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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

CONTRIBUTED BY ![Health Promotion Board](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4757810f9c6641279f24ac5089a87abd?v=3e58b66d&t=w150) Health Promotion Board

[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6c4c62aaef9845d293c3ac6bd9b03cb7?v=cb94b489)](#helplines "Helplines")

[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88bbcdcc2a3a43ea9954937c7ba75eb4?v=67c6e7a0)](#helplines "Helplines")

Caring for Ourselves

Coping with Stress

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Adults

\* [Teens](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/coping-with-stress-Teens#home)

\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/coping-with-stress-Youths#home)

\* Adults

\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/coping-with-stress-Seniors#home)

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Why is it important to manage stress?](#importance-of-managing-stress "Why is it important to manage stress?")

\* [Why do we feel stressed?](#feel-stressed "Why do we feel stressed?")

\* [The basics of stress](#toggle)

\* [How do we react to stress?](#fight-flight-freeze "How do we react to stress?")

\* [What causes stress?](#causes-of-stress "What causes stress?")

\* [What are the signs of stress?](#what-are-the-signs-of-stress "What are the signs of stress?")

\* [Is stress good or bad?](#is-stress-good-or-bad "Is stress good or bad?")

\* [How does prolonged stress affect us?](#prolonged-stress-affects-us "How does prolonged stress affect us?")

\* [Burnout](#toggle)

\* [What is burnout?](#what-is-burnout "What is burnout?")

\* [What are common symptoms of burnout?](#burnout-signs-and-symptoms "What are common symptoms of burnout?")

\* [How does burnout affect us?](#burnout-lead-to "How does burnout affect us?")

\* [How can we minimise burnout?](#tips-on-minimising-burnout "How can we minimise burnout?")

\* [How do we manage stress and burnout?](#manage-stress-and-burnout "How do we manage stress and burnout?")

\* [Stress self-assessment tool](#stress-assessment-tool "Stress self-assessment tool")

\* [Self-help tools to manage stress](#useful-self-help-tools "Self-help tools to manage stress")

\* [Mental health services](#mental-health-services "Mental health services")

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The importance of

managing stress

===================================

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f2cc4030cf2a492ea35301a5bef8ccc4?v=144d99fc)

Juggling multiple roles and responsibilities are part and parcel of adult life. This often brings about challenges with stressors and can be overwhelming over time, unless managed properly.

It is important that we prioritise our own well-being and learn to manage our stress, so we’re ready for the challenges ahead and we would then be able to better care for the people around us.

![The importance of managing stress](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f2cc4030cf2a492ea35301a5bef8ccc4?v=144d99fc)

Why do we feel stressed?

========================

Stress is a common word that we hear often. We all seem to know what it’s like to feel stressed but what exactly does it mean?

Stress is a normal response to everyday pressures. Daily needs and demands such as responsibilities, decisions, relationships, and money can cause stress.

Stressors trigger the release of two types of hormones in the body — \*\*adrenaline and cortisol\*\*.

### Adrenaline

Adrenaline is a fight-or-flight hormone. It causes an increase in heart rate, breathing and blood sugar levels. It also diverts blood flow from our digestive system to our muscles.

![Why do we feel stressed?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6cb770191c7d4a61ab663d5aa8ac4355?v=f7ffcc99)

### Cortisol

Cortisol is a stress hormone, triggered when we feel threatened. It directs energy from other parts of the body to the brain to deal with the threat. After the danger has passed, cortisol levels should decrease and return to a normal state.

However, if we are under constant stress, excessive cortisol could lead to health problems such as rapid weight gain, high blood pressure, etc.

![Why do we feel stressed?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6cb770191c7d4a61ab663d5aa8ac4355?v=f7ffcc99)

Fight, Flight or Freeze:

The three natural coping responses

=============================================================

![Fight](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7cf1f52f853a4927b2ad06ad99605ee4?v=460cd9da)

#### Fight

Fight is a response to literally fight the real or perceived danger.

![Flight](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0ccb8a80ea7d4dcbbd912d46fbf9f650?v=ae2b5593)

#### Flight

This means we are preparing to run away from the stressor.

![Freeze](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/92950f7874b84f188d2b11cec6af5490?v=f87935c6)

#### Freeze

This means being unable to respond in the presence of the stressor.

#### [#### What causes stress?](#causes-of-stress "What causes stress?")

Stress can be triggered by both positive and negative events in our lives. Even happy events can cause stress if they bring about major changes.

Stress is caused by our perception or evaluation of situations. When we deem the event to be threatening and beyond our ability to cope, we would become stressed. For example, someone may view a new job as stressful, but another may see it as a challenge and feel excited about it.

### Common causes include:

<

![Personal](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8685aafcef26428fb3f2fdcafea6d351?v=c86b0cec)

### Personal

\* Relationships

\* Death of loved ones

\* Relocation

\* Marriage

\* Pregnancy

\* Divorce

\* Uncertainties about the future

\* Increased responsibilities

![Financial](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a2efb8732a674b32bae4d86285c2149a?v=250cb6eb)

### Financial

\* Loss of income

\* Debt

![Environmental triggers](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e253f40e164846e28f797580f3780e82?v=36aeaa0d)

### Environmental triggers

\* Excessive noise

\* Traffic jams

\* Time pressure

\* Stress faced by people around us

![Work & studies](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/630ca40ebbcc49eea3d2613892bc8ee5?v=ed916a51)

### Work & studies

\* Unemployment

\* New job

\* Challenges at work/studies, e.g. not being able to meet deadlines

\* Performance pressure

\* Lack of work-life harmony

\* Competition at work/studies

\* Exams and assignments

![Health & safety](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dd9084ed44dd4c60b53afd8b22ab2586?v=c75fe17e)

### Health & safety

\* Illness

\* Health of family members

\* Epidemics

\* Accidents

\* Injury

\>

\* 1

\* 2

\* 3

#### [#### What are the signs of stress?](#signs-of-stress "What are the signs of stress?")

Everyone responds to stress differently. Our body sends out various physical, cognitive, behavioural, and emotional warning signs, such as:

![What are the signs of stress?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5b7c0254516849dcb2d082ed1b6a24d7?v=10a3b7fc)

### Physical signs

(How our body might react)

\* Headaches, migraines

\* Stomach aches

\* Muscle tension

\* Rapid heartbeats

\* Sweaty palms

\* Trembling

\* Chronic fatigue

### Cognitive signs

(How we might think)

\* Poor concentration

\* Forgetfulness

\* Difficulty in organising and making decisions

### Behavioural signs

(How we might behave)

\* Acting in a defensive, aggressive or impulsive manner

\* Nervous habits (e.g. stammering or biting nails)

\* Avoidance of tasks

\* Withdrawal from social activities

\* Drinking or smoking excessively

\* Sleep problems

\* Crying

\* Loss of appetite or overeating

![What are the signs of stress?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5b7c0254516849dcb2d082ed1b6a24d7?v=10a3b7fc)

### Emotional signs

(How we might feel)

\* Anxiety and being bad-tempered

\* Excessive worrying, moody

\* Sadness, fear

\* Overwhelmed

\* Restlessness or irritability

#### Physical

Signs

(How your body might react)

\* Headaches, migraines

\* Stomach aches

\* Muscle tension

\* Rapid heartbeats

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\* Chronic fatigue

#### Cognitive

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\* Difficulty in organising and making decisions

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(How you might behave)

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#### Emotional

Signs

(How you might feel)

\* Anxiety and being bad-tempered

\* Excessive worrying, moody

\* Sadness, fear

\* Feeling overwhelmed

\* Restlessness or irritability

Some stress can be good for us! Positive

stress, or eustress, helps us to cope with

challenging but important life events.

### Is stress good?

### Is stress bad?

It’s bad when we live under very

stressful conditions for long periods of

time. It may harm our health, our

relationships, and our enjoyment of life.

![Is stress good?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/849e1ca4a1e643708fd8047fa7b47901?v=1d35fea1) Is stress good?

Is stress bad? ![Is stress bad?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3b87a32466a348a48057fe609f4d8e3a?v=d806ccd2)

![Click and see is stress good or bad](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6e2df43deeac445781944d51d08432e0?v=fcab609e)

![Is stress good?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/849e1ca4a1e643708fd8047fa7b47901?v=1d35fea1)

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![Is stress good?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)

![Is stress bad?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3b87a32466a348a48057fe609f4d8e3a?v=d806ccd2)

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![Is stress bad?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)

### How does prolonged stress affect us?

Prolonged stress exposes our body constantly to the effects of adrenaline or cortisol and may lead to health problems:

![Decreased immunity levels, thereby increasing our chances of getting colds and other illnesses](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5d1fb3354dbb41e4b4bb041a046219a9?v=d7bc0db9)

Decreased immunity levels, thereby increasing our chances of getting colds and other illnesses

![Worsening of asthmatic conditions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b10adbbdaf6b4e47a342942b27390081?v=308c1947)

Worsening of asthmatic conditions

![Increased blood pressure that will increase the risk for stroke, heart attacks and kidney problems](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0b2f838c07864031a73a613cceb580a8?v=0ae65098)

Increased blood pressure that will increase the risk for stroke, heart attacks and kidney problems

![Digestive problems like stomach ulcers, indigestion, constipation, or diarrhoea](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8df6cae6195140f0a82034b6cfbad28e?v=403fef60)

Digestive problems like stomach ulcers, indigestion, constipation, or diarrhoea

![Nervous breakdown or mental conditions such as depression](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/52bf99fc208242998820e1f21ac2603d?v=bfa2a860)

Nervous breakdown or mental conditions such as depression

What is burnout?

================

![What is burnout?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ee2d4c3c52454c7993528a78d9641558?v=9e282ed5)

Burnout is a state where we feel emotionally, physically, and mentally drained. This is caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

When we experience burnout, we may feel overwhelmingly exhausted. A sense of dread about work might loom over us, making us feel withdrawn or detached from our commitments and the people around us.

We might also find ourselves feeling less productive or competent.

Some common signs and symptoms of burnout:

------------------------------------------

[<](#previous "Some common signs and symptoms of burnout")

![Frequently feeling tired or drained](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7f31dff598d0444c9658545efa7cee44?v=148c0b87)

Frequently feeling tired or drained

![Recurring pains/headaches](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/19c8b2519f654fc294e54991833f19b5?v=db64d20c)

Recurring pains/headaches

![Changes in sleep habits](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8dbad3674506468a9e64d284ce85c9ab?v=a4fb5b31)

Changes in sleep habits

![Changes in our appetite](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0fdff53716dd4689bc3f8f0e47705c14?v=0d57e68e)

Changes in our appetite

![Taking longer to complete tasks](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ff4d2d7020ef4394b69f8bf9ab57ca28?v=3359917e)

Taking longer to complete tasks

![Sense of failure or self-doubt](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/07be66872c074c20914ef05d82d492f6?v=7a7f0d3c)

Sense of failure or self-doubt

![Avoiding responsibilities](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/db46596ff2854a04959230a135c0c664?v=9a333b3d)

Avoiding responsibilities

![Cynical outlook](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ab1f31ffdc9a4f939b4178a104793f8f?v=c97ce6ec)

Cynical outlook

[\>](#next "Some common signs and symptoms of burnout")

\* 1

\* 2

Burnout can lead to:

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![Depression](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1ff5957b44d54af99c855e2622a17279?v=ec3e084b)

Depression

![Insomnia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ec0f966902d844298db12a276a9866d9?v=a8572232)

Insomnia

![High cholesterol](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2debcf9313fc40e595974e56208e5da5?v=f0822982)

High cholesterol

![Heart disease](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8758dbaf73fb4ca8a6dbb8cb24b91297?v=2eb4fb0a)

Heart disease

Tips on minimising burnout

--------------------------

One effective way to minimise burnout is to have work-life harmony, which is about being able

to achieve both our work and personal goals.

Work-life harmony is not about balancing work and life equally. Instead, it is about recognising

that our priorities may vary at different stages of our lives. Our work and life are

interdependent and increasingly intertwined.

Work-life harmony has three components. They are:

![Wholeness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/63d8c601b58a478ea74360907961d97e?v=5f350b9c)

\*\*Wholeness\*\*

Where we feel cohesive and aligned

![Positive reciprocity](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2dc3ddf4765949e18b3781645e4924ff?v=d7326b79)

\*\*Positive reciprocity\*\*

Which reinforces our overarching values

![Satisfaction](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8a38387670494306808f0e4ab4eb203f?v=626f40ae)

\*\*Satisfaction\*\*

Which gives us a sense of contentment

![Wholeness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/31443026acad428da77c116bff8c211f?v=f2e2161f)

\*\*Wholeness\*\*

Where we feel cohesive and aligned

![Positive reciprocity](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6912ccbc5feb4801834a8f63be03d614?v=aff38eb7)

\*\*Positive reciprocity\*\*

Which reinforces our overarching values

![Satisfaction](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8a38387670494306808f0e4ab4eb203f?v=626f40ae)

\*\*Satisfaction\*\*

Which give us a sense of contentment

When we have work-life harmony, we are likely to be more engaged at work. We'll also feel

happier with our family and friends, improving our mental well-being.

Here are some ways to achieve work-life harmony:

![Disconnect from work after working hours](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/eb69500b13c94d97a1fd7671e0276845?v=d2dfe747)

### Disconnect from work

after working hours

Some of us might have the tendency to stay logged on to our work devices after working hours. However…

[READ MORE](#disconnect-from-work-after-working-hours "Read more disconnect from work after working hours")

![Make time to rest](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/03ea36f6746345eb9ebad281cb7745d6?v=64027d09)

### Make time to rest

Rest is an important part of our lives. When we give ourselves time to rest, we can recharge and be ready for the challenges…

[READ MORE](#make-time-to-rest "Read more make time to rest")

How to manage stress and burnout

================================

![How to manage stress and burnout](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4ea9f2f64f554d828a9bfa75f8bd8964?v=8c9db052)

Since it is not entirely possible to cut out all forms of stress from our lives, it is all the more important - and realistic - that we learn how to cope with it. We have the power to keep our stress under control! Discover stress-busting powers to manage stress and burnout.

Stress-busting powers

---------------------

[![The power of observation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/abf59fc17d304b78b56506ab8fdcab74?v=308353f9)\

\

###### The power of observation\

\

Notice and identify when we are feeling stressed...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-observation "Read more The power of observation")

[![The power of time management](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9ab2e5d3a6bd432094b07147af11ac01?v=80f54526)\

\

###### The power of \

time management\

\

Being more organised and planning our time...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-time-management "Read more The power of time management")

[![The power of me-time and we-time](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8977f7bb8ae84b069856368d639f8ec3?v=65b6e461)\

\

###### The power of \

me-time and we-time\

\

Taking care of ourselves takes care of stress too...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-me-we-time "Read more The power of me-time and we-time")

[![The power of reaching out](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/33237a3bf704468db48e4ffd24b4707c?v=0d663431)\

\

###### The power of reaching out\

\

Reaching out is a sign of courage and asking for…\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-reaching-out "Read more The power of reaching out")

[![The power of movement](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/11d59647ea5a4f7195ff818ab2c571c3?v=73116f44)\

\

###### The power of movement\

\

Exercise keeps us fit and releases endorphins...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-moving "Read more The power of movement")

[![The power of mindfulness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d750d6a70f664c60bad67bf2f25b643a?v=03d141d1)\

\

###### The power of mindfulness\

\

Mindfulness is about paying attention to...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-mindfulness "Read more The power of mindfulness")

[![The power of relaxation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/24a935d085e846f0a785b26befcbbef7?v=fc6761f0)\

\

###### The power of relaxation\

\

Our breathing can help in calming us down, so...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-relaxation "Read more The power of relaxation")

[![The power of rest](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/79161a8c0e4a4f9da69ac7a01545bb7c?v=a60915d3)\

\

###### The power of rest\

\

Get at least 7 hours of sleep every night...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-rest "Read more The power of rest")

[![The power of positivity](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f8b19600b74a474693c418ebc2cee15d?v=38f596ca)\

\

###### The power of positivity\

\

Don’t let negative thoughts take control over us...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-positivity "Read more The power of positivity")

[![The power of healthy eating](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/eb6d703eb2c44339abff742358a3a755?v=f3db7908)\

\

###### The power of healthy eating\

\

We are what we eat! A healthy and balanced diet...\

\

read more](#stress-busting-power-healthy-eating "Read more The power of healthy eating")

[![Tap here to reveal more powers](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d92368f23f19480c81d31998b66c6008?v=76f3612b) \

Tap here to \

reveal more \

powers](# "Tap here to reveal more powers")

![Stress self-assessment tool](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/37adf7556afa4759ade61b1c161c64b3?v=28a8c8be)

Stress self-assessment

tool

=============================

![Stress self-assessment tool](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/37adf7556afa4759ade61b1c161c64b3?v=28a8c8be)

Stress is a normal response to everyday pressures.

The Stress subscale is a set of 7 questions adapted from the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) that those \*\*aged 14 and above\*\* can use to assess their reactions to stress levels and ability to relax.

\*\*Please note this is a self-assessment and not a medical diagnosis.\*\*

[Go to self-assessment](#stress-self-assessment "Go to self-assessment")

Useful self-help tools

======================

Need help coping with stress? Try out these self-help tools that can relieve stress and help us relax better.

[<](#previous "Useful self-help tools")

[![Manage anxiety at work](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2ecbf99388c341f4b7a81d90d230ed50?v=e1225e9b)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8c2050c3dbda4e52a73bfc4fabc39752?v=611bde5d "Manage anxiety at work")

[![Recharge from workplace burnout](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6f595a23430342ddbaa4d742bd51c616?v=e88ddf9e)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e443b7ef2d0b45b3ab2c04fd69b1300c?v=00588f7b "Recharge from workplace burnout")

[![Guided imagery](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/572d4a75108d4fdeb4e6d6d5a1877c5f?v=e828783a)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1386dc97fc7442e994a5f2e247510d92?v=36ca3616 "Guided imagery")

[![Progressive muscle relaxation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b35752b90cb84cc58c3d88430f76ad70?v=e0ee9e63)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5c7e1c7c72a8481781463dc5041ab459?v=a4e85f67 "Progressive muscle relaxation")

[![Mindfulness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/18385565dfbd4df08b2f7bd9878af04d?v=5b058493)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6b2e9fcf26044964b136122a744cf49a?v=a54c2565 "Mindfulness")

[![Deep Breathing](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1e6557b0a76d46018bfa2ae87e293fe1?v=c63e8a8b)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/69a470a5ea634ef586da74dec647685f?v=0cfc96d0 "Deep Breathing")

[![Stress Relief Exercises](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8c56b3ff4c234de4a06c19b4a84e9894?v=18b1a585)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6fYqEjG-Nc "Stress Relief Exercises")

[![Relaxation Exercise](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/58ea6b6945d54204918b3487838b4b38?v=d71d31bd)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c2d3b51f3bdb4eedb844fd9563978ead?v=4846e71e "Relaxation Exercise")

[![Understand Stress](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b632bf3c61f641cd971cfd7aaf1a5ecb?v=32a8dd36)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=understand\_stress "Understand Stress")

[![Relax Each Muscle](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/91fcf23b63bb498cbe007d09d8995efd?v=ca7ae310)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=deep\_relaxation "Relax Each Muscle")

[![Offload Your Worries](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5547e1bc1efe4f81a65fa5eb86c8b3db?v=3a64b127)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=offload\_worries "Offload Your Worries")

[![Balance Yourself](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/eec4f0cf0f164e6ab52bbc023145f338?v=83cc3b9d)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=balance\_yourself "Balance Yourself")

[\>](#next "Useful self-help tools")

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Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers

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[<](#previous "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-1](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ad82e3283f2e46ddaa9fc1f85665987d?v=6758c3a7)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3fe3a768a16747b0bbf5f3bc9415db1f?v=62a20ce6 "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-1")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-2](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6959587d47d844989e02e9d05f7b973a?v=76ecaec2)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7f026f2bd0d44013a8737d2a550ad115?v=51e01bbc "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-2")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-3](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/781d86221b804be788feb9a3e6250b87?v=1b994f03)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/bc6fd2a343b94ed9ab79ea0f5b608904?v=501d3413 "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-3")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-4](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d1487a50e8b24d51b68385fc6ae4bbd8?v=169e7367)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/075b0099af5e476f9d595bcceb699937?v=f52b0034 "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-4")

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[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-6](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/41320368e7a7439d9bbb54579247f171?v=e98a481f)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fe4a928dea0440d3a727e36bddbab6ab?v=cb08f8ca "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-6")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-7](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cd23cf48167c4827a31c6bea78196e5a?v=00f28db9)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9e8b31b9fc704b9eb6dacfe769bb82f3?v=92a5ac9b "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-7")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-8](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/51d146a3cead4acf821c79f22a2a95c0?v=c1cdf098)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f07470bccbe14c12a25e49da12ec66f4?v=51b32f72 "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-8")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-9](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/be80b0595c5f43dba8448ae7d265b0ed?v=32bee71b)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d5663458a98c40839eca2ebd0553b054?v=39ad4b91 "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-9")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-10](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9e4fdf2cc52c47568b6d5b1521cbc3f0?v=7c753859)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d4dd956eace1419fbbaa2ad6a49acb02?v=30b6abf5 "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-10")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-11](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/45cd6c77c6594d039e2711d9920d79d2?v=5b5890e5)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e48759b4fd8343868bb6407b030d3d67?v=ebf7aea5 "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-11")

[![Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-12](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/66c3598a322c4ee58437bc87941787c0?v=216418cd)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c116b486c36c45d193da2ce7b79bcb5a?v=650f486d "Brighten our day with mobile wallpapers-12")

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Mental health services

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Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88bbcdcc2a3a43ea9954937c7ba75eb4?v=67c6e7a0)](#helplines "Helplines")

Caring for Ourselves

Managing Our Emotions

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Adults

\* [Teens](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/managing-our-emotions-Teens#home)

\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/managing-our-emotions-Youths#home)

\* Adults

\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/managing-our-emotions-Seniors#home)

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Managing our emotions](#importance-of-managing-emotions "Managing our emotions")

\* [What are emotions and why do we feel them?](#what-are-emotions-and-why-do-we-feel-them "What are emotions and why do we feel them?")

