn more about condition's symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options. Social support and knowledge can be valuable tools to help you get through it. You can contact the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950- 6264 for more information.
- If you or your loved one is a student, contact the school and ask about their mental health support services.
- Remember that you can ask your mental health specialist questions so you can understand the plan and make decisions about your treatment.

If your family member or friend is an adult who doesn't want treatment, it can be difficult to help them. Don't give up and don't forget that you can also benefit from learning as much as you can and finding support. Stress is easier to handle when shared with people who understand. Your NAMI peers and health care specialists can advise you on how to offer encouragement and keep your loved one safe.

For more information visit www.nami.org.

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NAMI HelpLine: 800-950-NAMI (6264)

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