



Let's talk about mental health

Identifying depressive symptoms

With so many things weighing on our minds these days, managing your mental health can often take a backseat to the rest of your life. The past few years have been painful for many, particularly those experiencing loss, isolation, grief and many other emotions.

There will always be bumps in the road, so it's important to build a mental health routine that will help support you whether you're in the midst of a crisis or just managing the stress of day-to-day life. It's also important to acknowledge that different communities have different needs for mental healthcare.

The types of providers that can treat mental health issues through office visits are:

- **Psychiatrists**
Doctors who can prescribe medications that may help treat anxiety, depression and chronic mental health issues.
- **Psychologists, social workers and counselors**
Trained professionals you can talk with on a regular basis to treat mental health issues. There are a variety of therapy techniques they may use to treat you, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy and dialectical-behavior therapy.
- **Primary Care Provider (PCP)**
Your regular physician can help you with mild to moderate anxiety, depression and emotional distress.

Find the right match (it may take some trial and error)

One of the most important components to successfully navigating your mental health treatment is finding the right provider for your unique needs – not just your mental health concerns and budget, but also the right match for your background. Being comfortable with your mental health provider is key to having the vulnerable, open conversations that are necessary to make progress along your mental health journey.

Self-serve mental health tips and resources

There are also plenty of mental and behavioral health practices you can try on your own. Here are just a few to help you cope with anxiety, isolation and sadness:

- **Practice simple breathing techniques**
Sitting up straight or lying down on the floor, inhale deeply and allow your belly to expand. Count to five as you exhale slowly. Repeat a few times.
- **Try to go outside for at least 15 minutes a day**
Breathe fresh air, go for a walk around the block and try to get your heart rate up. Just remember to always keep at least 6 feet between you and other people.
- **Eat healthy, balanced meals**
It may be tempting to eat a lot at this stressful time (or not eat at all), but try to maintain a regular eating schedule with nutritional food choices when possible.
- **If you're a parent, don't put too much pressure on yourself to be perfect**
Abnormal times call for unusual approaches to babies and children. Don't judge yourself too harshly for loosening screen time rules to get things done. Model appropriate expressions of emotions, such as frustration and sadness. Above all, help your kids feel safe and reassure them as needed. They will take their cues from you.

- **Call or video chat with friends and family**
Many of us are far from our loved ones, but we can call the people we love across the world. It's good to express how you're feeling to people you trust. Try to arrange virtual gatherings on a regular basis, like game night or book club, and call or text people often.
- **Pursue a new interest or explore a creative passion**
There are many online classes and video tutorials out there (for free!) that allow you to try something new right from your own home: yoga classes, DIY crafting videos, live online concerts and events and more. There's something for everyone.

Mental health resources available to you right now

- **National Hotlines:** If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress or feeling overwhelmed, there are several telephonic options to provide immediate crisis and non-crisis counseling and support. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration hotline is 1-800-662-4357. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255.
- **Interactive Tools and Communities:** As suggested by [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#), list out your biggest sources of stress throughout the day using a stress log, a mood tracker or a journal. Examples of a stress log and mood tracker can be found below.

Mood Tracker

Day	Mood	Mood Intensity	Events	Thoughts
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

MOOD LIST (feel free to add other moods you might be feeling as well):

ANGRY
ANXIOUS
BORED
CONFIDENT

CONFUSED
DISAPPOINTED
EXCITED
FRUSTRATED

GRUMPY
HAPPY
HOPEFUL
NEUTRAL

RELAXED
SAD
SCARED
SICK

STRESSED
TIRED