\* [What are the basic emotions?](#6-basic-emotions "What are the basic emotions?")

\* [Why is it important to manage our emotions?](#Why\_is\_it\_important\_to\_understand\_and\_manage\_our\_emotions "Why is it important to manage our emotions?")

\* [How do we manage our emotions?](#How\_do\_we\_manage\_our\_emotions "How do we manage our emotions?")

\* [How do we talk about our emotions?](#How\_do\_I\_talk\_about\_my\_emotions "How do we talk about our emotions?")

\* [Self-help tools for managing our emotions](#mental-health-tools "Self-help tools for managing our emotions")

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The importance of

managing emotions

=====================================

Each of us plays many roles in our lives – from being a breadwinner, a friend, a role model to our children, to being a caregiver for our elderly parents. These responsibilities often come with different sets of challenges and concerns.

At times, we feel overwhelmed or drained. Such feelings often manifest themselves as intense emotions. By learning how to manage these emotions, we can take better care of our own well-being. This will in turn get us into a better position to support our loved ones and overcome any challenges ahead.

![The importance of managing emotions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7ca1a63d7b0544a18b85f0ff47e80ccf?v=55e6ccff)

What are emotions

and why do we feel them?

============================================

We all experience emotions as a normal and important part of our lives.

Emotions are

information

They help us know how to respond appropriately to circumstances we’re in and frame what we make of the situation.

![What are emotions and why do we feel them?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0e290d39ed644d3aaa061b34f6b4cfe6?v=3dd039a4)

It’s normal to feel

all kinds of emotions

All emotions have their functions.

Experiencing the full range of emotions adds meaning to our lives and helps us to handle challenges.

![What are emotions and why do we feel them?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0e290d39ed644d3aaa061b34f6b4cfe6?v=3dd039a4)

6 basic emotions

================

There is a wide spectrum of emotions. However, there are generally 6 basic emotions, which are universally experienced:

Anger

![Anger](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/de0d4978e9bc4f728bd95fc8b9be3152?v=d71423cd)

An emotional state

leading to feelings of

hostility and frustration

Disgust

![Disgust](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cc5a722eba9340df95a413894ee3194d?v=8f0f9129)

A strong emotion that

results in the feeling of

being repulsed

Fear

![Fear](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/391bebdf201c47b2a60c49cd7e946dbc?v=6a479c32)

A primal emotion that is

important to survival and triggers

a fight or flight response

Happiness

![Happiness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/eb317633e1434979a0e39b684f7e93ee?v=4a33fe73)

A pleasant emotional

state that elicits feelings

of joy, contentment, and satisfaction

Sadness

![Sadness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6f61749e4b864dd6bfe947b632872417?v=6ca3477e)

An emotional state

characterised by feelings

of disappointment, grief

or hopelessness

Surprise

![Surprise](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/91771dde175848418db35763e63c3dcc?v=d1a3a3ab)

A brief emotional state,

either positive or

negative, following

something unexpected

Why is it important to understand

and manage our emotions?

============================================================

Although emotions are an instinctive and natural thing, it can sometimes be intense and overwhelming.

That’s why we can all benefit from understanding and managing our emotions healthily.

![Managing our emotions helps us make better decisions, big or small.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a42e7d4ae58d4910bfede4130e96bfde?v=63a712ae)

Managing our emotions helps us make better decisions, big or small.

![Understanding our emotions allows us to become aware of triggers, so we can gain insights on how to respond in constructive ways.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8b98bdb730f74c4489a69155d956ff06?v=7a25c426)

Understanding our emotions allows us to become aware of triggers, so we can gain insights on how to respond in constructive ways.

![Accepting our emotions allows us to view our thoughts and perspectives objectively, instead of defaulting to making negative judgements about ourselves and others.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/99901a484df94aaaa350fd79ce33cd5c?v=b119a0e9)

Accepting our emotions allows us to view our thoughts and perspectives objectively, instead of defaulting to making negative judgements about ourselves and others.

\* \* \*

Watch this video to see why it’s important to acknowledge

and manage our emotions as they arise.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

How do we manage our emotions?

==============================

[#### Step 1: Identify the emotion](#acc-manage-emotions-step-1 "Step 1: Identify the emotion")

![Step 1: Identify the emotion](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0a8f8cb436ac4e09accf44fde4d19355?v=dfa48e7d)

\* Practice noticing and identifying our emotions by using the [feelings tracker](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/119c6fd06e33462797c81e97d0244fa9?v=a1b1fefc "Practice noticing and identifying our emotions by using the feelings tracker to identify how we are feeling.")

to identify how we are feeling.

\* Avoid brushing away or pretending not to have certain emotions as we might get overwhelmed and become less effective at managing them. Our feelings are there to help us make sense of what’s going on!

\* Check in with our body too. We may also feel some body sensations with certain emotions – perhaps our face gets hot and muscles tense up.

[#### Step 2: Know why we feel the way we do](#acc-manage-emotions-step-2 "Step 2: Know why we feel the way we do")

![Step 2: Know why we feel the way we do](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cd436eeb5ca14a37b118e7a3af2a4996?v=203fb7ee)

\* Accept all our emotions as natural and not something to avoid. Seek to understand and figure out what happened that got us feeling this way.

\* Our emotions can arise from many things. It could be from events, situations, or even our own thoughts or memories.

\* Knowing what brought about that feeling and why we felt that way would also make it easier for us to have a better grasp and assess on how best to manage our feelings.

[#### Step 3: Manage unhelpful thoughts](#acc-manage-emotions-step-3 "Step 3: Manage unhelpful thoughts")

![Step 3: Manage unhelpful thoughts](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fff03ba16ba744278e96879940e94fbe?v=a9e71941)

\* Consider whether things are really as bad as they seem. Sometimes, unhelpful thinking patterns may magnify the negativity of the situation. For example, we may overgeneralise and think, “I have failed once, I will fail again for sure”.

\* When we have such negative thoughts, we can use [My Positivity Guide](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b5c629eaf01b49eab36da5bb619d402d?v=97c8913c "When we have such negative thoughts, we can use My Positivity Guide to reframe such thoughts by focusing on the good things around us.")

to reframe such thoughts by focusing on the good things around us.

\* Shred away these unhelpful thinking patterns using the [Emotions Explorer](/programmes/186/MindSG/EmotionsExplorer#home "Shred away these unhelpful thinking patterns using the Emotions Explorer.")

.

\* Think about the best way to express our emotions or regulate them, so we can feel better. For example, would it feel more conducive to gently confront someone or work off the feeling by going for a run?

[#### Step 4: Take action and adopt self-care tips](#acc-manage-emotions-step-4 "Step 4: Take action and adopt self-care tips")

![Step 4: Take action and adopt self-care tips](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1ff54e7e76914292a285e6f346c1e300?v=9d977573)

\* Consider doing more of the things we enjoy, such as spending time in nature, listening to music or even sleeping. We can also try exercising as it has mood-boosting effects and relieves stress.

\* Learn relaxation skills such as:

\* Pick up [deep breathing](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/69a470a5ea634ef586da74dec647685f?v=0cfc96d0 "Pick up deep breathing exercises as a method of relaxation")

exercises as a method of relaxation

\* Practice [progressive muscle relaxation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5c7e1c7c72a8481781463dc5041ab459?v=a4e85f67 "Practice progressive muscle relaxation where we tense a group of muscles as we breathe in and relax them as we breathe out")

where we tense a group of muscles as we breathe in and relax them as we breathe out

\* Use [guided imagery](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1386dc97fc7442e994a5f2e247510d92?v=36ca3616 "Use guided imagery where, for example, we imagine ourselves at the beach feeling the warm breeze on our skin")

where, for example, we imagine ourselves at the beach feeling the warm breeze on our skin

\* Consider [mindfulness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6b2e9fcf26044964b136122a744cf49a?v=a54c2565 "Consider mindfulness where we slow down our racing thoughts and be aware of our body and mind")

where we slow down our racing thoughts and be aware of our body and mind

![How do we manage our emotions?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fd8c4adff94add97d3bacc7c1fb420?v=403b03df)

How do we talk about our emotions?

==================================

Talking to others about our emotions can also help us explore new perspectives and understand our thinking patterns.

#### [#### Pick someone to talk to](#acc-Pick\_someone\_to\_talk\_to "Pick someone to talk to")

![Pick someone to talk to](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/533fa2389fd34922bcf7eec9be1d59cd?v=71331544)

A friend, parent, relative or colleague can be people we can talk to. For a start, we can reach out to the person we trust and say, “Can we talk for a minute? I have something to share.” We can then share how we feel and why. We may just find ourselves surprised that someone can help us feel better and assure us that we are not alone.

#### [#### Know that we can talk about our feelings anytime](#acc-know\_that\_you\_can\_talk\_about\_your\_feelings\_anytime "Know that we can talk about our feelings anytime")

![Know that we can talk about our feelings anytime](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6988acb846d74a278b06311a4c66318f?v=2ad2aab6)

We don’t have to wait for our problems to be big or have a special time to talk about them. It’s good to practise talking about them earlier as it allows us to notice them.

We don’t have to talk about every feeling we have but noticing our feelings and saying how we feel and why, is good practice and a healthy way to express them. It is also okay to not know why we are feeling certain emotions. We can still say something like “I feel angry but I don’t know why.”

The more we talk about it, the easier it gets. It doesn’t just help us understand ourselves, but also increases the connection that we have with people who matter to us.

![How do we talk about our emotions?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a290b8f6add74b5bb5c288fc4edef721?v=404590bc)

Useful self-help tools

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Feeling a little overwhelmed? Try out these self-help tools that can help us manage our emotions better.

[<](#previous "Useful self-help tools")

[![Emotion Explorer](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c12fa61f99234b59b33354a7cb9ca049?v=3aaba43a)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/186/MindSG/EmotionsExplorer#home "Emotion Explorer")

[![Feelings Tracker](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/def881abb99b4b03bfc9135cb005167e?v=cf9e952b)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/119c6fd06e33462797c81e97d0244fa9?v=a1b1fefc "Feelings Tracker")

[![Understand Stress](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73fd4e4b4e044abea433ff6820a382c8?v=7670bbbb)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=understand\_stress "Understand Stress")

[![Relax Each Muscle](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/44d37136e9bd4b1fad2838283a98b9af?v=6b7fb640)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=deep\_relaxation "Relax Each Muscle")

[![Offload Your Worries](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/eb1d1b7f01954ac99be9d336d0b22e7e?v=485d25c7)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=offload\_worries "Offload Your Worries")

[![Balance Yourself](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5f12721030cc4008ac482a28bcd8b975?v=5de03559)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=balance\_yourself "Balance Yourself")

[![Find Perspective](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/18c6a58e42954f04a7e869172153253c?v=f5b5a4d3)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=find\_perspective "Find Perspective")

[![Anchor Yourself](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6a6d85d216b44cbebcefed5b54951585?v=8e506d44)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=anchor\_yourself "Anchor Yourself")

[![Manage Anxiety](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d3cba1ef3d0e4f0fa2b382d766131e01?v=40ba44d6)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=feel\_more\_control "Manage Anxiety")

[![Build Support](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/759fbd11f4974980a11c49ad649f066c?v=50584788)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=build\_support "Build Support")

[\>](#next "Useful self-help tools")

\* 1

\* 2

\* 3

Mental health services

======================

Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

.

![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88bbcdcc2a3a43ea9954937c7ba75eb4?v=67c6e7a0)](#helplines "Helplines")

Caring for Ourselves

Understanding Depression

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Adults

\* [Teens](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/understanding-depression-Teens#home)

\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/understanding-depression-Youths#home)

\* Adults

\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/understanding-depression-Seniors#home)

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Understanding depression](#understanding-depression-intro "Understanding depression")

\* [The basics of depression](#toggle)

\* [What is depression?](#what-is-depression "What is depression?")

\* [Common misconceptions](#common-misconceptions "Common misconceptions")

\* [Common depressive disorders](#common-depressive-disorders "Common depressive disorders")

\* [What causes depression?](#depression-causes "What causes depression?")

\* [How can we identify depression?](#depression-signs-and-symptoms "How can we identify depression?")

\* [Other depressive disorders](#symptoms-accordion "Other depressive disorders")

\* [How is depression diagnosed?](#diagnosis-glossary "How is depression diagnosed?")

\* [How is depression being treated?](#depression-treatment "How is depression being treated?")

\* [How can we manage depression?](#learn-to-better-manage-depression-with-these-tips "How can we manage depression?")

\* [Self-assessment tool for depression](#depression-assessment-tool "Self-assessment tool for depression")

\* [Mental health services](#mental-health-services "Mental health services")

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![Understanding depression man](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4b0a990eec534714a86875fe5d658dee?v=1ab11da3)

Understanding depression

========================

![Understanding depression man](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4b0a990eec534714a86875fe5d658dee?v=1ab11da3)

In our daily lives, we may experience some events or demands which may cause us to feel sad or tired every now and then.

Some of us might experience a long period of moodiness that seems out of proportion to the type of situations we find ourselves in, or we may gradually lack interest in the things we used to enjoy.

Don’t be quick to dismiss these feelings. If left unchecked, this sense of sadness may develop into depression if prolonged and could affect our day-to-day activities. Let’s read on and find out more about depression and what we can do about it!

In our daily lives, we may experience some events or demands which may cause us to feel sad or tired every now and then.

Some of us might experience a long period of moodiness that seems out of proportion to the type of situations we find ourselves in, or we may gradually lack interest in the things we used to enjoy.

Don’t be quick to dismiss these feelings. If left unchecked, this sense of sadness may develop into depression if prolonged and could affect our day-to-day activities.

![Understanding depression woman](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/89e7e73357b440b99fcb4ec47f6079b4?v=b74a451e)

![Understanding depression woman](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/89e7e73357b440b99fcb4ec47f6079b4?v=b74a451e)

What is depression?

===================

![Differentiating sadness from depression](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1dcbbc3f91914627abbab048774263c0?v=96830558)

Differentiating sadness from depression

[Click to reveal the answer](#what-is-depression-differentiating-sadness "Differentiating sadness from depression")

![Who is affected?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/08459438b1be487e90381d2796b737f5?v=4a41ad1a)

Who is affected?

[Click to reveal the answer](#what-is-depression-who-is-affected "Who is affected?")

![How does it affect us?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/09fbb21b910843a5b45c34d268ec2a00?v=d3575a00)

How does it affect us?

[Click to reveal the answer](#what-is-depression-how-it-affects-us "How does it affect us?")

#### Common misconceptions:

What people may think:

![We can simply ‘snap out of’ depression.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dccf470b5fce4e6db29cacfeced96642?v=b99219bf)

What people may think:

We can simply

‘snap out of’ depression.

[But did you know](#common-misconceptions-snap-out-of-depression "We can simply ‘snap out of’ depression.")

What people may think:

![Depression is only about being sad.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/52e44fb6813d4f0d8b0892b0b8c0b010?v=7221d450)

What people may think:

Depression is only

about being sad.

[But did you know](#common-misconceptions-depression-is-being-sad "Depression is only about being sad.")

What people may think:

![Depression is a sign of having a weak mind or character.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/65d12b35893d441fa09674512ef8b43d?v=9be9723c)

What people may think:

Depression is a sign of having a weak mind or character.

[But did you know](#common-misconceptions-sign-of-being-weak "Depression is a sign of having a weak mind or character.")

Some common depressive disorders include:

=========================================

1. Major depression

2. Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia)

3. Premenstrual dysphoric disorder

Major depression

Major depression is also known as major depressive disorder, classic depression, or unipolar depression. People with major depression experience sadness to such a degree that it affects functioning.

Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia)

Dysthymia or persistent depressive disorder is a milder form of major depression that lasts for two years or more.

Although persistent depressive disorder may not be as intense as major depression, it can still strain relationships and make daily tasks difficult.

![Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia) ](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/Dysthymia)

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder is a severe form of premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Sadness and other depressive symptoms arise due to hormonal fluctuations associated with the menstrual cycle.

These symptoms can get in the way of day-to-day functioning.

![Premenstrual dysphoric disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3dad99ce016e46ee82f5454fc6c36ab0?v=2ae6e77a)

[Previous](#some-common-depressive-disorders-carousel "Previous")

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[\> Next](#some-common-depressive-disorders-carousel "Next")

Causes

======

Depression is caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors.

Biological

1. \- Hereditary/genetic factors

2. \- Chemical imbalance

3. \- Existing conditions

4. Psychological

5. Environmental

Biological

Hereditary/genetic factors

Depression can run in families, indicating hereditary or genetic factors. Hence, some may be born with a higher risk of developing depression.

But having a relative with depression does not necessarily mean someone is vulnerable to depression.

![Biological Hereditary/genetic factors](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b6de74efeec646b69e87a529e431264b?v=a2c8bc84)

Biological

Chemical imbalance

Another possible cause of depression is a chemical imbalance in the brain, which affects one’s moods. Hormonal imbalances can also make someone vulnerable to depression.

![Biological Chemical imbalance](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/32826ed0beb04321b6ca59c681cc349e?v=84a7f147)

Biological

Existing conditions

Some conditions may also increase the risk of depression, e.g. cancer, stroke, arthritis, or heart disease.

![Biological Existing conditions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6afe823294ad42028ee2e66abc219739?v=fbd1b8aa)

Psychological

Psychological causes may also play a part in depression because of an individual’s biological factors and early life experiences.

People who are perfectionists, easily affected by criticism, and prone to anxiety may be more likely to suffer from depression.

![Psychological](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3b7a8fe642c14e8baf181f3289545dd7?v=98b66c08)

Environmental

Stressful or traumatic events can cause people to suffer from depression.

This includes relationship problems, worries over finances, loss of employment, or grief from the death of a loved one.

Social circumstances may also make us more vulnerable to depression, affecting those who feel lonely, have few or no friends, or suffer from a chronic illness.

![Environmental](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c96f928ec983420cb8bd0425231f3e4f?v=292b725c)

[Previous](#causesCarousel "Causes")

[\> Next](#causesCarousel "Causes")

Signs and symptoms

==================

A person who experiences five or more of these common signs and symptoms for more than two weeks may have depression.

The symptoms can be described

using the acronym

In SAD CAGES

============

![Signs and symptoms](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/bfbb1665ab174860a373ad50531ea3f6?v=41541aa9)

Loss of

IN

terest in activities

S

leep disturbances

A

ppetite changes

D

epressed mood or feelings of sadness over a sustained period

C

oncentration difficulties

A

ctivity level changes

G

uilt or shame

Low

E

nergy

S

uicidal thoughts due to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness

![Signs and symptoms](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/bfbb1665ab174860a373ad50531ea3f6?v=41541aa9)

The signs and symptoms can be managed with early treatment.

The following depressive disorders also have their individual symptoms:

#### [#### Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia)](#signs-and-symptoms-persistent-depressive-disorder "Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia)")

Symptoms of Dysthymia occur for at least two years. They include having a depressed mood and at least two of the following these symptoms:

![Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/Dysthymia)

Low self-esteem

Having too much or too little sleep

Feelings of hopelessness

Low energy or fatigue

Poor appetite or overeating

Poor concentration or

difficulty making decisions

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/feafe949608445b2ae1ca2fa176a538d?v=75c244a3)

#### [#### Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)](#signs-and-symptoms-premenstrual-dysphoric-disorder "Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia)")

Symptoms of PMDD typically appear in the week before menstruation and end a few days after the period begins. In PMDD, the individual has at least one symptom from the following two categories:

#### Category A

\* Sadness and despair

\* Irritability and anger

\* Anxiety

\* Extreme mood swings

#### Category B

\* Food cravings or binge eating

\* Feeling overwhelmed

\* Cramps, bloating, breast tenderness, joint and muscle pain

\* Decreased interest in usual activities

\* Difficulty in concentrating

\* Low energy or fatigue

\* Having too much or too little sleep

![Persistent depressive disorder (Dysthymia)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/Dysthymia)

Diagnosis

=========

To diagnose depression, a healthcare professional would conduct a detailed clinical interview in which he/she would ask about the individual’s past medical and psychiatric history, family history, current symptoms, and the impact on his/her functioning.

With the patient’s consent, the healthcare professional may also request to speak with a family member to gather more information. A standardised questionnaire, physical examination, and blood tests may be administered to assess for the presence and severity of depression.

![Diagnosis](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ad0d7edf41b047a0ad0614c8f04ed87d?v=bec3fdc3)

Treatment

=========

Depression is treatable. When depression is recognised and treated, a person’s quality of life can be greatly improved.

Treatment may consist of drug (antidepressant medication) and/or non-drug therapy. Often, a combination of both medication and [psychotherapy](#non-drug-therapy "Often, a combination of both medication and psychotherapy is used.")

is used. Patients may also be taught effective ways to deal with life stresses.

#### Medication

#### [#### How do medications help?](#depression-treatment-medications-help "How do medications help?")

Medications like antidepressants have mood-altering properties that seek to normalise the biochemical imbalances in the brain.

Medicine is prescribed based on the individual’s needs. There is no ‘one size fits all’ antidepressant. Some people respond better to one medicine than another.

![How do medications help?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dfeaace195c24951b69c1e6d4e303e9d?v=0374d7bb)

#### [#### How soon does it take effect?](#depression-treatment-how-soon "How soon does it take effect?")

With antidepressants, improvement does not usually show immediately. It takes about one to three weeks before changes occur, with some symptoms improving earlier in treatment than others. For example, energy levels may improve before feeling a lift in mood.

To give the medication time to work, it should be continued for at least 6 months (or longer) after symptom remission.

![How soon does it take effect?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d998821bd13d4227b4dc7809ffd95bee?v=621ae4fa)

#### [#### How long should someone be on medication?](#depression-treatment-how-long "How long should someone be on medication?")

Continuing or stopping medication must be advised by a healthcare professional. For those with several bouts of depression, long-term treatment may be necessary to prevent further depressive episodes.

It is vital to know that medication alone may not completely cure depression. However, to aid in recovery, it is effective in treating its symptoms together with psychotherapy.

![How long should someone be on medication?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c19bcb7d95bb4c8eafc4038e8ebf507a?v=10be8a2d)

![Treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e5e1de65d99b4bfdae3b6bca66f94940?v=30d1c9f5)

#### Non-drug therapy

1. Psychotherapy

2. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

3. Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT)

Psychotherapy

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4dd214295f9b40cea7e60814c45889cd?v=564f35fe)

Psychotherapy involves talking things through with a healthcare professional.

Talking to someone who can listen and understand without passing judgement can be a tremendous relief, helping in the solving of problems and the coping of life’s stressors.

![Psychotherapy](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4dd214295f9b40cea7e60814c45889cd?v=564f35fe)

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fd51a8023b344396a349131de65273b2?v=e8ae23ba)

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a form of psychotherapy found to be effective in treating depression.

It helps in recognising and changing negative thinking and behavioural patterns.

![Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/CBT)

Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/07cc921963d240778dd4b9c40698ca97?v=7f6e874b)

Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) involves the use of electric current and is only prescribed to those with severe depression who have not responded to treatment or are highly suicidal.

It involves passing a very small electric current through the brain. The procedure is carried out under general anaesthesia taking just a few minutes, while the patient is asleep.

![Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/ECT)

[Previous](#depression-non-drug)

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[\> Next](#depression-non-drug)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9949b91324e047abb1075229dcdfc189?v=41d1f2a7)

#### Learn to better manage depression with these tips:

1. Support networks

2. Exercise

3. Learn relaxation audio exercises and guided imagery

4. Practise good sleep hygiene

5. Eat a balanced diet

6. Manage unhelpful thoughts

7. Set realistic goals

8. Refrain from drinking

Support networks

Support groups offer fellowship where participants learn first-hand accounts of how others cope with depression. A support system can also be made up of people we trust, friends, parents, relatives or colleagues that will support us in times of need.

[Reaching out](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/seeking-support#How\_to\_reach\_out\_for\_support "Reaching out to connect and share about our thoughts and feelings can help us feel understood, explore new perspectives, and find different ways to resolve our difficulties.")

to connect and share about our thoughts and feelings can help us feel understood, explore new perspectives, and find different ways to resolve our difficulties.

![Support networks](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/247c29afa31841fc9aa6a79c01e90d65?v=5ee1921e)

Exercise

Exercise not only improves our health but releases endorphins (‘feel good’ hormones) that can elevate our mood. Check out these exercise ideas to [stay active](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/moveit/moveit-classes#home "Check out these exercise ideas to stay active.")

.

[Stay Well to Stay Strong - Stay Active](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/StayWell#stay-active)

[Exercise Ideas - \

Stay Active Anywhere, Anytime](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw\_CrLrIHQhW55gk3PRfkVoVFckcBVoeh)

[The Ultimate 20 Min Home Workout](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/440b6745c075472c80901e51fc3e1e7f?v=bc8da727)

![Exercise](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1254d7a06c0f403ebe47e31d6e6467fd?v=237f755c)

Learn relaxation audio exercises and guided imagery

\* \*\*Deep breathing exercises\*\*

Pick up deep breathing exercises as a method of relaxation

Your browser does not support the audio element.

\* \*\*Progressive muscle relaxation\*\*

Practise progressive muscle relaxation where a group of muscles is tensed as we breathe in and relaxed as we breathe out

Your browser does not support the audio element.

\* \*\*Guided imagery\*\*

Use guided imagery such as imagining ourselves at the beach, feeling the warm breeze on our skin

Your browser does not support the audio element.

\* \*\*Mindfulness\*\*

Consider mindfulness where we train our mind to pay

attention to the present moment without judging our

experiences

Your browser does not support the audio element.

![Learn relaxation audio exercises and guided imagery](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/77c1a8d521e64eb0acccae87f18d6815?v=b75eb616)

Practise good sleep hygiene

Poor sleep hygiene has been found to worsen depressive symptoms such as poor sleeping habits, making it a vicious cycle.

Learn how to adopt practical [sleep tips](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Sleeping-Well-Adults#what-can-we-do-to-get-a-good-nights-sleep "Learn how to adopt practical sleep tips for a good night’s rest.")

for a good night’s rest.

![Practise good sleep hygiene](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ba39186ae0b24def87bf87cd9919d4d7?v=fb12c0f7)

Eat a balanced diet

[A balanced diet](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/my-healthy-plate#home "A balanced diet may help improve our moods.")

may help improve our moods.

![Eat a balanced diet](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b8efc6c7aba748fa97501933f42f9447?v=a8e74203)

Manage unhelpful thoughts

Sometimes, unhelpful thinking patterns may magnify the negativity of the situation. For example, we may overgeneralise and think, “I have failed once, I will fail again for sure”.

Identify such negative thoughts to manage them more positively by using the [My Positivity Guide](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b5c629eaf01b49eab36da5bb619d402d?v=97c8913c "Identify such negative thoughts to manage them more positively by using the My Positivity Guide.")

. Reframe them and focus on the things we love.

![Manage unhelpful thoughts](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/aa9173d5b1d944748018fa42007a2bb3?v=745b783c)

Set realistic goals

Setting and accomplishing goals can be an overwhelming task when one has depression.

Use the SMART goal framework: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely to set reasonable and achievable goals.

Break down tasks into smaller chunks and affirm ourselves regularly.

![Set realistic goals](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/29c60d6116654dc5baafdc255e093669?v=abddd946)

Refrain from drinking

Avoid drowning our sorrows in alcohol as it depresses mood. It may give immediate relief, but it is only temporary.

![Refrain from drinking](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a7bb74c599784879baa9aa131b638eaa?v=79e9d6dd)

[Previous](#manage-depression "Learn to better manage depression with these tips:")

[\> Next](#manage-depression "Learn to better manage depression with these tips:")

![Learn to better manage depression with these tips:](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8fd50feb17c3461d875da5b83349864f?v=63bab9ab)

![Depression self-assessment tool](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/da454ca4808a4c19939c99ff43c62161?v=ea662b3d)

Depression self-assessment

tool

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![Depression self-assessment tool](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/da454ca4808a4c19939c99ff43c62161?v=ea662b3d)

Depression affects the body, mood, and thoughts to a point of dysfunction, impacting an individual’s ability to function at work, at school, and at home.

The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) is a set of 9 questions that those \*\*aged 12 and above\*\* can use to assess if they might be suffering from depression. It helps one take stock of where they are at, so they can make a plan to feel better soon.

\*\*Please note this is a self-assessment and not a medical diagnosis.\*\*

[Go to self-assessment](#depression-self-assessment "Go to self-assessment")

Mental health services

======================

Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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Caring for Ourselves

Living with OCD

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Adults

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\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/living-with-ocd-Youths#home)

\* Adults

\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/living-with-ocd-Seniors#home)

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\* [Understanding OCD](#understanding-ocd "Understanding OCD")

\* [The basics of OCD](#toggle)

\* [What is OCD?](#what-is-ocd "What is OCD?")

\* [Common misconceptions](#what-is-ocd-common-misconceptions "Common misconceptions")

\* [Is OCD the same as perfectionism?](#obsessive-compulsive-disorder-learn-more "Is OCD the same as perfectionism?")

\* [What causes OCD?](#ocd-causes-adult "What causes OCD?")

\* [How can we identify OCD?](#ocd-signs-and-symptoms-obsessions "How can we identify OCD?")

\* [How is OCD diagnosed?](#ocd-diagnosis "How is OCD diagnosed?")

\* [How is OCD being treated?](#ocd-treatment "How is OCD being treated?")

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Understanding

obsessive-compulsive

disorder

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As we go through the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, we are met with a fair share of challenges and issues. While some may learn to cope and overcome the new stressors, others may find these stressors overwhelming.

We may start having irrational thoughts and fears (obsessions) and develop behaviours such as repeating actions that come from those thoughts (compulsions). These obsessions and compulsions can be so immense that they affect our day-to-day activities.

The good news is, the obsessions and compulsions can be managed. Read on to find out more.

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The good news is, the obsessions and compulsions can be managed.

![Understanding obsessive-compulsive disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1b8dd49fd00c4935b8b1e8167328e130?v=517d39c5)

![Understanding obsessive-compulsive disorder](https://www.healthhub.sg/sites/assets/Assets/Programs/mindsg/phase-2/)

What is obsessive-compulsive disorder?

======================================

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is one of the top three most common mental health disorders.

Obsessions cause distress and anxiety to the person. These obsessions typically intrude into our thoughts and actions. In Singapore, it affects 1 in every 28 Singaporeans in their lifetime.

#### Common misconceptions:

What people may think:

![OCD is all about cleanliness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2c1526f8e66f44258c40a846448b50e1?v=8747e932)

OCD is all about cleanliness

[But did you know](#ocd-is-all-about-cleanliness "OCD is all about cleanliness")

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2c1526f8e66f44258c40a846448b50e1?v=8747e932)

What people may think:

![We’re all ‘a little OCD’](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f658ebf03e2f4cddb2a6001edd761ad9?v=0831fae6)

We’re all

‘a little OCD’

[But did you know](#we-are-all-a-little-ocd "We’re all ‘a little OCD’")

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f658ebf03e2f4cddb2a6001edd761ad9?v=0831fae6)

What people may think:

![People with OCD just need to relax](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8570dcd598ba4213849b70e90d587d2c?v=b5ea426c)

People with OCD just need to relax

[But did you know](#people-with-ocd-relax "People with OCD just need to relax")

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![What is obsessive-compulsive disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cd226b98938e45fd9abc7c2779c3d39d?v=4ecee33a)

#### Learn more

about OCD here

#### Learn more

about OCD here

#### Perfectionism vs OCD

There is a difference between being a perfectionist and having OCD. While we may sometimes find a need to keep the floors sparkly clean or have our knickknacks arranged in a certain manner, that does not necessarily mean that we have OCD.

With OCD, our quality of life decreases dramatically as we become consumed in carrying out compulsive behaviours and rituals.

Causes

======

![causes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5e041df1ab9b4672a43841e09dbb6892?v=e8300e9b)

OCD affects both adults and children. Because these obsessions and compulsions can be hard to ignore, OCD can become a long-term problem.

There are many possible causes of OCD. For example, it could be due to genetic and biological factors.

All of these may interact to trigger the development of OCD.

Underlying causes may also be further influenced by:

![Stressful life events](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f3fed9323d314b52b6221a4f3eae1a00?v=6e1d55a6)

Stressful life events

![Hormonal changes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4583626e2299425f8d5ed7bd8ef4bb9d?v=f4089174)

Hormonal changes

![Personality traits](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6b6a0e193ea44975bddda9bc09e64882?v=39abd24e)

Personality traits

Causes

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Hormonal changes

![Personality traits](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6b6a0e193ea44975bddda9bc09e64882?v=39abd24e)

Personality traits

Signs and symptoms

==================

Obsessions Obsessions

Obsessions are repeated, persistent, unwanted ideas, thoughts, images, or impulses that are experienced involuntarily at some time. They typically intrude into our thoughts and actions.

#### Common obsessions include:

Common obsessions include:

Fear of hurting someone.

Need for symmetry and exactness.

Irrational fears of contamination from dirt or germs.

Distressing religious thoughts.

Examples of these kinds of thoughts include obscenities related to religious figures or making themselves excessively accountable for breaking religious codes of conduct.

Distressing sexually intrusive thoughts. This includes sexual thoughts about friends, family, children, or animals.

These thoughts are unwanted, intrusive and cause extreme anxiety and distress. They do not bring pleasure to the person.

![Signs and symptoms common obsessions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3367e584fbb24d569d1f029382c83a31?v=a4492084) ![Signs and symptoms common obsessions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3367e584fbb24d569d1f029382c83a31?v=a4492084)

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Compulsions Compulsions

Compulsions can be behavioural (actions) or mental (thoughts). They are repetitive actions that are often carried out in a special pattern or according to specific rules. Compulsions are usually performed to try and prevent an obsessive fear from happening, to reduce the anxiety the obsessive thought creates, or to make things feel “just right”.

#### Common compulsions include:

Common compulsions include:

Excessive checking

Excessive cleaning and washing

Continuously thinking the same thought

Mentally repeating words or numbers a certain number of times

![Signs and symptoms common compulsions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/65017b7624034541853da55ee6801a34?v=db8dea1b)

These symptoms may not actually mean OCD as they may also be present in people with other medical and neurological conditions, such as:

Tourette’s syndrome

characterised by sudden, repetitive, rapid, and unwanted movements or vocal sounds

![Tourette’s syndrome](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/095df82d5dbb4678869a2ee7503925b1?v=8a072781)

Autism spectrum disorder

where one experiences difficulties with social interaction and communication

![Autism spectrum disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/15a23b81b30447209f5f43c36af48561?v=cb440bfe)

Epilepsy

which causes seizures or unusual sensations and behaviours

![Epilepsy](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b4ae51e7303b47d6ba7432a778155f7d?v=8ab1910b)

Brain injury

caused by head traumas

![Brain injury](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a9308fd1bcdf493bb5ad2c201f251dbe?v=8f3d22b6)

The signs and symptoms can be managed with early treatment.

Diagnosis

=========

To diagnose OCD, a healthcare professional would conduct a detailed clinical interview in which he/she would ask about the individual’s past medical and psychiatric history, family history, current symptoms, and the impact on his/her functioning.

With the patient’s consent, the healthcare professional may also request to speak with a family member to gather more information. A standardised questionnaire may be administered to assess for the presence and severity of OCD. A physical examination and some blood tests may also be done.

![Diagnosis](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1c44f98529f643a996e360e6a089fab1?v=df9a9d75)

Treatment

=========

A combination of medication and cognitive behavioural therapy (a form of therapy to identify and change unhealthy behaviours) has been found to be effective in significantly reducing the symptoms of OCD.

The treatment may not result in a cure, but it can help bring symptoms under control so that they don’t rule over our daily life. Depending on the severity of OCD, some may need long-term, ongoing, or more intensive treatment.

#### [#### Medication](#ocd-treatment-medication "Medication")

Medication has been found to be an effective way to reduce OCD symptoms. A common medication prescribed is a class of drugs called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs).

SSRIs work by increasing the serotonin levels (our body’s chemical messengers that help stabilise our mood) in our brain. This, in turn, helps to decrease OCD symptoms.

Most people will have no or only mild side effects. It will take a few weeks before one sees an improvement in the symptoms. Medication may be prescribed or recommended at the clinical judgment of the healthcare professional.

![Medication](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1bd0acb0ed7749acbe545b0be38b1f10?v=83bceee2)

#### [#### Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)](#ocd-treatment-cognitive-behavioural-therapy "Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)")

CBT is a treatment approach that helps us recognise negative or unhelpful thoughts and behaviour patterns. It aims to help develop alternative ways of thinking and behaving to reduce psychological distress.

A specific form of CBT used for clients is Exposure and Response Prevention therapy in which the individual is deliberately exposed to the obsessional trigger, and then prevented from engaging in the associated repetitive behaviour.

With repeated and prolonged exposure to triggers, habituation eventually takes place. In addition, it is also useful to learn how to cope with our anxiety and stress. The combination of medication and CBT often increases the chance of achieving the intended results.

![Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/CBT)

![treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d9b7ffc7155644ccad70383edbcf2035?v=1239f9a4)

Coping with OCD

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Anyone can have a medical condition - some people have hypertension, others are diabetic. It is important to understand that these conditions don’t define who they are. OCD doesn’t define a person, and it doesn’t make them who they are.

To complement the treatment for OCD, here are some coping strategies to help us through this period.

![Accept our thoughts without judgement](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3c8dd9c68e974641b2274e7620669966?v=41ea3456)

Accept our thoughts without

judgement

We may find that holding back our thoughts may have…

[READ MORE](#coping-with-ocd-accept-our-thoughts "Accept our thoughts without judgement")

![Understand how OCD works](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b098f60b069c4786a8876877ca60d273?v=b00a561e)

Understand how OCD works

When engaging in the compulsions of OCD, we may find ourselves…

[READ MORE](#coping-with-ocd-understand-how-it-works "Understand how OCD works")

![Recognise that OCD is not us and is separate from who we are](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ce905ad789bf469a8cfa1d9113c41ed4?v=fd828fda)

Recognise that OCD is not us and is separate from who we are

OCD tricks us into thinking that our fears are real and need…

[READ MORE](#coping-with-ocd-recognise-its-not-us "Recognise that OCD is not us and is separate from who we are")

![Accept mistakes if they happen, and avoid being too harsh with ourselves over it](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fbc32db268a54435926b17b057ba4822?v=64bf2b19)

Accept mistakes if they happen, and avoid being too harsh with ourselves over it

Remind ourselves that a single mistake does not…

[READ MORE](#coping-with-ocd-accept-mistakes "Accept mistakes if they happen, and avoid being too harsh with ourselves over it")

![Practise relaxation techniques](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/34e7efcdf233409c861c46bb5a7a5f59?v=ff02dfbb)

Practise relaxation techniques

These relaxation and guided imagery audio exercises may be helpful…

[READ MORE](#coping-with-ocd-relaxation-techniques "Practise relaxation techniques")

![Coping with OCD](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/53cc1106a86643e08a7f5f8e5137041d?v=8cd0e127)

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Caring for Ourselves

Dealing with

Anxiety Disorder

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Adults

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\* Adults

\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/dealing-with-anxiety-disorder-Seniors#home)

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Understanding anxiety disorder](#understanding-anxiety "Understanding anxiety disorder")

\* [What is anxiety disorder?](#what-is-anxiety "What is anxiety disorder?")

\* [The basics of anxiety](#toggle)

\* [How does it affect us?](#how\_anxiety\_disorders\_affect\_us "How does it affect us?")

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\* [Types of anxiety disorders](#different-types-of-anxiety "Types of anxiety disorders")

\* [What causes anxiety disorders?](#anxiety-causes "What causes anxiety disorders?")

\* [How do we identify anxiety disorders?](#signs-and-symptoms "How do we identify anxiety disorders?")

\* [How are anxiety disorders diagnosed?](#anxiety-diagnosis "How are anxiety disorders diagnosed?")

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Understanding anxiety disorder

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![Understanding anxiety disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/05dc5b9cfefc4499b8cecba2a12bc5ec?v=93c3a9d4)

Feeling anxious every now and then is a normal part of life. We might feel anxious as we go through big changes in our lives, when we do something new, or when we are confronted with our fears.

For some of us, these feelings of anxiousness will eventually go away on their own. However, for others, it might linger for a long period, even after those events have passed.

Don’t be quick to dismiss our anxious feelings. If left unmanaged, that sense of worry and dread may develop into anxiety disorders and affect our day-to-day activities. Read on to learn about anxiety and what we can do about it.

Feeling anxious every now and then is a normal part of life. We might feel anxious as we go through big changes in our lives, when we do something new, or when we are confronted with our fears.

For some of us, these feelings of anxiousness will eventually go away on their own. However, for others, it might linger for a long period, even after those events have passed.

Don’t be quick to dismiss our anxious feelings. If left unmanaged, that sense of worry and dread may develop into anxiety disorders and affect our day-to-day activities.

![Understanding anxiety disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/05dc5b9cfefc4499b8cecba2a12bc5ec?v=93c3a9d4)

What is anxiety disorder?

=========================

Anxiety disorder occurs when a person’s anxiety is persistent, excessive, and irrational. This is different from anxiety, a common, normal, and appropriate feeling of worry, nervousness or unease when dealing with day-to-day stresses or problems.

![What is anxiety disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5d6d8b866b5f43508133f467e2faabbe?v=cffdf076)

![What is anxiety disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5d6d8b866b5f43508133f467e2faabbe?v=cffdf076)

How does it affect us?

======================

When we have anxiety disorders, we frequently have worries and fears that interfere with daily activities. These feelings are difficult to control, out of proportion, and can last a long time, affecting us in the following ways:

\* The way we lead our lives, e.g. avoiding the fear and anxiety-provoking situations

\* Our ability to work

\* Our ability to cope with the demands of life or relationships

#### Common misconceptions:

What people may think:

![Feeling anxious is the same as having an anxiety disorder.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7ff9acb06cc471882f1ace11264e42a?v=b48a2b91)

What people may think:

Feeling anxious is the same as having an anxiety disorder.

[But did you know](#common-misconceptions-feeling-anxious "Feeling anxious is the same as having an anxiety disorder.")

What people may think:

![Anxiety disorders only happen to those who are often stressed and worry a lot.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0027184c69b74b7db3eff6f55eca5488?v=5c22a3b1)

What people may think:

Anxiety disorders only happen to those who are often stressed and worry a lot.

[But did you know](#common-misconceptions-stressed-worry "Anxiety disorders only happen to those who are often stressed and worry a lot.")

What people may think:

![Anxiety disorders will go away on their own.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/01bdc5f692ab4fe39d24e1e7b6c717c2?v=5e40da42)

What people may think:

Anxiety disorders will go away on their own.

[But did you know](#common-misconceptions-stressed-worry-causes "Anxiety disorders will go away on their own.")

![How does it affect us](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1e30525821934967838f9eff71a2d634?v=e1de1d43)

![How does it affect us](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5d9c000dde4b4984afba5d041c0faade?v=95c0fd6a)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/06a8c6a360eb45ca8c2b7162e672d337?v=b1bf0671)

What are the different

types of anxiety disorders?

====================================================

There are different types of anxiety disorders. Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is a common anxiety disorder

that affects 2 in every 100 Singaporeans in their lifetime.

Other common anxiety disorders include panic disorder and specific phobias.

#### [#### Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)](#generalised-anxiety-disorder "Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)")

![Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/GAD)

People with GAD face excessive anxiety and worry over various situations. GAD is diagnosed when a person finds it difficult to control his/her worry over a prolonged period of at least 6 months. Learn more about GAD here:

![Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/GAD)

#### [#### Panic disorder](#panic-disorder "Panic disorder")

![Panic disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7b35bac820447cda69770dd317bbbc2?v=1042e8ff)

Panic attacks are sudden episodes of intense anxiety. They may occur out of the blue without any real danger.

With panic disorder, an individual experiences recurrent and unexpected panic attacks over a period of a month.

They develop a constant fear of future panic attacks and begin to change their

behaviours (e.g. avoiding certain places) to prevent experiencing it again.

![Panic disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7b35bac820447cda69770dd317bbbc2?v=1042e8ff)

#### [#### Specific phobias](#specific-phobias "Specific phobias")

![Specific phobias](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/51c2729315794e60b05b048d56b76536?v=7bd529a7)

People with specific phobias experience excessive and unreasonable fears over a period of 6 months.

The fears range from thunder to lizards, or situations such as confined spaces, height, or flying.

Although these objects and situations are not dangerous, they provoke immense anxiety and avoidance from those with the phobia.

![Specific phobias](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/51c2729315794e60b05b048d56b76536?v=7bd529a7)

Some people may be affected by more than one anxiety disorder or have other mental health conditions, e.g. depression, at the same time.

This is not uncommon and a healthcare professional will be able to determine which condition(s) an individual has.

Causes

======

Causes

======

There are generally three factors in understanding the possible causes of anxiety disorders:

Biological

1. \* Side effects of certain medications

2. \* Underlying health issues

3. Psychological

4. Social

##### Biological

This includes inherited genetic traits or the amygdala (the part of our brain that processes fear) being more reactive when facing threats.

The healthcare professional may conduct tests to determine if the anxiety disorder is a result of an existing medical issue. Existing health issues or side effects from some medications may also cause anxiety symptoms.

This includes inherited genetic traits or chemical imbalances in the brain.

The healthcare professional may conduct tests to determine if the anxiety disorder is a result of an underlying medical issue. Underlying health issues or side effects from some medications may also cause anxiety symptoms.

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##### Biological

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Underlying health issues or side effects from some medications may also cause anxiety symptoms.

![Side effects of certain medications](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/258a0a32c0534eb4b1211bf15e83bf5b?v=e194b430)

##### Side effects of certain medications

Medications that may cause symptoms of anxiety disorder include:

\* Cortisone

\* Adderall

\* Ventolin

\* Thyroid medicine

![Side effects of certain medications](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/258a0a32c0534eb4b1211bf15e83bf5b?v=e194b430)

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This includes inherited genetic traits or chemical imbalances in the brain. The healthcare professional may conduct tests to determine if the anxiety disorder is a result of an underlying medical issue.

Underlying health issues or side effects from some medications may also cause anxiety symptoms.

![Underlying health issues](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0d4ecdb7ac9347daae6e96cf79fd4689?v=6f37d1ef)

##### Underlying health issues

Medical problems that may cause symptoms of anxiety disorder include:

\* Heart disease

\* Diabetes

\* Thyroid problems, such as hyperthyroidism

\* Respiratory disorders, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma

![Underlying health issues](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0d4ecdb7ac9347daae6e96cf79fd4689?v=6f37d1ef)

##### Biological

![Psychological](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8b57f51d287f4651a73b8baf5b403c6d?v=c7d3e22c)

##### Psychological

This includes negative thinking patterns such as the perception of not having control over the environment and/or emotions.

![Psychological](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8b57f51d287f4651a73b8baf5b403c6d?v=c7d3e22c)

##### Biological

![Social](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/aa966b16d62a4bd19776d007aecb4f52?v=68754d74)

##### Social

This refers to lived experiences such as traumatic events or the environment we grew up in.

![Social](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/aa966b16d62a4bd19776d007aecb4f52?v=68754d74)

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Causes

======

Causes

======

There are generally three factors in understanding the possible causes of anxiety disorders:

1. \* Side effects of certain medications

2. \* Underlying health issues

3. Psychological

4. Social

##### Biological

Chronic illnesses such as heart problems, and joint and muscle issues, may also increase the risk of developing anxiety disorders. Other biological causes include inherited genetic traits or chemical imbalances in the brain.

The healthcare professional may request for tests to determine if the anxiety disorder is a result of an underlying medical issue. Underlying health issues or side effects from some medications may also cause anxiety symptoms.

##### Biological

This includes inherited genetic traits or chemical imbalances in the brain. The healthcare professional may conduct tests to determine if the anxiety disorder is a result of an underlying medical issue.

Underlying health issues or side effects from some medications may also cause anxiety symptoms.

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This includes negative thinking patterns such as the perception of not having control over the environment and/or emotions.

![Psychological](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8b57f51d287f4651a73b8baf5b403c6d?v=c7d3e22c)

##### Biological

![Social](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/aa966b16d62a4bd19776d007aecb4f52?v=68754d74)

##### Social

This refers to lived experiences such as traumatic events or the environment we grew up in.

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Signs and symptoms

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\*\*Some common signs and symptoms of anxiety disorders include:\*\*

Chest pain/discomfort

Cold, numb/tingly hands

and feet

Difficulties remaining calm and staying still

Dizziness

Excessive fear, panic, and feelings

of uneasiness

Heart palpitations

Shortness of breath

Sweating

![Signs and symptoms anxiety disorders](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9490116dc2bb4e1b81157c6414b58a6f?v=9cfc63b2)

\*\*Other additional symptoms distinct to GAD, panic disorder and specific phobias are:\*\*

1. Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

2. Panic disorder

3. Specific phobias

![Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/GAD)

#### Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

\* Excessive worrying that is difficult to control

\* Difficulty concentrating

\* Fatigue

\* Irritability

\* Muscle tension

\* Restlessness or feeling on edge

\* Sleep disturbance

![Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/GAD)

![Panic disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7b35bac820447cda69770dd317bbbc2?v=1042e8ff)

#### Panic disorder

\* Recurrent panic attacks

\* Persistent concern/worry about future panic attacks and their consequences

\* Fear of losing control and/or dying

\* Maladaptive change in behaviour to avoid having panic attacks

\* Physical symptoms such as chest discomfort, difficulty breathing, giddiness and nausea

![Panic disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7b35bac820447cda69770dd317bbbc2?v=1042e8ff)

![Specific phobias](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/51c2729315794e60b05b048d56b76536?v=7bd529a7)

#### Specific phobias

\* Distinct fear or anxiety about a specific object or situation

\* The specific object or situation almost always provokes immediate fear or anxiety

\* Specific objects or situations are actively avoided or endured with intense anxiety

\* The fear or anxiety is out of proportion to the actual threat of the object and to the sociocultural context

![Specific phobias](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/51c2729315794e60b05b048d56b76536?v=7bd529a7)

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The signs and symptoms can be managed with early treatment.

Diagnosis

=========

To diagnose an anxiety disorder, a healthcare professional would conduct a detailed clinical interview in which he/she would ask about the individual’s past medical and psychiatric history, family history, current symptoms, and the impact on his/her functioning.

With the patient’s consent, there may also be requests to speak with a family member to gather more information. A physical examination and some blood tests may also be done.

![Diagnosis](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1c44f98529f643a996e360e6a089fab1?v=df9a9d75)

![Treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/74d0e90bcd03484ab4f159b058b6f140?v=94a19e97)

Treatment

=========

Medication and psychotherapy are effective treatments

to help reduce the signs and symptoms of anxiety disorders.

#### [#### Medication](#treatment-medication "Medication")

![Medication](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1c12f1a1677d454abd98b6f5720b032a?v=4e35bb8a)

Anxiety disorders respond well to treatment if they are identified and treated early. Antidepressants are effective in treating anxiety disorders. A short course of benzodiazepines may also be prescribed for short term relief of anxiety symptoms.

When combined with psychotherapy, medication results in a lower risk of relapse and better control of symptoms. The advice of a healthcare professional is required for the continuation or stopping of medication.

![Medication](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1c12f1a1677d454abd98b6f5720b032a?v=4e35bb8a)

#### [#### Effective therapies](#treatment-effective-therapies "Effective therapies")

![Effective therapies](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/919c7e311b8d4da881df646575043224?v=9cc566ea)

Psychological therapies are treatments used to improve a person’s mental health. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is commonly used for anxiety disorder and it is a psychological treatment focused on improving mood by recognising and changing unhelpful thought patterns.

A subtype of CBT that may be deployed is Exposure Therapy (EP), where patients are incrementally and gradually exposed to things or situations that make them anxious. This therapy seeks to help them reduce the distress experienced.

![Effective therapies](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/919c7e311b8d4da881df646575043224?v=9cc566ea)

#### [#### Coping skills](#treatment-coping-skills "Coping skills")

![Coping skills](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6af8ce938dee412c9a7ae68ba95af43a?v=ad614a4f)

Positive coping skills are crucial for treatment. Simple strategies such as being aware of what makes us anxious, learning relaxation techniques and having regular exercise help to reduce anxiety, and can contribute to our mental well-being. Here are some [tips](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/About-Mental-Well-Being#okay-adopt-coping-skills "Here are some tips that can help us cope with our anxiety.")

that can help us cope with our anxiety.

\*\*Grounding ourselves\*\*

Grounding is a technique to help us bring ourselves to the present moment when anxious thoughts or feelings get too overwhelming. A simple grounding exercise is to describe, in specific details, the things we are feeling, hearing and seeing. We can practise this with a trusted adult.

\*\*Spending time with friends or family\*\*

Spending time with people we love and trust can help tide us through difficult periods. Sharing about how we feel can help us explore new ways of seeing things and understand why we are experiencing certain anxious feelings. Learn how we can reach out to others [tips](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/seeking-support#How\_to\_reach\_out\_for\_support)

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![Coping skills](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6af8ce938dee412c9a7ae68ba95af43a?v=ad614a4f)

![Treatment anxiety disorders](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/753735e2cec14957b89df06070f19437?v=9ac2f655)

![Anxiety self-assessment tool](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9eb9a6f2590746dab81ccedd8f96e941?v=2d97d543)

Anxiety self-assessment

tool

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![Anxiety self-assessment tool](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9eb9a6f2590746dab81ccedd8f96e941?v=2d97d543)

Anxiety disorder is when our anxiety (feelings of worry, nervousness, or unease) is persistent, excessive, and irrational.

The General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) is a set of 7 questions that those \*\*aged 12 and above\*\* can use to assess if they might be suffering from anxiety disorder and to take steps to feel better.

\*\*Please note this is a self-assessment and not a medical diagnosis.\*\*

[Go to self-assessment](#anxiety-self-assessment "Go to self-assessment")

Useful self-help tools

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[![Manage anxiety at work](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9412053353d7488596459320c4e3bec2?v=1523da17)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8c2050c3dbda4e52a73bfc4fabc39752?v=611bde5d "Manage anxiety at work")

[![Recharge from workplace burnout](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/927b1ed3f1844e02886bfddc8a190e6c?v=b007c8af)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e443b7ef2d0b45b3ab2c04fd69b1300c?v=00588f7b "Recharge from workplace burnout")

[![Managing anxiety at home](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/603cf8361f674deca20f1509c5dcab09?v=2c90657a)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a1d4594c900f4aaebb7886e6fe6cfc6d?v=6afc4be2 "Managing anxiety at home")

Mental health services

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Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88bbcdcc2a3a43ea9954937c7ba75eb4?v=67c6e7a0)](#helplines "Helplines")

Caring for Ourselves

Managing

Dementia

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Seniors

\* Seniors

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Understanding dementia](#understanding-dementia "Understanding dementia")

\* [The basics of dementia and its misconceptions](#what-is-dementia "The basics of dementia and its misconceptions")

\* [How does dementia affect us?](#how-does-dementia-affect-us "How does dementia affect us?")

\* [Common types of dementia](#different-types-of-dementia "Common types of dementia")

\* [How do we identify dementia?](#dementia-signs-and-symptoms "How do we identify dementia?")

\* [How is dementia diagnosed?](#dementia-diagnosis "How is dementia diagnosed?")

\* [List of memory clinics](#memory-clinic "List of memory clinics")

\* [How is dementia treated?](#dementia-treatment "How is dementia treated?")

\* [Where can I learn more about dementia?](#dementia-supplementary-resource "Where can I learn more about dementia?")

\* [Mental health services](#mental-health-services "Mental health services")

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![Understanding dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/44d5aa842bf9411cabfb41e5ff1f59e6?v=c349359b)

Understanding dementia

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![Understanding dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/15594bd566454fa49ea0d8d6a3ce7d63?v=5f066bc5)

At this stage of our lives, we have more opportunity to devote time to ourselves and the things we like to do. With much of the responsibilities of caring for our families and/or our busy working lives behind us, we can enjoy life at a more leisurely pace.

We would also begin to experience normal age-related memory changes such as occasionally misplacing things. However, if the bouts of forgetfulness are persistent and other cognitive declines appear (e.g. forgetting how to go home despite taking the same routes for years), they may be signs of dementia.

As dementia can affect our lives greatly, it is important to learn more about this topic.

What is dementia?

=================

![What is dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8fffbb8b20a44dfabd80d86df2a8290d?v=c6266dd6) ![What is dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/880e1f1974424386978e26d449d91de9?v=d34c311f)

Slight changes in memory may occur naturally as we age, be it simple forgetfulness or delay in recalling names, dates, and events. Experiencing small memory lapses and becoming forgetful does not necessarily mean that we have dementia.

![What is dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8fffbb8b20a44dfabd80d86df2a8290d?v=c6266dd6)

\*\*Let’s learn about the common misconceptions about dementia:\*\*

![Dementia is a natural part of ageing.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/22792b3966b14d218b0ffd2a447973a3?v=98893fee)

What people may think:

Dementia is a natural

part of ageing.

\*\*But did you know?\*\*

Dementia is not a part of normal ageing. It is an illness that affects the brain, leading to progressive memory loss, decline in cognitive abilities (relating to the processes of thinking and reasoning), and personality changes.

In normal ageing, a person may still be able to:

\* Go about their daily activities and function independently, despite occasional forgetfulness

\* Make decisions

\* Recall and describe significant events

\* Engage in conversations with others

On the other hand, a person living with dementia may find it challenging to carry out these activities.

![Dementia is a natural part of ageing.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)

![Dementia is the same as Alzheimer’s Disease.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/54a9232c5d494a709436d4fdb2491b6a?v=a236b3cc)

What people may think:

Dementia is the same

as Alzheimer’s Disease.

\*\*But did you know?\*\*

There are different types of dementia, each with different causes and symptoms.

[Alzheimer’s Disease](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Managing-Dementia-Seniors#alzheimer-disease "Alzheimer’s Disease is one type of dementia.")

is one type of dementia.

The different types of dementia have something in common, i.e. changes happening in the brain.

![Dementia is the same as Alzheimer’s Disease.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)

![There is nothing we can do to prevent dementia.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1998663d07b24c33ae2df019371b431f?v=635dffa9)

What people may think:

There is nothing we can

do to prevent dementia.

\*\*But did you know?\*\*

There are things we can do to lower the risk, or to delay the onset of dementia:

\* Be physically active and exercise regularly

\* Keep blood pressure at a healthy level

\* Monitor blood glucose if we have diabetes

\* Eat a balanced diet

\* Quit smoking

\* Go for regular health screening

\* Refrain from heavy alcohol intake

\* Be socially engaged

\* Sleep well

\* Stimulate our minds by playing strategy games and puzzles or learning something new such as:

\* playing a musical instrument

\* trying to eat with the hand we don’t usually use

\* taking a new route home

\* breaking an old habit

![There is nothing we can do to prevent dementia.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)

[Learn other misconceptions](https://www.dementiahub.sg/what-is-dementia/debunking-myths-about-dementia/ "Learn other misconceptions")

How does dementia affect us?

============================

Dementia is the name for a group of brain disorders that result in the loss of intellectual abilities such as memory and reasoning. It is a syndrome with a group of symptoms that doesn’t have a definitive diagnosis. Adults of any age can be affected by dementia.

Based on the Well-being of the Singapore Elderly (WiSE) nationwide study by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), 1 in 10 people aged 60 years and above has dementia. Those with dementia may gradually find the following challenging:

![Thinking and reasoning](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/26cc20a57433414aadec6f9b64920dba?v=2228f477)

Thinking and reasoning

![Problem-solving and making judgements/reasoning](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/992b85db694e49d5bfcccae8764ba347?v=90037fc6)

Problem-solving and making

judgements/reasoning

![Remembering new information or recalling recent events](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9ec1496ca70346daabff3477bc4449c6?v=cd577843)

Remembering new information

or recalling recent events

![Learning new information and skills](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d986f8575cb344b4bad2af5c22d0fa24?v=c1024cd2)

Learning new

information and skills

![Recognising familiar faces and items](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4cf7872fb9034ac09fa40d6dbff371b7?v=7295c39b)

Recognising familiar

faces and items

![Finding the right words to communicate](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d465538ebeef4b6991cae7fd6705e709?v=97e09176)

Finding the right words

to communicate

There are different types of dementia, some common ones include:

----------------------------------------------------------------

left

1. What is it?

2. What causes it?

3. How does it affect us?

\* [Vascular Dementia](#vascular-dementia "Vascular Dementia")

\* [Alzheimer’s Disease](#alzheimer-disease "Alzheimer’s Disease")

\* [Lewy Body Dementia](#lewy-body-dementia "Lewy Body Dementia")

\* [Fronto-Temporal Dementia](#fronto-temporal-dementia "Fronto-Temporal Dementia")

#### What is it?

![What is it? - Vascular Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e162f0272db34cfcba591e19d72a8745?v=6e5b6f07)

Vascular dementia is an illness that affects the brain, leading to progressive memory loss, decline in intellectual ability and personality changes.

#### What causes it?

![What causes it? - Vascular Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7a2f5fc4c7324575acdd74a984702510?v=916f1600)

Vascular dementia is caused by reduced supply of blood to the brain due to damaged or blocked blood vessels, depriving the brain cells of vital oxygen and nutrients.

Memory loss isn’t the typical first symptom. Instead, people with vascular dementia can have different signs, depending on the area of the brain that’s affected, such as problems with planning or judgement.

There are many factors that can increase the chances of damage to blood vessels in the brain, which in effect increases the risk of getting vascular dementia:

![High blood pressure](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8d91cc8008064d6f8e22a4c4a48742ee?v=4bffc640)

High blood pressure

![High cholesterol](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a2249b8b18934de081e0d26a986cef98?v=865d1afb)

High cholesterol

![Type 2 diabetes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d4a5ade5f00d4c86b3cb45ebcae19425?v=9b04ba87)

Type 2 diabetes

![Obesity](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b61d4c2d7999427681c3491185d0e7f5?v=0795088a)

Obesity

![Smoking](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f84237461b2a41f8b4c4504f64eb6776?v=93746ac8)

Smoking

![Stroke](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e0e2bf4cc9ec49868eb10a858b4e38e2?v=b4c40166)

Stroke

Learn more [here](https://youtu.be/L0lYvxsszBE "Learn more here and how to reduce your risk.")

and how to reduce your [risk](/programmes/160/aap/dementia#how-to-reduce-your-risk "Learn more here and how to reduce your risk.")

.

#### How does it affect us?

![How does it affect us? - Vascular Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/30d1d7cd6d984c52a819feb166004ab8?v=de6e8e34)

It affects our ability to think, learn and make decisions.

[Previous](#vascular-dementia\_carousel)

[\> Next](#vascular-dementia\_carousel)

#### What is it?

![What is it? - Alzheimer’s Disease](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4f3fcaf29b1c4b9699e7cd3b6de0308d?v=1da25600)

Alzheimer’s disease is a progressive condition which means it gets worse over time. The disease causes the brain to shrink (atrophy) and brain cells to die.

Alzheimer’s disease happens when proteins (called plaque) and fibres (called tangles) builds up in a person’s brain, which then blocks the nerve signals and destroys the nerve cells.

#### What causes it?

![What causes it? - Alzheimer’s Disease](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7a2f5fc4c7324575acdd74a984702510?v=916f1600)

There is no single cause. Alzheimer’s disease is likely developed as a result of multiple factors, such as genetics, lifestyle, and environment.

The risk factors include:

\* Ageing

\* Gender: women are at a higher risk

\* Family history: having a parent or sibling with Alzheimer’s disease

\* Down syndrome: those with this disorder are more likely to get Alzheimer’s disease in their 30s and 40s

\* Major head injury

\* Others: high cholesterol levels and high blood pressure

#### How does it affect us?

![How does it affect us? - Alzheimer’s Disease](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/30d1d7cd6d984c52a819feb166004ab8?v=de6e8e34)

While the memory loss may be mild at first, it builds up over time affecting our ability to function independently. We may also see a decline in thinking, behavioural, and social skills.

[Previous](#alzheimer-disease\_carousel)

[\> Next](#alzheimer-disease\_carousel)

#### What is it?

![What is it? - Lewy Body Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/116a78090cd74fc09bb733954066fd6e?v=062d22b8)

Lewy Body Dementia is a type of dementia that shares the features of Parkinson’s disease, e.g. slowness, trembling, rigid muscles, and vivid visual hallucinations. Lewy Body Dementia is caused by Lewy bodies – abnormal clumps of protein called alpha-synuclein.

They build up in the cortex of our brain, which handles learning and memory, resulting in dementia symptoms.

#### What causes it?

![What causes it? - Lewy Body Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7a2f5fc4c7324575acdd74a984702510?v=916f1600)

Specific causes of Lewy Body Dementia are still unknown. There are no genes that have been conclusively linked to the condition. Most people diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia have no family history of the condition.

#### How does it affect us?

![How does it affect us? - Lewy Body Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/30d1d7cd6d984c52a819feb166004ab8?v=de6e8e34)

At the early stage, we may experience problems with attention which affect activities like driving as well as sleeping issues.

We may also encounter hallucinations and slowed, unbalanced movements.

At the later stage, issues with memory loss may show up.

[Previous](#lewy-body-dementia\_carousel)

[\> Next](#lewy-body-dementia\_carousel)

#### What is it?

![What is it? - Fronto-Temporal Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f5552a47f9fb4009bcfee13095c8614e?v=8f916558)

This form of dementia involves the loss of nerve cells in the front and at the side of our brain – behind the forehead and ears. It is a common cause of early onset dementia.

#### What causes it?

![What causes it? - Fronto-Temporal Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7a2f5fc4c7324575acdd74a984702510?v=916f1600)

There are no known risk factors for Fronto-Temporal Dementia except for a family history of a similar disorder.

#### How does it affect us?

![How does it affect us? - Fronto-Temporal Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/30d1d7cd6d984c52a819feb166004ab8?v=de6e8e34)

Unusual personality, behaviour changes and trouble with language may be observed. Some will also have a hard time with writing and comprehension.

[Previous](#fronto-temporal-dementia\_carousel)

[\> Next](#fronto-temporal-dementia\_carousel)

![Different type of dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/34249270c9104f0580d83f8a7aa77b6c?v=7f7d50f7)

Signs and Symptoms

==================

Look out for the common signs and symptoms of dementia in these areas:

![Activities of daily living](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5426caa430b14e4d9d4e820a0a35dec5?v=247db05f)

Activities of

daily living

[Read More](#signs-and-symptoms-activities "Activities of daily living")

![Behaviours](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4ed0a2f5bb714d46a4297d90c6d2ea9e?v=b21c296d)

Behaviours

[Read More](#signs-and-symptoms-behaviours "Behaviours")

![Cognition](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d5cdd33fab70491a8bafe5458ca196e8?v=bcc7ceee)

Cognition

[Read More](#signs-and-symptoms-cognition "Cognition")

![Disorientation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e30ef43f8b0f4d05866e5137facc1a0c?v=54fc41b2)

Disorientation

[Read More](#signs-and-symptoms-disorientation "Disorientation")

Diagnosis

=========

For those who have noticed signs of dementia and are unsure where to get a diagnosis, watch this video to learn more.

![Treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/30fecea7260e482a96c3df37e865e155?v=4d2f7fed)

To address our concerns, the first person we can go to is our family doctor at the polyclinics or nearby general practitioner (GP) clinics. He or she may then refer us to the relevant specialists:

\* Neurologists: Specialising in disorders of the brain and nervous system

\* Geriatricians: Specially trained in treating older adults, especially those aged 65 and above

\* Geriatric psychiatrists: Focusing on prevention, evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders in the elderly

![Treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/30fecea7260e482a96c3df37e865e155?v=4d2f7fed)

Memory clinics

==============

Get a diagnosis at one of the memory clinics listed below.

A polyclinic or a CHAS GP referral is required for subsidised fees.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Changi General Hospital](#changi-general-hospital "Changi General Hospital")

###### Geriatric Clinic

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

2 Simei Street 3,

Singapore 529889

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm

Sat: 8:30am – 12:30pm

Closed on Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6850 3510

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6850 3510](tel: 6568503510)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Institute of Mental Health](#imh "Institute of Mental Health")

###### Psychogeriatric Clinic

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

10 Buangkok View,

Singapore 539747

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Thu: 8:00am – 5:30pm

Fri: 8:00am – 5:00pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6389 2200

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6389 2200](tel: 6563892200)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

\

Khoo Teck Puat Hospital](#khoo-teck-puat-hospital "Khoo Teck Puat Hospital")

###### Geriatric Medicine

(Clinic C41, Tower C, Level 4)

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

90 Yishun Central,

Singapore 768828

\*\*Opening Hours (Clinic):\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:00pm

Closed on Sat, Sun, and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6602 3041

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6602 3041](tel: 6566023041)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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National University Hospital](#national-university-hospital "National University Hospital")

###### Neuroscience Clinic

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

5b Lower Kent Ridge Road,

Singapore 119074

\*\*Opening Hours (Clinic):\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:00pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6779 5555

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6779 5555](tel: 6567795555)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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NNI @ TTSH Campus](#nni-ttsh-campus "NNI @ TTSH Campus")

###### Neuroscience Clinic, Level 1

National Neuroscience Institute

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng,

Singapore 308433

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6357 7095

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6357 7095](tel: 6563577095)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Ng Teng Fong Hospital](#ng-teng-fong-hospital "Ng Teng Fong Hospital")

###### Geriatric Medicine

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

1 Jurong East Street 21,

Singapore 609606

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm

Sat: 8:30am – 12:30pm

Closed on Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6716 2222

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6716 2222](tel: 6567162222)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Singapore General Hospital](#singapore-general-hospital "Singapore General Hospital")

###### Department of Neurology

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

Outram Road,

Singapore 169036

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:00am – 5:30pm

Fri: 8:00am – 5:00pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6321 4377

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6321 4377](tel: 6563214377)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Tan Tock Seng Hospital](#tan-tock-seng-hospital "Tan Tock Seng Hospital")

###### Geriatric Medicine Clinic

(Basement 1)

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng,

Singapore 308433

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6359 6100

\*\*Tel:\*\* [6359 6100](tel: 6563596100)

![Treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/bee0fd97ea9b473e994c5f4995058f7e?v=b31ba1f1)

Treatment

=========

There is currently no cure for dementia but there are medicines to help with dementia symptoms. Counselling, behavioural therapies, and education can also improve care for patients and their families. Learn about the medications that may be used to treat dementia:

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d99702cb9ec14bc787eee0f58fe20412?v=2e380929)

#### Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors

Used to treat the mild to moderate stage of the disease, these inhibitors aim to maintain our ability to be mentally active. Possible side effects include vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea, and anorexia.

#### Memantine hydrochloride

Used to treat moderate to advanced stages of the disease, it generally has minimal side effects and can be used on its own or in combination with Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors. It is also used as an alternative for those who are less tolerant of Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors.

Supplementary resource

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Find out more about dementia from DementiaHub.SG, the one-stop resource for persons living with dementia and their caregivers. It seeks to equip persons living with dementia, caregivers, care professionals, and members of the community and corporations, with the most relevant, comprehensive, and up-to-date information from evidence-based research to enhance the quality of life of persons living with dementia.

[Learn more](https://www.dementiahub.sg/)

![Supplementary resource](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/37d8fa14e38349f48b7064917eabd949?v=2eef7dc2)

Mental health services

======================

Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

.

![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

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You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6c4c62aaef9845d293c3ac6bd9b03cb7?v=cb94b489)](#helplines "Helplines")

[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88bbcdcc2a3a43ea9954937c7ba75eb4?v=67c6e7a0)](#helplines "Helplines")

Caring for Ourselves

Preventing Self-harm

and Suicide

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Teens

\* Teens

\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/preventing-self-harm-and-suicide-Youths#home)

\* [Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/preventing-self-harm-and-suicide-Adults#home)

\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/preventing-self-harm-and-suicide-Seniors#home)

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Helplines](#helplines-24hours "Helplines")

\* [Understanding self-harm and suicide](#understanding-self-harm-and-suicide "Understanding self-harm and suicide")

\* [What is self-harm?](#what-is-self-harm-and-suicide "What is self-harm?")

\* [Why would someone self-harm?](#why-do-people-self-harm-and-suicide "Why would someone self-harm?")

\* [Understanding self-harming behaviours](#understanding-self-harming-behaviour "Understanding self-harming behaviours")

\* [How can we stop self-harm?](#how-can-one-stop-self-harm "How can we stop self-harm?")

\* [What is suicide?](#learn-more-about-self-harm-and-suicide "What is suicide?")

\* [What contributes to the risk of suicide?](#what-increases-the-risk-of-suicide "What contributes to the risk of suicide?")

\* [How can we reduce the risk of suicide?](#reduce-the-risk-of-suicide "How can we reduce the risk of suicide?")

\* [What are the warning signs of suicide?](#the-signs-someone-is-contemplating-suicide "What are the warning signs of suicide?")

\* [How can we manage suicidal tendencies?](#what-can-one-do-when-struggling-with-suicidal-tendencies "How can we manage suicidal tendencies?")

\* [Mental health services](#mental-health-services "Mental health services")

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![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d33f8f7d4d25479a97bb6ead7113250c?v=e29022f5)

Helplines

=========

If you or someone you care about needs a safe space and would like for someone to provide a listening ear, these helplines are available.

Samaritans of Singapore

24-hour

![phone](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4c92c9971745497a8820deca1d863c6f?v=14b14b09) 1-767 [![phone](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4c92c9971745497a8820deca1d863c6f?v=14b14b09) 1-767](tel:1767)

[![chat](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/60532d6f7fae4b93923241e0f20a417a?v=e0e8595d) CareText](https://www.sos.org.sg/)

Institute of Mental Health

24-hour

![phone](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4c92c9971745497a8820deca1d863c6f?v=14b14b09) 6389-2222 [![phone](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4c92c9971745497a8820deca1d863c6f?v=14b14b09) 6389-2222](tel: 6563892222)

Understanding self-harm and suicide

===================================

The teenage years could be a challenging phase for many of us. Be it the hurdles we face in our studies or the changes in our body due to puberty – these challenges can feel unpredictable, daunting, and stressful at times.

Stress is a common experience for everyone. Some manage their stress by talking to friends and family, while others may find it overwhelming.

When our emotions are not expressed and are instead suppressed, the pressure could build up and become unbearable. Some of us may take it out on ourselves and our bodies to express the thoughts and feelings we may not say aloud.

Let’s read on to find out what self-harm and suicide are about and how we can cope.

![Learn about teen self-harm, teen suicide, suicide hotlines available to teens, teen suicide warning signs and more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/41c75a985ce14aa7bd59958826ba1a5c?v=2a9c4103)

What is self-harm?

==================

Self-harm means to cause harm to one’s body on purpose. It is a form of maladaptive coping behaviour (poor patterns of behaviour to cope with the situation) that may accidentally result in serious injury or even death.

Examples of self-harm behaviours are:

Scratching or cutting one’s skin

Consuming toxic substances (e.g. bleach or detergent)

Swallowing sharp objects

Hitting parts of the body on hard surfaces or objects

![Understand why teens self-harm, ways teens can stop self-harm, cope with suicide thoughts and more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d11ad81ea4ee40e88cab2f7c2b7681eb?v=9dcf34eb)

Burning the skin

Pulling hair out

Binge drinking

Consuming drugs or taking medicine in a manner or dosage more than what is prescribed

Having casual sex

Scratching or cutting one’s skin

Consuming toxic substances (e.g. bleach or detergent)

Swallowing sharp objects

Hitting parts of the body on hard surfaces or objects

Burning the skin

Pulling hair out

Binge drinking

Consuming drugs or taking medicine in a manner or dosage more than what is prescribed

Having casual sex

![Understand why teens self-harm, ways teens can stop self-harm, cope with suicide thoughts and more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d11ad81ea4ee40e88cab2f7c2b7681eb?v=9dcf34eb)

Why do people self-harm?

========================

Some reasons why a person could harm themself:

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e32858962d13436585d7e62c375fcec2?v=946c90c1)

[<](#previous "Common causes include")

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6685f793f4df4047b878b57bfb0d6758?v=adcac69b)

Distracting oneself from difficult situations, experiences, or emotions

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ffbeb7571ce145df815286e1679ddd0d?v=04d52c2a)

A temporary form of relief from intense and painful emotional or psychological distress

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f81e39df7838481c963394851db9310f?v=57ebf17d)

A self-punishment due to feelings of guilt or shame from past traumatic experiences

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7dbacadcaa804be2814498404a6d4812?v=83288bf6)

A way of regaining some sense of control in their lives (e.g. being able to decide when, where and how to hurt oneself)

[\>](#next "Common causes include")

\* 1

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\* 3

\* 4

There are several stressors that can make someone more vulnerable to hurting themselves. Be mindful of the person’s behaviour if they are facing any of these stressors:

[<](#previous "Common causes include")

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0d4c40e23e984802b944860d3c794a8a?v=c3f65a22) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/906a3c425c8940b6bdea701ae3f661a7?v=89d19551)

School or workplace pressures (e.g. heavy workload or bullying)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5c62b70652374bacb9545ecc61c90303?v=7dd25c51) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/59eabb94482149afb35df64ff241caee?v=b9c2f66b)

Relationship problems (e.g. with family, friends, or romantic partners)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4fc114da492c4c34be70cfa058fd5f56?v=f409d86f) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b3a1d5552258454e920dfe9c82a2cc4f?v=09e22965)

Confusion and insecurity about self (e.g. one’s identity and role)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/da278d077c554ab08c58558209dc7304?v=daaa92e6) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dbe6dfc108bb4bb08a368431aa84af43?v=730de969)

Transitional changes (e.g. changing schools or stepping out into the workforce)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ac102a8484d94596933aa5877110bc5c?v=b09556cf) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/32ba2532a456489d9f5b4ee710ed8dcb?v=3efbbc67)

Financial difficulties (e.g. inability to find a job, debt, or retrenchment)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8c7a6f61f06146a891edbcaa014f27f4?v=1a41c307) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/36e2474b96e2497db2f97b2088462c2b?v=74811d93)

Bereavement and grief (e.g. losing a loved one to death, divorce or breakup)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f4dd3f1abc634ee2a85540a1bd87456f?v=b7460e0c) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f0799080c61048b79eb0e642e891ec59?v=55f8ccbf)

Mental health conditions

(e.g. depression and anxiety)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/485bd0b0207a4a0993f138963b5e9428?v=09e13195) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ae094d868357480fb0db5cf86b7ae757?v=e73c5f19)

Social isolation

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/90e491877acb48298d3bc544b5ca0505?v=75e99dba) ![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/970d3e78993d49888d8ab95c55a042ff?v=5f724d8e)

Alcohol or drug use

[\>](#next "Common causes include")

\* 1

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![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e32858962d13436585d7e62c375fcec2?v=946c90c1)

Left unchecked, constant self-harming can become a habit due to the sense of relief it may bring. However, this sense of relief is only temporary. It cannot help with the issues that make someone want to hurt themself in the first place.

It is important to remember that self-harm is dangerous – a cut too deep or a drug overdose could put a person’s life at risk.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e32858962d13436585d7e62c375fcec2?v=946c90c1)

Understanding self-harming behaviour

====================================

Self-harm is often done as a way to cope with intense and painful emotions. Identifying and understanding what leads to thoughts of self-harm is the first step to coping better and stopping self-harm. For those who associate self-harm with comfort and a sense of control, this could be a challenging process.

One way to stop self-harm is to come up with reasons for and against self-harming. Listing down the reasons and understanding them provides a clearer picture of the intention and consequences of one’s actions. Doing so can lead to well-thought-out decisions on why one should reduce (or even stop) self-harming actions.

Some reasons to discourage self-harming behaviour include:

“I have to constantly hide my injuries from others.”

“It doesn’t help to solve the problems I have.”

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/738a285363324116ba96d71b9b163606?v=df5d01a7)

“I might end up hurting myself more than I intended.”

“The scars and injuries to my body can be permanent.”

From a sense of comfort to control, some of these common reasons for self-harm can appear convincing. However, seeing the reasons against self-harm can help one realise that the reasons for self-harm may not be as valid as initially thought. For example:

Even though hurting myself may give me a sense of comfort at the beginning, it does not help me solve my issues.

Going for a run can give me the sense of control and comfort I want too.

Overall, this process can help someone come to an informed decision about their self-harming behaviours.

How can one stop self-harm?

===========================

Self-harming behaviour is a response to one's feelings and thoughts. While the first step to keep one from hurting themselves is to identify and understand what leads to thoughts of self-harm, there are also other measures they may consider to protect themselves.

#### [Staying safe from the objects used for self-harm\

------------------------------------------------](#panel-staying-safe)

This means throwing away or asking a trusted friend or adult to store away objects that can cause self-harm. If they are daily household items, reach out to family members to keep those items locked away.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c3bd94ca3672433bbf37865299d5f0e2?v=cc245715)

#### [Learn positive coping techniques\

--------------------------------](#panel-learn-positive-coping)

Here are some positive coping techniques to try:

\*\*Exercise regularly\*\*

Exercise not only improves our health but releases endorphins (‘feel good’ hormones) that can elevate our mood. Check out these [exercise](/programmes/142/MoveIt/moveit-guides#guide-videos)

ideas to stay active.

\*\*Mindfulness\*\*

Pay attention to the present moment, to our thoughts and feelings without any judgement.

Note: While some people benefit from mindfulness practices, some may experience adverse effects such as increased anxiety or dissociation, especially when practised in an unsupervised manner. It is important to practise mindfulness under the supervision and guidance of trained personnel, especially for children, teens and youths.

\*\*Learn relaxation exercises and guided imagery\*\*

Pick up deep breathing exercises as a method of relaxation. Follow the [audio exercises](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/69a470a5ea634ef586da74dec647685f?v=0cfc96d0)

or the steps below:

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f3d3e4531f5c402886361e7690d14d50?v=2d998810)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dbefbf5789614d2dafe3c09b1b951f2f?v=1f53b5f7)

Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just above your belly button

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ca6a9a5317f149cab8d3a189d0e80d11?v=9b33614d)

Take a deep breath slowly through your nose for 5 counts, feel your stomach rise

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c1683b6794034ce2a7627f838d483744?v=0cf0635e)

Breathe out slowly for 5 counts, breathe out fully

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/245d13a4df314e86b1a5252086652a4c?v=73008f97)

Repeat until you feel relaxed

Practise progressive muscle relaxation where a group of muscles is tensed as we breathe in and relaxed as we breathe out. Follow the [audio exercise](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5c7e1c7c72a8481781463dc5041ab459?v=a4e85f67)

or follow the steps below:

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/568abe56ba374c14a7b02eff2f5d9c13?v=b0c84ed1)

Sit comfortably on a chair

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4d209ab5abdb426883e6a562e9cb24b5?v=a16b60f3)

Scrunch up your face for 5 seconds, then relax it

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fd2e62f773da4bdba088ce12db74536f?v=b5d013db)

Raise your shoulders up to touch your ears for 5 seconds, then relax them

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a07c3b84e28d43c2a31661f81fea960a?v=8b1fceb9)

Clench your fists and tighten your arms for 5 seconds, then relax them

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/43984093a60143b49ad73089f419521b?v=7cd1d587)

Take a deep breath and suck your stomach in for 5 seconds, then relax

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5c01ea5130f54b9fb16ec2ca3d6247f0?v=6b250186)

Raise your legs and curl your toes for 5 seconds, then relax them

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9bfc27f19ce740358c05b0b3d4c7031a?v=644fd8a8)

Breathe in slowly through your nose and breathe out slowly

\*\*Other exercises:\*\*

[Guided imagery](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1386dc97fc7442e994a5f2e247510d92?v=36ca3616 "Guided imagery")

[Stress relief exercises](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6fYqEjG-Nc "Stress relief exercises")

#### [Reach out to a trusted friend or adult\

--------------------------------------](#panel-reach-out-trusted-friend)

Some may try to hide their actions or injuries to avoid confrontation or rejection. There might be the worry that their friends or family do not understand their reason for self-harm, becoming angry with them or rejecting them as a result.

But confiding in someone can be a huge relief as the person we reach out to might be able to provide some help or even be a source of support through this difficult period. The act of [speaking to someone](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/seeking-support#How\_to\_reach\_out\_for\_support)

about troubles and problems is a great way of coping.

When talking to someone about self-harming behaviours, one can talk about the reasons, causes, and emotions that led to those acts of self-harm.

Sometimes, what was shared may come across as a shock to the other party, resulting in them not responding in a manner we expect them to. Try to understand their situation, and give them time to process what was shared.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/396795a5c38e422fa150283721982587?v=c373d3ac)

#### [Reach out to a healthcare professional\

--------------------------------------](#panel-reach-out-mental-health-professional)

Seeking support from [mental health professionals](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/seeking-support#mental-health-professionals-who-can-provide-support)

helps as they can provide professional advice such as safety plans and healthy coping methods.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/aa5aca9809c2479eb395862d3ff567c2?v=92f77f3e)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88a8cdb72b65406e9afa81b67bbfc30b?v=e29148d6)

Let’s learn more about suicide, an extreme form of self-harm

============================================================

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ff37c23ca08c4b9c91ddf64ac3c078cb?v=667d4cbf)

Suicide is the intentional act of ending one’s life. While people who self-harm usually do not intend to kill themselves or die, constant self-harm can increase the risk of suicidal tendencies.

Before the act of suicide, suicidal thoughts and behaviours may occur. These include having thoughts of ending one’s life, planning suicide, and enacting the plan. However, some suicidal behaviours may occur suddenly and impulsively.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ff37c23ca08c4b9c91ddf64ac3c078cb?v=667d4cbf)

What increases the risk of suicide?

===================================

Some factors that increase the risk of suicidal behaviour can include:

[<](#previous "Common causes include")

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8a0dd0e209a44c5aabf2cb3222fc563c?v=e2081e3f)

Family history of suicide

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/887782cf3aaf4f3c8452df721404910a?v=97d2d9db)

History of trauma or abuse

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b1e88a8aae1f4cccace5531d2c247543?v=871db674)

Existing mental

health conditions

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b8a0f5deca91415eb15b8e1dfac592b1?v=6d0808cb)

Dealing with multiple stressors over a prolonged period (e.g. relationship problems, unrealistic pressure, financial worries)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/77ca0c037f114931a42fb8e0b0027c5e?v=41c46d58)

Social isolation or rejection

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b7393f80deb74c139d52b55305f01491?v=27531c16)

Unrealistic expectations

from ourselves or others

[\>](#next "Common causes include")

\* 1

\* 2

While these factors do not necessarily cause one to attempt suicide, they can increase the risk of suicidal tendencies. A combination of multiple “causes” may also heighten this risk.

What reduces the risk of suicide?

=================================

[<](#previous "Common causes include")

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b36dcc16f7594c809c9b7440f113c4e9?v=8f620043)

Strong and supportive

relationships with family,

friends and mentors

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/400dbf56d1a3451c88f05865d0820899?v=9481c0d4)

Life skills such as problem-

solving skills, coping skills,

ability to adapt to change

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/72f89c8eb1074caebe3b0b8c1a7833a7?v=30169432)

Beliefs that discourage suicide

(e.g. cultural or religious)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b6e8f3a038e848488addaa6e9bd3f2f7?v=a8e4a82a)

Healthy self-esteem

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ea5769d4c16f4ae78f771f55f7e46686?v=8e824892)

Sense of purpose, hope and meaning in life

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3a325a2187f74a248113b9a736f7c7dd?v=8d4a217a)

Limited access to lethal means

[\>](#next "Common causes include")

\* 1

\* 2

Signs that someone is contemplating suicide

===========================================

There are warning signs to suicide. Here are some examples of the thoughts and actions of someone considering suicide:

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9f4d2c57d43c48bdb036909552245535?v=9ae795d5)](#navc\_warning-signs\_thoughts)

[Thoughts](#navc\_warning-signs\_thoughts)

\* “My family will be better off without me.”

\* “I’m a burden on my family.”

\* “My life is meaningless anyway.”

\* “Nobody loves me.”

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)](#navc\_warning-signs\_thoughts)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4e8a6e5ba1564a9199fe2a1f83a59d31?v=dbb7e85c)](#navc\_warning-signs\_behaviour)

[Behaviour](#navc\_warning-signs\_behaviour)

\* Having past suicidal behaviour

\* Giving away treasured possessions and saying goodbye

\* Researching suicide methods

\* Writing suicide notes (e.g. posts on social media/diaries/letters)

\* Feeling calm and positive after a long period of hopelessness or worthlessness

\* While this can be counterintuitive, the sudden calmness after a long period of depression can be due to the person deciding to end their life as opposed to someone still struggling with the decision.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)](#navc\_warning-signs\_behaviour)

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a04af0bed2f54b79a7cf1c994204e321?v=b072d591)](#navc\_warning-signs\_mood)

[Mood](#navc\_warning-signs\_mood)

\* Feeling hopeless

\* Displaying emotional outbursts

\* Feeling angry, sad, irritable, or reckless

\* Having lost interest in things we usually enjoy

\* Feeling humiliated or anxious

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)](#navc\_warning-signs\_mood)

What can one do when struggling with suicidal tendencies?

=========================================================

![Always prioritise safety first](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b82d8ef132754d6e9dd5dd5c826d7922?v=aa35d135)

Always prioritise safety first

------------------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Always prioritise safety first")

![Reach out to a trusted friend or an adult](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/52fe611bf1724d4c9309e925e953bb64?v=ea7c5992)

Reach out to a trusted friend or an adult

-----------------------------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Reach out to a trusted friend or an adult")

![Seek professional help](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/217386e4fe514ea1b645f3a77e3acbb7?v=56cb7290)

Seek professional help

----------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Seek professional help")

![Have a safety plan in place](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/25d5a8b1df4b494e8ae8a4fcb80e1d28?v=4f6c32a5)

Have a safety plan in place

---------------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Have a safety plan in place")

![Have hope things can get better](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9f2cd97b3c8349e889de7be7e84bd4d8?v=a8c22b00)

Have hope things can get better

-------------------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Have hope things can get better")

![Go easy with expectations](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2ee4e5bcd9d744e9a02639d7fa32ee55?v=88f307f3)

Go easy with expectations

-------------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Go easy with expectations")

![Develop self-kindness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a9fc1f4cd86949c6be94c7132331b1e5?v=d979dfef)

Develop self-kindness

---------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Develop self-kindness")

![Practise gratitude](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1ceea714f6894fa48d4d242c0d1aff0d?v=1dc2ec47)

Practise gratitude

------------------

[Read more](#what-can-one-do-modal "Practise gratitude")

Let us remind ourselves to appreciate every moment, and learn to accept the fact that life is short and we need to make the most out of it. Overcoming our struggles will take determination, persistence and time. But it is far from an impossible task, especially with the help of the people we love and trust. When overwhelmed with stress, know that there are always people around us that can help us as long as we reach out.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dd733a35b2dc48628e792274c47a542f?v=205f9e35)

Mental health services

======================

Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

.

![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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[References](#references "References")

A joint initiative

![Health Promotion Board partners](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6c319ebfc48348aba53a6ce77e3aa140?v=29963eca)![Health Promotion Board partners](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/532e161db9c54bf2a91cd5221202f421?v=d84d9879)

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[close](javascript:void(0);)

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\* [![HealthHub](https://www.healthhub.sg/assets/images/fb.svg)](javascript:void(0);)

\* [![HealthHub](https://www.healthhub.sg/assets/images/whtsapp.svg)](whatsapp://send?text=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.healthhub.sg%2Fprogrammes%2Fmindsg%2Fcaring-for-ourselves%2Fpreventing-self-harm-and-suicide-teens%23home)

\* [](javascript:void(0);)

\* [](javascript:void(0);)

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[![Ministry of Health Singapore](https://cdn.healthhub.sg/-/media/ihis/images/moh-logo.svg?rev=c29a7294e92d4a9ba6ad95cf85ac1efc)](https://www.moh.gov.sg/)

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[![Agency for Integrated Care](https://cdn.healthhub.sg/-/media/ihis/images/aic-logo.svg?rev=d1e0fad494d44a33be75e9e636d0801c)](https://www.aic.sg/)

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

CONTRIBUTED BY ![Health Promotion Board](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4757810f9c6641279f24ac5089a87abd?v=3e58b66d&t=w150) Health Promotion Board

[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6c4c62aaef9845d293c3ac6bd9b03cb7?v=cb94b489)](#helplines "Helplines")

[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88bbcdcc2a3a43ea9954937c7ba75eb4?v=67c6e7a0)](#helplines "Helplines")

Caring for Ourselves

Transition

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Seniors

\* [Teens](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/undergoing-transitions-Teens#home)

\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/undergoing-transitions-Youths#home)

\* [Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/undergoing-transitions-Adults#home)

\* Seniors

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Undergoing transitions](#undergoing-transitions "Undergoing transitions")

\* [What are transitions?](#what-are-transitions "What are transitions?")

\* [How to cope with transitions and its effects?](#toggle)

\* [Coping with transitions](#coping-with-transitions "Coping with transitions")

\* [Coping with stress from transitions](#coping-with-stress-from-transitions "Coping with stress from transitions")

\* [Coping with emotions from transitions](#coping-with-emotions-from-transitions "Coping with emotions from transitions")

\* [Coping with isolation from transitions](#coping-with-isolation-from-transitions "Coping with isolation from transitions")

\* [Self-help tools](#mental-health-tools "Self-help tools")

\* [Mental health services](#mental-health-services "Mental health services")

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Undergoing transitions

======================

As we enter the later stages of our lives, things may start to move at a slower pace for us. We may also experience many changes, such as retirement, experiencing emerging health concerns, watching our loved ones move out, or even losing our loved ones.

This can often bring about stress and overwhelming emotions which, if not properly managed, may affect our mental well-being. Let’s read on to find out more about what we can do to cope with transitions in our lives.

![Learn about the life changes like psychological problems in old age, the psychological ageing process and other changes the elderly, seniors, retirees and older adults.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/77e6e8c95a9e47b780f5a2c76265e28d?v=0210683f)

What are

transitions?

=======================

Transitions are events or situations that result in changes to our lives such as in our

relationships, routines, or roles.

Common transitions we experience

--------------------------------

While the changes we face may vary individually, there are some common ones we

experience as we get older. These include:

![Learn about common life changes the elderly, seniors, retirees and older adults in Singapore experience from becoming grandparents to feeling grief after losing a spouse.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/95caad26fdaf41eab9c0c4b7c5064840?v=6a667a57)

Retirement or

a change in jobs

![Age-related physiological changes (e.g. difficulties in sight or hearing, struggles with mental abilities like memory, mobility limitations, insomnia or sleep complaints)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/e.g.%20difficulties%20in%20sight%20or%20hearing,%20struggles%20with%20mental%20abilities%20like%20memory,%20mobility%20limitations,%20insomnia%20or%20sleep%20complaints)

Age-related physiological changes (e.g. difficulties in sight or hearing, struggles with mental abilities like memory, mobility limitations, insomnia or sleep complaints)

![Bereavement and grief (e.g. losing a spouse, friend, or relative to death)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/e.g.%20losing%20a%20spouse,%20friend,%20or%20relative%20to%20death)

Bereavement and grief

(e.g. losing a spouse, friend, or relative to death)

![Moving to a senior living or assisted living community](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/43e2850a37ef46afb5117d77fe89460e?v=e5a75f00)

Moving to a senior living or

assisted living community

![Watching our children move out and start their own families](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0f6589ea11994b12940c06af00071852?v=6f7ae83e)

Watching our children move out and start their own families

![Becoming grandparents](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9db854bf7db744b79a47b69df223a66b?v=541f54f4)

Becoming grandparents

How to cope

with transitions

and its effects

================================================

The changes caused by transitions disrupt our routines as well as our feelings of familiarity, comfort,

and security.

[Coping with transitions\

-----------------------](#coping-with-transitions)

To deal with transitions, we may need to step out of our comfort zone, discard old habits, relearn, and even pick up new skills.

Here are some ways we can cope with transitions:

![Be kind to ourselves](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/863b248bd56c4957adc91d46b738d8df?v=6c2e2321)

### Be kind to ourselves

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Be kind to ourselves")

![Reach out to friends or those around us](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/972b419f0b24482d9c36e2cf60021639?v=0860180f)

### Reach out to friends or those around us

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Reach out to friends or those around us")

![Prepare ourselves](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b1710353ab91440b834252f8daff0a0f?v=abd3e807)

### Prepare ourselves

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Prepare ourselves")

![Set realistic expectations](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fcffd6fc8bc54bffac9ca71327a9aaaa?v=975b80a1)

### Set realistic expectations

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Set realistic expectations")

![Develop a consistent routine](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/81010d9a3fd348df90ce6eb44e562880?v=c502f5d0)

### Develop a consistent

routine

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Develop a consistent routine")

![Remind ourselves of our past successes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0732cebe435c40828b662428c7b4eeef?v=14e061bd)

### Remind

ourselves of our past successes

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Remind ourselves of our past successes")

![Keep an open mind](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c9e923c6727c4ec59c4dd3e35032d8c3?v=63bf392d)

### Keep an open mind

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Keep an open mind")

![Set small goals](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0c4f7ecd0011491e8f7a46beaa2f6ce5?v=1c18dea9)

### Set small goals

[Read more](#coping-with-transitions-modal "Set small goals")

[Tap to \

show more\

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#tap-to-reveal-more "Tap to reveal more")

[Tap to \

show less\

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#supporting-our-child\_mobile\_tap-to-reveal "Tap to reveal less")

[Coping with stress from transitions\

-----------------------------------](#coping-with-stress-from-transitions)

As going through transitions can be very stressful, it is important we learn to cope with it. Read on for some ways we can identify and manage it.

Look out for signs of stress

Sometimes, we might not notice when we are feeling stressed but there are some common signs to look for, including:

Trembling

Poor concentration

Withdrawing from social activities

Excessive worrying

When we notice signs of [stress](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Coping-With-Stress-Seniors#navc\_signs\_of\_stress)

, we should refrain from brushing them off as they can be indicators of our [mental well-being](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/About-Mental-Well-Being#okay-tips)

.

Take breaks to do the things we enjoy

Enjoyable activities can include going for a short walk, reading a book, or even taking a nap. We can also spend time with friends and people we care about to alleviate some of our stress.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/03a16f7cdeae4747ad075954c97fd4f8?v=a602bd29)

Discover more stress-busting tips [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Coping-With-Stress-Seniors#manage-stress)

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[Coping with emotions from transitions\

-------------------------------------](#coping-with-emotions-from-transitions)

During a transition, we may experience many different emotions. It is important to know how we can manage these so we can successfully navigate the transition with a clear mind. However, as we may go through a wide range of them, we need to first identify the emotions troubling us before we can work towards solving them.

Here are some steps we can take to identify and manage our emotions:

![Identify the emotion](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/b038847559dd48d3b58a932fe46d19c2?v=3efa7f33)

Identify the emotion

\* We can use the [feelings tracker](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/119c6fd06e33462797c81e97d0244fa9?v=a1b1fefc)

to identify how we are feeling.

\* We can then use the [emotions explorer](/programmes/186/MindSG/EmotionsExplorer#home)

to understand why we feel those emotions.

\* We should not neglect how we feel as we may get overwhelmed and become less effective at managing our emotions.

![Know why we feel the way we do](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dc933bc491ec483eb86f36cbb9bf0101?v=48e228de) ![Know why we feel the way we do](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7356f38798454cf19e399f7ada63f744?v=fe2c1e2b)

Know why we feel

the way we do

\* We should accept our emotions as natural and not something to avoid.

\* Many things can trigger our emotions, including events, situations, or even our own thoughts and memories.

\* Try to understand what makes us feel a certain way and why as this would make it easier for us to assess how best to manage our feelings.

Find out how we can manage our emotions [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Managing-Our-Emotions-Seniors#How\_do\_we\_manage\_our\_emotions)

.

[Coping with isolation from transitions\

--------------------------------------](#coping-with-isolation-from-transitions)

Some transitions may cause us to become [socially isolated](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Experiencing-Social-Isolation-Seniors#content)

because of reduced social connections. These can include retirement or even changes in our physical health. As isolation can have serious impacts on our physical and mental health, it is important that we know how to cope with it.

Stay active by adopting a new skill or hobby

Learning a new skill or hobby not only keeps us mentally active, but also allows us to interact with new people with similar interests.

Consider joining the following programmes to stay active:

1. [Live Well Age Well Programmes](#stay-active-live-well-age-well-programmes "Live Well Age Well Programmes")

2. [The National Silver Academy](#stay-active-the-national-silver-academy "The National Silver Academy")

3. [The Seniors Go Digital programme](#stay-active-the-seniors-go-digital-programme "The Seniors Go Digital programme")

Live Well Age Well Programmes

Participate in free exercise [programmes](/programmes/160/AAP#home)

or workshops while connecting with other residents from the same neighbourhood.

The National Silver Academy

This [academy](https://www.c3a.org.sg/)

supports life-long learning by providing opportunities for seniors to continue learning and upskilling.

With a wide range of courses available to suit our interests and needs, we can meet like-minded peers, expand and strengthen our social networks, as well as reduce our difficulties connecting with other generations by interacting with people of different age groups.

The Seniors Go Digital programme

This [programme](https://www.imda.gov.sg/en/seniorsgodigital)

teaches seniors how to use a smartphone for communication (e.g. phone calls, sending messages), leisure (e.g. watching videos) and services (e.g. making e-payments, scanning QR codes).

This can help us feel more connected to our increasingly digitalised society by enhancing our digital access and understanding. Available schemes are tailored for varying levels of digital knowledge and income groups

[Previous](#stay-active-carousel "Previous")

[Previous](#stay-active-carousel "Previous")

[\> Next](#stay-active-carousel "Next")

Sign up for

befriending services

As part of this service, trained volunteers will visit us as a friend, providing us with some relief to our loneliness, isolation, or boredom.

Through our interactions, befrienders may also identify ways to improve our day-to-day environment and provide the necessary assistance.

Simply visit the [Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) E-Care Locator](https://www.aic.sg/care-services/e-care-locator)

or [AIC’s webpage](https://www.aic.sg/care-services/befriending-service)

for more information.

Useful self-help tools

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[<](#previous "Useful self-help tools")

[![Emotions explorer](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/66fb6498ee55425a8ed7f80f9bbb3901?v=9ae93f62)](/programmes/186/MindSG/EmotionsExplorer#home "Emotions explorer")

[![Feelings tracker](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c01841ef48fc48269a299a5dac73c6ae?v=bef94338)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/119c6fd06e33462797c81e97d0244fa9?v=a1b1fefc "Feelings tracker")

[![Understand stress](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9bb971b8b630454f91cc6b70fa2e109d?v=bce57487)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=understand\_stress "Understand stress")

[![Relax each muscle](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/170cf7013dfc4235896a16e9cfb42966?v=c7b69f60)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=deep\_relaxation "Relax each muscle")

[![Offload your worries](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/49698fa380ce4c61bf671ec7a98abf11?v=5cc64b44)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=offload\_worries "Offload your worries")

[![Find perspective](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/47143ab0b96b467a9de621c82af02505?v=dd70dcbd)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=find\_perspective "Find perspective")

[![Anchor yourself](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d3e5b10fff294811a4400c9f6252457a?v=ae5f4ff0)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=anchor\_yourself "Anchor yourself")

[![Manage anxiety](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/00e3940b25ff4b8ab8cea97c18fae343?v=a1f67312)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=feel\_more\_control "Manage anxiety")

[![Build support](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/924474c9e72b4ac8a6c3f9ea509ea24c?v=f1febfe0)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=build\_support "Build support")

[\>](#next "Useful self-help tools")

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Mental health services

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Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

.

![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

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You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

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\* [![HealthHub](https://www.healthhub.sg/assets/images/whtsapp.svg)](whatsapp://send?text=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.healthhub.sg%2Fprogrammes%2Fmindsg%2Fcaring-for-ourselves%2Fundergoing-transitions-seniors%23home)

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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Caring for Ourselves

Coping with Grief

Select the age group you are looking for information on

Seniors

\* [Teens](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/coping-with-grief-Teens#home)

\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/coping-with-grief-Youths#home)

\* [Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/coping-with-grief-Adults#home)

\* Seniors

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Understanding grief](#understanding-grief "Understanding grief")

\* [What is grief?](#what-is-grief "What is grief?")

\* [What causes grief?](#what-causes-grief "What causes grief?")

\* [Common misconceptions of grief](#common-misconceptions-of-grief "Common misconceptions of grief")

\* [Understanding stages of grief](#understanding-stages-of-grief "Understanding stages of grief")

\* [What are the signs and symptoms of grief?](#what-are-the-signs-and-symptoms-of-grief "What are the signs and symptoms of grief?")

\* [How can we cope?](#toggle)

\* [Coping with grief](#how-can-we-cope-with-grief "Coping with grief")

\* [Coping with guilt and regret](#coping-with-guilt-and-regret "Coping with guilt and regret")

\* [Coping with reawakened grief](#coping-with-reawakened-grief "Coping with reawakened grief")

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\* [Mental health services](#mental-health-services "Mental health services")

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Understanding grief

===================

As we enter our golden years, we may experience loss. It may be the loss of a family member, close friend, our job, or even our health.

During such times, we may face difficult emotions such as sadness or despair along with our grief. Such emotions can feel overwhelming and affect our appetite, energy, and sleep, thereby impacting our well-being and daily routines. Although navigating these feelings may not be easy, there are healthy ways for us to cope with our loss, find new meaning and prevent [social isolation](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Experiencing-Social-Isolation-Seniors#experiencing-social-isolation)

.

Read on to find out more about what we can do to cope with grief.

![Learn about grief, grieving and the grieving process for the elderly and seniors in Singapore](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/841fe914397f4b849e58e87d03e42ec5?v=4eaa38e2)

![Understanding grief](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3860df02988c4897bbc24063d2c99444?v=a69770d3)

![The meaning of grief or grieving for the elderly, seniors and older adults experiencing the loss of something or someone](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/beedbf14e8c94043b3d482262daf9aff?v=5ae96b7c)

What is grief?

==============

Grief is a natural response to losing someone or something important to us. It is a personal experience, with everyone grieving differently and at different paces. We can learn to heal in a comfortable and healthy way by understanding our emotions, learning to care for ourselves, and seeking support.

What causes grief?

==================

Some common causes of grief include:

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/48b7ec264263464f8f25e141de4b936c?v=3ee5a925)

Passing of a loved one

(e.g. a family member, friend or pet)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e819bbb2551647019eefb06d8a6c662c?v=d47f8b82)

Lost sense of independence from decreased abilities to carry out daily activities

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/674ec40e266b4856a03d763ce6173583?v=82c47d38)

Experience a life-altering illness or injury

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/dcafbc332abe4ffab2ed7958123962d4?v=32fc90ce)

Experiencing a loved one getting seriously ill

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/494ffc4cca3c47ea8238d005771ac7ab?v=fced2b1f)

Loss or end of a relationship (e.g. divorce, break-up or loss of friendship)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/354a203e07bf45abb6e0d178a5394004?v=72e0574d)

Loss of financial stability

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a2f4f926e22b472fbe285cdae94026c1?v=52849f58)

Loss of security after

a traumatic event

(e.g. traffic accident,

house fire or assault)

Common misconceptions of grief

==============================

[![To quickly overcome our grief, we need to be strong and avoid or ignore our pain.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6a16abc9c0fc47a886837a8268aaca70?v=7bdb8e05)](#common-misconception-1)

[What people may think:\

\

To quickly overcome our grief, we need to be strong and avoid or ignore our pain.](#common-misconception-1)

[\*\*But did you know?\*\*](#common-misconception-1)

It is normal to feel sad and afraid after experiencing loss. Brushing away our pain may make it even harder to heal or find closure, resulting in prolonged pain.

Instead, we could try to take time to actively deal with our grief by acknowledging and processing our emotions, as well as practice self-care.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)](#common-misconception-1)

[![We are not grieving “properly” if we do not cry after experiencing the loss.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fd88986db650400f9d028b88ae91cdc2?v=695da469)](#common-misconception-2)

[What people may think:\

\

We are not grieving “properly” if we do not cry after experiencing the loss.](#common-misconception-2)

[\*\*But did you know?\*\*](#common-misconception-2)

Grief is different for everyone and does not have rights and wrongs. Some of us may express our pain in other ways instead of crying.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)](#common-misconception-2)

[![We should stop grieving and forget about our loss after a year.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a53224c756c94d7f954df31f139ebad7?v=0c5453a1)](#common-misconception-3)

[What people may think:\

\

We should stop grieving and forget about our loss after a year.](#common-misconception-3)

[\*\*But did you know?\*\*](#common-misconception-3)

There is no set period for grieving. Our grieving process can be influenced by our personality, age, beliefs, support network, and the type of loss we experience.

How long this process takes varies from person to person.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)](#common-misconception-3)

Understanding stages of grief

=============================

As we age, grief may become more of a common occurrence. While grief is different for everyone, there are

5 common stages of grief that can help us make sense of our emotions.

These 5 stages of grief are:

[<](#previous "Previous")

![Denial is one of the 5 stages of grief and a way the elderly cope with the loss of a loved one or something important](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/190a607ad2fa470db17ac5afa3e19dd7?v=7b781ad2) ![Denial](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/143af5727fa247d4a4c1446e95226b85?v=6135d57a)

Denial

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![Denial is one of the 5 stages of grief and a way the elderly cope with the loss of a loved one or something important](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/190a607ad2fa470db17ac5afa3e19dd7?v=7b781ad2) ![Denial](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/143af5727fa247d4a4c1446e95226b85?v=6135d57a)

Right after experiencing a loss, we may feel stunned or numb, choosing to deny reality rather than overcome our disbelief in what has happened. This is normal and a natural way of protecting ourselves from the full impact of grief. Denial is the body’s method of managing our emotions in a way that staggers and paces the pain, letting in only as much as it can handle.

![Anger is one of the 5 stages of grief or 7 stages of grief experienced by the elderly in Singapore](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cbfe15ca08d14114823e747fc58a18da?v=f9fcccf2) ![Anger](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/98415cc0b81e49528b24ec51c186f7cc?v=d5edd19d)

Anger

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![Anger is one of the 5 stages of grief or 7 stages of grief experienced by the elderly in Singapore](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cbfe15ca08d14114823e747fc58a18da?v=f9fcccf2) ![Anger](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/98415cc0b81e49528b24ec51c186f7cc?v=d5edd19d)

As we begin to process the loss, life may seem unfair, and we may begin to question why this happened or who caused it.

We might misdirect our anger, hurt, and frustration onto innocent others, blaming the person who left us, those we think are responsible for our loss or even ourselves.

Sometimes, we may even direct our anger at strangers as a result of our general sense of anger and hatred at the world. We might also feel disconnected and alone.

[Read More\

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-more "Read more")

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-less "Read less")

![Bargaining is one of the five stages of grief and part of the grieving process for seniors experiencing loss](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5b2f09edf1f94ea5b4f28c37d695ba18?v=9000298a) ![Bargaining](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ff7827f0395c4967a1f478cd6ec53b33?v=71ac1a1d)

Bargaining

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![Bargaining is one of the five stages of grief and part of the grieving process for seniors experiencing loss](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5b2f09edf1f94ea5b4f28c37d695ba18?v=9000298a) ![Bargaining](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ff7827f0395c4967a1f478cd6ec53b33?v=71ac1a1d)

Having to suddenly adapt to life without the person or thing we lost can have us feeling helpless and hurt. When trying to cope with this pain, we may resort to making futile deals and promises such as “I promise to never get angry again if it prevents them from leaving me” or “I will turn my life around if it keeps them from dying”.

Our minds may also explore alternate realities to see if we could have prevented our loss from ever occurring. We might wonder if our grief could have been avoided if we had done things differently or not done something at all.

[Read More\

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-more "Read more")

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![Depression is one of the stages of grief and also a symptom of grief experienced by the elderly](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/75e0481ab7324271892295d473e3ad85?v=b16dd1fa) ![Depression](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d4b717261d09402daeb1aa6ddd0beadf?v=c635d35b)

Depression

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![Depression is one of the stages of grief and also a symptom of grief experienced by the elderly](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/75e0481ab7324271892295d473e3ad85?v=b16dd1fa) ![Depression](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d4b717261d09402daeb1aa6ddd0beadf?v=c635d35b)

As we proceed to accept our loss, we might feel too upset to do anything. We may not see any reason to get out of bed or engage in our normal routines, withdrawing from our usual activities and interactions (e.g. carrying out our hobbies, spending time with friends and family).

While our sorrow may feel endless and too difficult to recover from, it is important to recognise that these depressive feelings are temporary and simply our body’s way of helping us cope with our loss.

[Read More\

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-more "Read more")

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-less "Read less")

![Acceptance is one of the 5 stages of grief or the 7 stages of grief when the elderly go through the grieving process](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/64feb1edf2264a6a8ce19cb278555f52?v=5ee13352) ![Acceptance](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/45274a333ea4461a8b54ec4d56356536?v=5229e40c)

Acceptance

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![Acceptance is one of the 5 stages of grief or the 7 stages of grief when the elderly go through the grieving process](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/64feb1edf2264a6a8ce19cb278555f52?v=5ee13352) ![Acceptance](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/45274a333ea4461a8b54ec4d56356536?v=5229e40c)

As we progress through our grief, our feelings of depression will gradually improve. Slowly, we may find ourselves looking forward to future plans and resuming our usual activities or interactions with our family and friends.

Acceptance does not mean that we will not feel difficult emotions when reminded of our loss or become happy right away. We may still find ourselves alternating between feeling intense emotions and pushing aside our emotions temporarily to fulfil our practical needs and life tasks (e.g. having to run errands without our loved one, adjust to our poorer health or mobility status).

[Read More\

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![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-more "Read more")

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While these stages are common when processing grief, not everyone undergoes all the stages or in the same order. This is perfectly normal and okay.

What are the signs and

symptoms of grief?

===========================================

The type and intensity of emotions experienced as well as the physical signs of

grief vary for each person. For example:

1. [Physical Responses \

(How our body might react)](#sign-symptom-of-grief-physical-responses "Physical Responses (How our body might react)")

2. [Cognitive Responses \

(How we might think)](#sign-symptom-of-grief-cognitive-responses "Cognitive Responses (How we might think)")

3. [Behavioural Responses \

(How we might behave)](#sign-symptom-of-grief-behavioural-responses "Behavioural Responses (How we might behave)")

4. [Emotional Responses \

(How we might feel)](#sign-symptom-of-grief-emotional-responses "Emotional Responses (How we might feel)")

Physical Responses

(How our body might react)

-----------------------------------------------

![Physical symptoms of grief the elderly and older adults experience including loss of appetite and loss of energy](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ca75b4d2a7b244dc9e56702a969f41e6?v=64435e54)

Energy loss

Hyper-sensitivity to sight, smell or sound

Loss of appetite, leading to weight loss

Sleep disturbances,

exhaustion, fatigue

Increased susceptibility to illnesses

Empty, tight or sick feeling in the stomach, tightened chest,

constricted throat, breathlessness, heart palpitations

Cognitive Responses

(How we might think)

------------------------------------------

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a97dd4d86d70431b9513af450492e0f4?v=daf47a31)

Difficulties coming to terms with the loss or disbelief

Obsession with thoughts of the loss

Difficulties with memory and concentration

Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness

Absent-mindedness

Disorganised thoughts

Behavioural Responses

(How we might behave)

---------------------------------------------

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6387a0bf6ca4484d93ef3f7b639a3d4f?v=46befe19)

Crying or sighing

Being agitated or tense

Preoccupation with the loss

Lashing out at others for minor

mistakes or misunderstandings

Abandoning routines

Being disorientated and disorganised

Withdrawing from social

activity (e.g. loss of interest or low energy)

Attachment to or

avoidance of items

reminding us of our loss

Emotional Responses

(How we might feel)

-----------------------------------------

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/df3e4afbbff443499cdd2561ecb75f66?v=43e2c270)

Shock or numbness

Liberation or

relief

Distress

Anger or

irritability

Sadness

Confusion

Self-blame or guilt

Anxiety or fear

Loneliness or longing

Depression or despair

[< pan="" /> Previous](#sign-symptom-of-grief-carousel "Previous")

[< pan="" /> Previous](#sign-symptom-of-grief-carousel "Previous")

[\> Next](#sign-symptom-of-grief-carousel "Next")

[Physical Responses \

(How our body might react)](#physical-responses)

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[Cognitive Responses \

(How we might think)](#cognitive-responses)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a97dd4d86d70431b9513af450492e0f4?v=daf47a31)

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Disorganised thoughts

[Behavioural Responses \

(How we might behave)](#behavioural-responses)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6387a0bf6ca4484d93ef3f7b639a3d4f?v=46befe19)

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[Emotional Responses \

(How we might feel)](#emotional-responses)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/df3e4afbbff443499cdd2561ecb75f66?v=43e2c270)

Shock or numbness

Liberation or

relief

Distress

Anger or

irritability

Sadness

Confusion

Self-blame or guilt

Anxiety or fear

Loneliness or longing

Depression or despair

How can we cope with grief?

===========================

At times, we may feel lost and unsure of how to process our grief, especially if our coping strategies seem unhelpful or

even harmful to our physical and mental well-being. While we should process grief at our own pace and in ways

comfortable for us, it is also important that our coping strategies are healthy.

Unhealthy habits such as drinking alcohol, overeating, smoking, or abusing substances may provide us temporary

relief during painful times of grief. However, they are addictive and harmful to our health, making life more difficult

for us in the long run.

[Ways to acknowledge and process our emotions\

--------------------------------------------](#ways-to-acknowledge-and-process-our-emotions)

[<](#previous "Previous")

Identify and understand what we feel

When we grieve, we may not be able to understand what we feel and why. To make sense of our emotions, we can use the [feelings tracker](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/119c6fd06e33462797c81e97d0244fa9?v=a1b1fefc)

to identify how we are feeling and understand it using the [emotions explorer](/programmes/186/MindSG/EmotionsExplorer#home)

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Embrace our feelings

It is natural to feel a wide range of emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt, or even relief as we grieve. Although we will need to process these emotions eventually, we can first take time to just sit with them. When we finally feel ready, we can learn to [manage our emotions](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Managing-Our-Emotions-Seniors#How\_do\_we\_manage\_our\_emotions)

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Write a journal

Starting a grief journal can help us express our thoughts and emotions and prevent us from becoming overwhelmed. We can use our grief journal to record memories, write a letter to the person or thing we have lost, or even express ourselves through art like drawing or painting. We can choose what we would like to add to it and how much. Going through our journal entries can help us to realise how we have grown and encourage us to continue persevering.

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[Ways to take care of our health\

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[<](#previous "Previous")

Try having small meals

Following our loss, we may not have much of an appetite or might be too busy with necessary arrangements (e.g. making palliative care or funeral arrangements) that we neglect our meals. As grief can take a toll on our body, without sufficient nutrition, it may become even harder to cope. Try to have small healthy meals to provide our mind and body with the energy it needs during this difficult period.

Try to get sufficient sleep

During this period, our thoughts and emotions can keep us up at night. Sometimes, sleep disturbances (e.g. dreaming of the thing or person we lost, worrying about debts to be repaid) may make what little sleep we do have unrestful.

As having inadequate rest can make us feel worse physically, emotionally and mentally, it is important we get sufficient sleep. If we have trouble sleeping at night, we can try taking naps throughout the day or night instead.

Having some quiet time by ourselves, reading a book, or listening to music can also help us relax and improve our sleep. Here are some additional [self-help tools](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Sleeping-Well-Seniors#mental-health-tools)

that may help us get adequate rest.

[Read More\

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Take a stroll to relax

We might spend a lot of time thinking about the past as we grieve. Going on a walk can help us feel connected to the present moment and clear our minds. A short walk also allows us to be exposed to natural sunlight and fresh air, while helping us get some physical exercise and providing opportunities to interact with others. This can help improve our mood and the quality of our sleep.

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[Ways to find support\

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[<](#previous "Previous")

Reach out to others for help

Although everyone’s experience with grief is different, it does not mean that we will be unable to find support. Reaching out to someone we trust or accepting support from others can in fact help us cope as they can provide us with support and a fresh perspective. Find out how we can reach out to others in our time of need [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Seeking-Support#How\_to\_reach\_out\_for\_support)

.

However, it is also okay if we choose not to accept help, especially if that is not what we feel we need at the moment. We can still thank them for their support and let them know we will reach out if we need their help or when we are ready. By communicating our needs clearly, we can avoid pushing others away unintentionally.

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Join community support programmes

If we do not feel comfortable reaching out to friends or the people around us, we can consider joining community programmes organized by Community Centres or Senior Activity Centres to meet new people instead. Some activities to consider include:

\* Active Ageing Programmes

Connect with other residents from the same neighbourhood through free exercise [programmes](/programmes/AAP#home)

or workshops. This can help us to cope with periods of grief healthily as the programmes occupy our free time and we channel our energy into meeting new people that can provide social support for us.

\* [Grief support groups](https://singaporehospice.org.sg/community-bereavement-service-providers)

or other support helplines.

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[Ways to make going through each day easier\

------------------------------------------](#ways-to-make-going-through-each-day-easier)

[<](#previous "Previous")

Try to accomplish simpler routines and tasks

Grief and loss can disrupt our normal routines as these may involve the person or thing we lost. As we may not have the energy for our usual routines, we can try maintaining bits of it instead. For example we can:

\* Try to wake up, have meals, and go to bed at regular timings. Maintaining a consistent routine can provide stability and help us to adapt better, temporarily distracting us from our pain.

\* Break down our tasks and goals into smaller chunks. This allows us to adapt to our new normal more comfortably. Completing these small goals can also be an affirmation of our resilience.

[Read More\

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Keep yourself occupied

As we may end up overthinking in our spare time, engaging in healthy activities such as a hobby is helpful in keeping our mind from straying while allowing us to meet and connect with people.

We can consider joining activities such as:

Live Well Age Well Programme

This [programme](/programmes/AAP)

has a wide range of free activities and workshops ranging from physical activities to creative workshops.

Volunteer work

As part of experiencing grief, we may have negative thoughts and sometimes lose purpose or meaning in our lives. Through volunteering, we may find fulfilment in giving back and helping others. Find out more about the various volunteer opportunities and experience [here](https://www.c3a.org.sg/volunteerism)

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Be patient and give ourselves time to adapt to our loss

There is no rush for us to heal from our loss or make major life changes following the loss. (e.g. remarrying, finding a permanent home). We can instead take our time and resume or engage in activities when we feel ready.

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Coping with guilt and regret

============================

During our grieving period, we may blame ourselves for things such as not spending enough time with our loved one

or not doing more to “prevent” our loss.

We may also experience guilt when we find ourselves feeling relief or anger over our loss. Even though experiencing

guilt and regret is normal during grief, knowing how to process these feelings is important for our healing process.

Here are some ways we can overcome our guilt and regret:

![Acknowledge and examine these emotions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/acebbc62eed849fc8abb4653bfdece8d?v=3fafcf70)

Acknowledge and examine these emotions

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[Read more](#coping-with-guilt-and-regret-modal "Acknowledge and examine these emotions")

![Write or talk to someone we trust](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/78dec63d629c4dc1b2101428f4982c79?v=d9ea9a9a)

Write or talk to someone we trust

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[Read more](#coping-with-guilt-and-regret-modal "Write or talk to someone we trust")

![Remind ourselves of what we did right](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9e55c14b7b3f4e679bc5d701b822095c?v=88319126)

Remind ourselves of what we did right

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[Read more](#coping-with-guilt-and-regret-modal "Remind ourselves of what we did right")

![Be forgiving to ourselves](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/85acd7fa25ea4fecbab28bc57490ede1?v=9ee3d1ca)

Be forgiving to ourselves

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[Read more](#coping-with-guilt-and-regret-modal "Be forgiving to ourselves")

![Find ways to make amends](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/97add1a973f24862a543e5ec2b89f113?v=bb1403aa)

Find ways to make amends

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[Read more](#coping-with-guilt-and-regret-modal "Find ways to make amends")

Coping with reawakened grief

============================

Reawakened grief refers to feelings of grief that return due to reminders of our loss. It is normal for us

to experience reawakened grief, especially after the loss of a loved one. Reminders of loss may include

special occasions (e.g. birthdays, death anniversaries, holidays), or even sights, sounds, and smells

associated with our loss or the person we lost.

We can cope with reawakened grief by:

Being prepared during special occasions

Anticipating reawakened grief during special occasions that are reminders of our loss can help us to plan for the day and anticipate the emotions we will feel. Instead of spending these occasions alone, we can arrange to meet up with friends or family and spend time with them to take our minds off our loss and receive social support.

Reminiscing about and honouring our loved one

When we are reminded of our loss, we can remember the good memories we have of our loved one instead of focusing on what we have lost. We can also honour them by starting a new tradition such as donating to a charity in their name during the special occasion.

![Coping with reawakened grief](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/30b9494af5584352aa20614cc5d4dcc1?v=4c544803)

When should we seek

professional help?

========================================

During our grief, there may be many dark periods when we experience intense difficult emotions and thoughts. While

most of us make it through these dark periods, some of us may be unable to accept or move on from our loss. If our

grief feels too much to bear or is affecting our daily lives and overall health, we should seek professional help. Seeking

help is a sign of courage, not weakness.

We should consider seeking help from a [healthcare professional](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Seeking-Support#mental-health-professionals-who-can-provide-support)

if these symptoms persist for more than 6 months or

are distressing and disruptive to our lives:

[<](#previous "Previous")

Persistent, intense yearning, or longing for the deceased

Intense emotional pain (e.g. anger or sadness) related to the deceased that does not improve over time

Desire to join the deceased

Detachment and/or isolation

Intense obsession with the circumstances of the deceased’s death

Trouble keeping up with a normal routine, such as eating, sleeping, going to work or handling usual responsibilities (e.g. caregiving)

Inability to stop self-blame over the loss

Persistent thoughts and feelings of being worthless and hopeless

(e.g. life has no meaning or purpose, unable to find joy or positivity in life) or having thoughts of suicide or self-harm

Feeling emotionally numb

Experiencing hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that are not there, or that make us feel scared)

Engaging in unhealthy coping strategies such as drinking alcohol or smoking tobacco

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![When should we seek professional help?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0aab26c8b61d42a5a938a31a5252c303?v=34d41590)

Mental health services

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Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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Caring for Ourselves

Understanding Bipolar Disorder

Select the age group you are looking for information on

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\* Adults

\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/understanding-bipolar-disorder-Seniors#home)

Choose what you’d like to read

\* [Understanding bipolar disorder](#understanding-bipolar-disorder "Understanding bipolar disorder")

\* [What is bipolar disorder?](#what-is-bipolar-disorder "What is bipolar disorder?")

\* [The basics of bipolar disorder](#toggle)

\* [How does it affect us?](#how-does-it-affect-us "How does it affect us?")

\* [Common misconceptions](#common-misconceptions "Common misconceptions")

\* [What causes bipolar disorder?](#what-causes-bipolar-disorder "What causes bipolar disorder?")

\* [How can we identify bipolar disorder?](#how-can-we-identify-it "How can we identify bipolar disorder?")

\* [How is bipolar disorder diagnosed?](#how-is-it-diagnosed "How is bipolar disorder diagnosed?")

\* [How is bipolar disorder being treated?](#how-is-it-treated "How is bipolar disorder being treated?")

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Understanding bipolar disorder

==============================

![Understanding bipolar disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/74f17093a956485db59521aa671e1abd)

We all go through mood swings, especially when life gets tough. However, there are moments when these mood shifts become more intense and stick around, significantly affecting our daily routines. In such instances, it may be a sign that we’re dealing with bipolar disorder.

When we catch these signs and seek help early, it becomes possible to better manage the extreme mood swings and intense emotions we may experience. After all, we’re in this together, and reaching out for support can help us cope better.

Read on to learn more about bipolar disorder and how we can better manage it.

![Understanding bipolar disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1eafebb80d05413087ad56f72b6a265b)

What is bipolar disorder?

-------------------------

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition that causes us to have recurring and

extreme mood episodes.

These can be either:

Depressive

When we’re noticeably

and

persistently sad

![What is bipolar disorder?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/92c37b1b585e4277b0407a801128c652)

Manic/Hypomanic

When we’re noticeably and

persistently happy or irritable

These mood episodes, unlike our typical responses to everyday situations and stresses,

can be quite unpredictable, sometimes stretching on for days, weeks, or even longer.

They can create significant challenges in our lives, often affecting our personal and

professional relationships.

![What is bipolar disorder?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/92c37b1b585e4277b0407a801128c652)

How does it affect us?

----------------------

Depending on the type of episode we experience, we may find ourselves dealing with

different kinds of intense and extreme emotions.

![Feeling euphoric/energetic during a manic episode](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f030047b34344ce19cdafa268277aa30)

During a manic/hypomanic episode, we may feel:

\* Euphoric (immense joy)

\* Energetic

\* Agitated

\* A bloated sense of self-esteem

![Feeling sad and hopeless during a depressive episode](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cf43b81df4074a4f8cbd558810aacb48)

During a depressive episode, we may feel:

\* Sad

\* Hopeless

\* Disinterested in most activities

Since these states can have a major impact on our quality of sleep, energy, judgment,

and behaviour, professional or social situations may become challenging for us.

In severe cases, it may even lead to serious consequences such as [self-harm or suicide](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Preventing-Self-harm-and-Suicide-Adults#home)

,

overspending or other risk-taking behaviours. However, even in the most challenging times,

we can find healthier ways to deal with our struggles with the right support and mindset.

Common misconceptions:

What people may think:

![Common bipolar disorder misconception: bipolar disorder is rare](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/81b95b915dce48bdb45da8d1d5b0d0f5)

What people may think:

### Bipolar disorder is rare.

[But did you know](#bipolar-disorder-is-rare-popup "Bipolar disorder is rare.")

What people may think:

![Common bipolar disorder misconception: mania doesn’t seem so bad; it might even be fun!](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/079adea543cf48bb80c11fc2b4cc1d7f)

What people may think:

### Mania doesn’t seem so bad; it might even be fun!

[But did you know](#mania-doesnt-seem-so-bad-popup "Mania doesn’t seem so bad; it might even be fun!")

What people may think:

![Common bipolar disorder misconception: bipolar disorder is just mood swings.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f81aa3ec7e754e35acb042900b72899f)

What people may think:

### Bipolar disorder is just mood swings.

[But did you know](#bipolar-disorder-is-just-mood-swings-popup "Bipolar disorder is just mood swings.")

Causes

------

While we still don’t know the exact cause of bipolar disorder, it is usually a combination of

genetic, psychological, and environmental factors that leads to someone developing it.

1. Biological factors

2. \- Family History

3. \- Chemical imbalances in brain

4. Psychological and social factors

5. \- Certain personality traits

6. \- Traumatic or stressful life events

7. \- Social isolation

![Bipolar disorder causes: Family history](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a047c3c6da9d426d9580ef5ec01b87d2)

Biological factors Family History

\* Having a family history of bipolar disorder increases one’s likelihood of developing it

\* While it may run in families, it’s important to know that even when a family member is living with bipolar disorder, chances are most people in the family will not develop it

![Bipolar disorder causes: Family history](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a047c3c6da9d426d9580ef5ec01b87d2)

![Bipolar disorder causes: Chemical imbalances in brain](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8207f75d674545aca804a908d44fc6fb) ![Bipolar disorder causes: Chemical imbalances in brain](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0500c86f1423411683fda12755dcc681)

Biological factors Chemical imbalances in brain

\* Having an excess or lack of certain chemicals in the brain, such as serotonin and dopamine can lead to bipolar disorder

\* It may also occur as a side effect of medication or alcohol, resulting in mood disturbances

![Bipolar disorder causes: Chemical imbalances in brain](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8207f75d674545aca804a908d44fc6fb) ![Bipolar disorder causes: Chemical imbalances in brain](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0500c86f1423411683fda12755dcc681)

![Bipolar disorder causes: Certain personality traits](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/493d9ed619d04a8e9116cefe6ff8e1cc)

Psychological and social factors Certain personality traits

Traits such as neuroticism (i.e. the tendency to experience negative emotions like worry and anxiety more intensely and frequently than average), aggressiveness, and impulsivity are found to be related to bipolar disorder.

![Bipolar disorder causes: Certain personality traits](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/493d9ed619d04a8e9116cefe6ff8e1cc)

![Bipolar disorder causes: Traumatic or stressful life events](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7ec484f1c7534d7296852463bba64b2f)

Psychological and social factors Traumatic or stressful life events

\* Traumatic childhood experiences can increase tendencies of developing bipolar disorder

\* Triggers from stressful life events such as a divorce, the death of a loved one, or even pressures at work can also contribute to one developing bipolar disorder

![Bipolar disorder causes: Traumatic or stressful life events](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7ec484f1c7534d7296852463bba64b2f)

![Bipolar disorder causes: Social isolation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fbb3a1f9b7024f6ca1c419aa57f3ff77) ![Bipolar disorder causes: Social isolation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5a85aeedb9514f0db6b6033daff7d492)

Psychological and social factors Social isolation

\* Feeling lonely or experiencing social isolation can increase the likelihood of developing mood disorders like bipolar disorder

\* Experiencing persistent symptoms of depression or bipolar disorder can also heighten one’s experience of loneliness

![Bipolar disorder causes: Social isolation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fbb3a1f9b7024f6ca1c419aa57f3ff77) ![Bipolar disorder causes: Social isolation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5a85aeedb9514f0db6b6033daff7d492)

[< Previous](#whatCausesCarousel "Causes")

[\> Next](#whatCausesCarousel "Causes")

Signs and symptoms

------------------

1. Manic episodes

2. Depressive episodes

![Bipolar disorder symptoms: Manic episodes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fbd1f40bccfb4e968268fd5a7a9e6652)

Manic episodes

During a manic episode one may feel a mixture of:

\* Distinct, abnormal, and persistent periods of elevated or irritable mood

\* An unusual increase in goal-directed activities or energy

(e.g. working on a project all night)

\* An inflated self-esteem

\* A reduced need for sleep

\* Excessive conversation on a variety of topics

\* Racing thoughts

\* Low attention span

\* Risky or reckless behaviours with negative consequences

These symptoms can last for \*\*1 week or longer\*\*, and become severe enough to affect daily activities, and in some cases, even require hospitalisation.

![Bipolar disorder symptoms: Manic episodes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/fbd1f40bccfb4e968268fd5a7a9e6652)

![Bipolar disorder symptoms: Depressive episodes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f60c808f3e2d4c6790cd9e652814e60c) ![Bipolar disorder symptoms: Depressive episodes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c26419082b5740e4a20b67c8f491d3ae)

Depressive episodes

During a depressive episode, one may struggle with a mixture of:

\* Persistent sadness

\* Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed

\* Restlessness or agitation

\* An increase or decrease in appetite or weight

\* Insomnia or excessive sleep

\* Fatigue

\* Difficulties concentrating

\* Feelings of worthlessness or guilt

\* Recurring thoughts of death

These symptoms can last \*\*2 weeks or longer\*\*, and become severe enough to affect daily activities.

![Bipolar disorder symptoms: Depressive episodes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f60c808f3e2d4c6790cd9e652814e60c) ![Bipolar disorder symptoms: Depressive episodes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c26419082b5740e4a20b67c8f491d3ae)

[< Previous](#howToIdentifyCarousel "Causes")

[\> Next](#howToIdentifyCarousel "Causes")

Diagnosis

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Healthcare professionals may conduct several different assessments to check if one has bipolar disorder.

[<](#previous)

Physical evaluation

\* A physical examination may be carried out to check if other physical conditions may be causing the symptoms

\* This may involve:

\* Inquiries on past medical and medication history

\* Physical examinations and blood tests

\* Neuroimaging studies

Psychiatric evaluation

\* Healthcare professionals may conduct an assessment to know more about an individual’s feelings, thoughts, and behaviours

\* This may involve:

\* A psychological questionnaire

\* Gathering of more information from family and confidants with permission of the individual

[\>](#next)

\* 1

\* 2

The individual may also be asked to record their daily mood, sleep, or other behaviours that

may help reach a diagnosis in the form of a mood diary.

![Healthcare professionals may conduct several assessments to diagnose bipolar disorder.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/24b8407ad76d4c3487af6a263195b7da)

Treatment

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![Bipolar disorder treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f1d91d9bd16f40b59c85daf32a5152c5)

Although the effects of bipolar disorder can be overwhelming, there is hope in

knowing that it can be effectively treated with medication, counselling, and brain

stimulation therapies. During the course of the treatment, a team of dedicated

healthcare professionals can be counted on to provide support.

This may include a:

Medical doctor specialising in mental

health conditions (i.e. a psychiatrist)

Psychologist

Social worker

Occupational therapist

Case manager

Pharmacist

Nurse

[### Medication therapy](#medication-therapy)

Healthcare professionals may prescribe certain medications to help treat the symptoms of bipolar disorder. One may incorrectly assume that they do not need to take their medication when experiencing mania, especially in hopes of prolonging their elevated moods. However, it is important that individuals follow their full medication plan prescribed by their healthcare professionals. This helps one to properly treat and manage their condition.

[<](#previous "Previous")

Medications

\* 1 or more medications may be used to help balance extreme emotions

\* These may include mood stabilisers, antipsychotic medications, antidepressants, or anti-anxiety medications

Duration

\* Medications may be prescribed for 6 months or longer, depending on the pattern and severity of one’s disorder

\* While it may take 1-2 weeks or longer for changes to occur, improvements may be noticed earlier such as in one’s quality of sleep

\* Even after feeling better, long-term medication therapy may be required to prevent more episodes from recurring

\* Based on one’s needs, the healthcare professionals will help adjust medications accordingly

Side effects

\* Just as with other medications, it is normal to experience some mild side effects

\* These may include nausea, stomach discomfort, dizziness, drowsiness, dry mouth, and constipation

\* Normally, the effects will go away on its own over time, and there is no need to worry

Other points to note

\* Avoid drinking alcohol close to medication times as this may cause excessive drowsiness

\* The healthcare professionals will advise on any diet adjustments (though there is usually no need for it)

\* Prescribed medications can be taken without worry as they are not known to be addictive

[\>](#next "Next")

\* 1

\* 2

\* 3

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It is okay to be nervous or overwhelmed by the medications or its side effects. If one has any concerns, they can reach out to [healthcare professionals for support](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Seeking-Support#mental-health-professionals-who-can-provide-support)

. If they would like to stop their medications, they can discuss and make the decision together with the healthcare professional so that the healthcare professionals can advise them on the best course of action.

![Medication therapy as a bipolar disorder treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7b887b3e2b5c4408a2d288172401eb83)

[### Counselling, Psychological and Family therapy](#counselling-psychological-and-family-therapy)

In addition to medications, healthcare professionals may recommend counselling, psychological therapy, or family therapy. This can help improve an individual’s ability to function during their mood episode as well reduce the probability of the mood episode happening again.

During therapy sessions one may learn how to:

\* Identify triggers for episodes

\* Develop healthy coping strategies

\* Take medications as prescribed

\* Solve interpersonal problems

\* Maintain regular daily rhythms

\* Enhance communication skills

\* Manage negative emotions effectively

Therapy sessions may be conducted individually (one-on-one) or in groups.

In individual therapy, one can acquire valuable skills to manage their skills more effectively. For instance, they can learn helpful techniques like setting reminders on their phones to stay on track with their medication schedule.

In parallel, family therapy equips one’s loved ones with the tools to provide support and assist them in managing their symptoms. For instance, loved ones can play a crucial role in ensuring they take their medications as prescribed by checking in with them regularly.

Through both these types of therapies, an individual can not only learn how to better manage their symptoms but can also build a good support network of family and friends who understand their needs.

[Read More\

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![Read more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-more "Read More")

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![Read less](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)](#read-less "Read Less")

![Counselling, psychological and family therapy as a bipolar disorder treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6b4fec126d78425ab890978e27ab6436)

[### Brain stimulation therapy](#brain-stimulation-therapy)

If one’s bipolar disorder does not respond well to medications, or they are unable to tolerate their prescribed medications due to side effects, healthcare professionals may recommend a course of brain stimulation therapy. This may come in the form of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) or transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS).

In ECT, the brain is treated with small controlled electrical currents over a brief period, a safe and effective treatment for both manic and depressive episodes.

On the other hand, in TMS, the neural circuits in the brain are stimulated using magnetic fields to help regulate one’s mood during depressive episodes.

![Brain stimulation therapy as a bipolar disorder treatment](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/39aa3e2939d3489fb4d83c85a9a10bb9)

Managing bipolar disorder

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Although bipolar disorder may affect the way someone thinks or acts, it does not have to define them.

To complement their treatment and manage their symptoms, one can try these strategies:

Learn how to cope with stress

![Managing bipolar disorder by learning how to cope with stress](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e0738bb5388247d88fcd871a9ced83d4)

Learn how to cope with stress

[Read more](#how-to-manage-modal "Learn how to cope with stress")

Develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle

![Managing bipolar disorder by developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d0f0d0b75dd74c40972a70af414304fc)

Develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle

[Read more](#how-to-manage-modal "Develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle")

Pay attention to the warning signs

![Managing bipolar disorder by paying attention to its warning signs.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1612c8b8e8214bea9da6d966101911a7)

Pay attention to the warning signs

[Read more](#how-to-manage-modal "Pay attention to the warning signs")

Build a support network

![Managing bipolar disorder by building a support network](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7d4c31dd750446588d8707248d32c641)

Build a support network

[Read more](#how-to-manage-modal "Build a support network")

Devise a recovery plan

![Managing bipolar disorder and devising a recovery plan](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9dc3956b74244ca6831efb2baa5e044e)

Devise a recovery plan

[Read more](#how-to-manage-modal "Devise a recovery plan")

Mental health services

======================

Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

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MindSG

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Explore our suite of self-care tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your mental health.

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Caring for Ourselves

Sleeping Well

Select the age group you are looking for information on

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\* [Youths/Young Adults](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/sleeping-well-Youths#home)

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\* [Seniors](/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-ourselves/sleeping-well-Seniors#home)

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\* [Why is sleep important?](#importance-of-sleeping-well "Why is sleep important?")

\* [What are the benefits of sleep?](#why-do-we-need-sleep "What are the benefits of sleep?")

\* [What happens when we sleep?](#sleep-cycle "What happens when we sleep?")

\* [How much sleep do we need?](#how-many-hours-of-sleep "How much sleep do we need?")

\* [How to know if we are getting enough sleep?](#sleep-enough "How to know if we are getting enough sleep?")

\* [What is sleep deprivation?](#sleep-deprivation "What is sleep deprivation?")

\* [What is revenge bedtime procrastination?](#revenge-bedtime-procrastination "What is revenge bedtime procrastination?")

\* [What are the effects of sleep deprivation?](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation "What are the effects of sleep deprivation?")

\* [What is a sleep disorder?](#What\_is\_a\_sleep\_disorder "What is a sleep disorder?")

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\* [What are some common symptoms?](#What\_are\_common\_symptoms "What are some common symptoms?")

\* [What to do if we suspect a sleep disorder](#suspects-a-sleep-disorder-accordion "What to do if we suspect a sleep disorder")

\* [List of sleep centres](#sleep-centers "List of sleep centres")

\* [Tips to get a good night’s sleep](#what-can-we-do-to-get-a-good-nights-sleep "Tips to get a good night’s sleep")

\* [What to do if we cannot fall asleep](#cannot-sleep "What to do if we cannot fall asleep")

\* [Self-help tools for sleeping well](#mental-health-tools "Self-help tools for sleeping well")

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The importance

of sleeping well

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![The importance of sleeping well](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e43445e0d4d84ece86ccc305c2a4d674?v=71a848e9)

As we go through the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we might start to neglect the importance of sleep in order to finish up things that we didn’t get to do during the day.

It is vital we recognise that sleep is essential because having good sleep allows us to perform at our best. Let’s read on to learn more about what we can do to have better sleep.

Why do we need sleep?

=====================

Regular, adequate, and restful sleep recharges our bodies and minds, leaving us refreshed and alert when we awaken.

This is beneficial for our:

![Health](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1d3195eebbb247398ced3c5a32e8b643?v=1f85a5a5)

Health

It helps to boost our immune system, while giving our body time to restore itself and replenish energy for the next day.

![Learning](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0c667cce4b9746e585a140474efb6d5a?v=dfbf3cb2)

Learning

It helps to consolidate memory

for better learning.

![Mental well-being](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3d8f5cbbd1cf494b8fe987cf394f21ba?v=cc9b515f)

Mental well-being

It helps with mood regulation.

What happens when we sleep?

===========================

We usually pass through four sleep stages. These stages progress in a continuous cycle from Stage 1 to 4 (which is known as the rapid eye movement, or REM stage). Sleep cycles vary from person to person.

On average, each sleep cycle lasts around 90 minutes and repeats several times throughout the night.

![What happens when we sleep?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ded212ab92e74717a4e63fbb8fb28ad9?v=c6f0da8e)![What happens when we sleep?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5525f854f6dd41e890ddb607101c0db6?v=f336be2f)

#### [#### How much sleep do we need?](#how-many-hours-of-sleep "How much sleep do we need?")

A good night’s sleep should leave us feeling refreshed, alert, and ready to begin the day.

International recommendations for sleep duration depend on age. As adults, we should strive to get at least seven hours of sleep each day.

![How much sleep do we need?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/67ba9b342b7644c898cde535fba83c98?v=986b6e66)

#### [#### How to know if we are getting enough sleep](#sleep-enough "How to know if we are getting enough sleep")

![How to know if we are getting enough sleep](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/df760cf1315b4969af64bd2b455365b2?v=2c745c6b)![How to know if we are getting enough sleep](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/212a2af16f9b4e2896595f2a44778152?v=17908cd7)

Sleep tracking is a good way to know how many hours of sleep we are getting. Similar to a sleep diary, sleep tracking can help us measure the duration of our sleep using our wearable devices, with our sleep records easily accessible on our mobile apps. Through this, not only are we able to track if we are getting sufficient rest daily, but we can also understand and improve the quality of our sleep.

Some benefits of sleep tracking include:

Monitoring our sleep patterns

![Monitoring our sleep patterns](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/07b0ed55ad21461aa19edccf75089ec7?v=4c23d0e1)![Monitoring our sleep patterns](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/22aa0d63b2cd453ca075140bac5662a5?v=544f545d)

Monitoring our sleep patterns

Sleep trackers can provide us with detailed information about our sleep patterns, such as how long we slept or how many times we awoke during the night. Some commercial brand wearables can also record the duration we spend in [each stage of sleep](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Sleeping-Well-Adults#sleep-cycle "each stage of sleep")

. By monitoring these sleep patterns, we can make adjustments to improve the quality of our sleep.

Understanding our sleep habits

![Understanding our sleep habits](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/de0e15ce0715408eab0dfeae63847a4c?v=27e80414)![Understanding our sleep habits](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/85fe7291ab6c4604aaa0ffb972d21aff?v=ecd3a249)

Understanding our sleep habits

Tracking our sleep can help us learn more about our sleep habits. For example, we may notice certain activities that prevent us from getting enough sleep such as binge-watching shows at night. Being mindful of these can provide us with a better understanding of the improvements we can make to our sleep habits, helping us to prioritise better sleep.

Ready to reap the benefits of sleep tracking? Simply pair the app with a [compatible fitness tracker](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Sleep-Tracking-FAQ#wearables-faqs "compatible fitness tracker")

\\* and start tracking your sleep with the Healthy 365 app! Click [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Sleep-Tracking-FAQ)

to learn more.

Get on the app today.

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[![How to know if we are getting enough sleep](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/31196dab3980480299a01e2934edcf79?v=a06cf13a)](https://pphtpc.hpb.gov.sg/h365-app/home?a=b)

[![How to know if we are getting enough sleep](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/eacc1974e9e34153ba4116342746cde5?v=20960d0b)](https://pphtpc.hpb.gov.sg/h365-app/home?a=b)

#### [#### What is sleep deprivation?](#sleep-deprivation "What is sleep deprivation?")

It is a general term to describe a state when we don’t have enough sleep, or poor quality sleep. The main signs and symptoms of sleep deprivation include feeling very tired during the day, reduced concentration, slower thinking, and mood changes.

Sleep deprivation can be caused by:

![Poor sleep hygiene](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3a5c52f0d9c546a3bfef1dab7d78aeb7?v=5744e668)

Poor sleep hygiene

E.g. irregular bedtime routines and bedroom environments that do not encourage sleep

![Lifestyle choices](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/31771fd5f8b041e58e4b552f37d06914?v=3c61b022)

Lifestyle choices

E.g. staying up to binge-watch shows

![Work obligations](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c00af23b03494ab99a45225ab68d5c53?v=04399f57)

Work obligations

E.g. multiple jobs, long hours

![Sleep disorders](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/0289ea7b17cb403c80a1655d0b8d03de?v=e85e890c)

Sleep disorders

E.g. sleep apnoea, a breathing disorder that causes us to wake up abruptly

![Other conditions, e.g, physical or mental](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7c4df3df494c410ab7bb0387bce7059e?v=be005e4b)

Other conditions, e.g, physical or mental

E.g. anxiety disorder which includes persistent and excessive worry about activities/events, big or small

#### [#### What is revenge bedtime procrastination?](#revenge-bedtime-procrastination "What is revenge bedtime procrastination?")

Sleep deprivation is often a result of poor sleep hygiene. An example is Revenge Bedtime Procrastination (RBP) where we sacrifice sleep for more leisure time.

This happens in cases where our jobs or responsibilities take up a significant portion of our day and we feel that we are left with very little time for leisure and relaxation.

We may take “revenge” by pushing back our bedtimes to do the things we find fun and relaxing, e.g. gaming, engaging on social media, binge-watching shows.

Although this can be tempting in the moment, late nights, followed by early mornings, can lead to sleep deprivation. Learn how to prevent this by [picking up good sleep habits.](#what-can-we-do-to-get-a-good-nights-sleep "picking up good sleep habits.")

![What is revenge bedtime procrastination?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/744ffbc4dc4e4eb6b04027c0aa4a14bb?v=d66f2111)

What are the effects of sleep deprivation?

==========================================

People who are sleep deprived are more likely to struggle while at work or in school, or experience mood changes that may affect personal relationships. It can also lead to unintentional errors and accidents, such as traffic accidents due to drowsy driving.

Over time, a persistent lack of sleep can pose the following risks to our physical and mental health:

1. [Cardiovascular disease](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-cardiovascular-diesease "Cardiovascular disease")

2. [Diabetes](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-diabetes "Diabetes")

3. [Obesity](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-obesity "Obesity")

4. [Compromised immune function](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-compromised-immune-function "Compromised immune function")

5. [Mental health conditions](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-mental-health-conditions "Mental health conditions")

6. [Dementia](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-dementia "Dementia")

Cardiovascular disease

Sleep deprivation has been linked to cardiovascular problems including high blood pressure, heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

![Cardiovascular disease](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/28a6819b5ec141588964a8b3f5f1d13e?v=0f9885a3)

Diabetes

Insufficient sleep appears to affect the body’s ability to regulate blood sugar, increasing the risk of diabetes.

![Diabetes](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5bcb856b87ea4dcf8dab118fb3cacce0?v=2f00d2eb)

Obesity

Research has found that people tend to consume more calories and carbohydrates when they are sleep deprived.

![Obesity](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c437521dac72493eafc61280782a7ff1?v=0b390cfa)

Compromised immune function

Sleep deficiency has been shown to lead to worsened immune function.

![Compromised immune function](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1eaed99665794a2e95c4ace8fb462d37?v=e2e1d84b)

Mental health conditions

Poor sleep has strong associations with conditions such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder.

![Mental health conditions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4613b56bfc634138b782b9db176a78e5?v=1c281db7)

Dementia

Those with poor sleep habits would run a higher risk of dementia.

![Dementia](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/180bb306980c4addaaf8ece7418d647b?v=17bf90da)

[< Previous](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-carousel "Previous")

[< Previous](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-carousel "Previous")

[\> Next](#effects-of-sleep-deprivation-carousel "Next")

What is a sleep disorder?

=========================

A sleep disorder is characterised by a disruptive sleep pattern that may include

any of the following:

\* Abnormal behaviour associated with sleep (e.g. sleepwalking)

\* Difﬁculty falling or staying asleep

\* Excessive total sleep time

\* Falling asleep at inappropriate times

![What is a sleep disorder?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6c72ff275d6f458582f02c4879fb11fc?v=bf088951)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3437c13a60094714b68fe573b4612a4b?v=fdd98b9f)![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/cf892e0874b34883b73dda6d9b85a608?v=479df1f9)

\* Needing multiple caffeinated drinks to make it through the day

\* Difficulty concentrating at home, school or work

\* Often appearing tired and/or feeling fatigued

\* Feeling sleepy or irritable during the day

\* Difﬁculty staying awake while sitting

\* Falling asleep while driving

\* Emotional outbursts

\* Memory problems

\* Slowed reaction

\* Snoring

#### [#### What should we do if we suspect a sleep disorder?](#sleep-disorder-one "What should we do if we suspect a sleep disorder?")

We may experience difficulty sleeping at some points in our lives. If the issue persisted for at least a month, caused signiﬁcant emotional distress and interfered with our social or occupational functioning, we could consider keeping a sleep record.

The sleep record, either in the form of a sleep diary or tracker, could allow us to calculate our total sleep time, identify sleep disruptions and other unknown factors that may influence our sleep.

It would also serve as a source of useful information for the healthcare professionals to make a diagnosis on whether we have a sleep disorder.

The sleep record should include:

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/143aa72c572640ad984ef0275b9ada42?v=1893947e)

The time we went to bed and woke up

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/29fde64504134faca04003e5a7b495f5?v=69e02ff8)

Total sleep hours and perceived quality of sleep

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/442f3e04084b4e3da0871f994126301f?v=5db7bfda)

A record of the time we spent awake and what we did (e.g. “got up, had a glass of milk”, “stayed in bed with eyes closed")

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5d3afe0a277e4e91a2d0c877ea2281a8?v=fdcf6458)

Types and amount of food, liquids, caffeine, or alcohol we consumed before bed, plus frequency of consumption

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/04b72555f2e54ac89bf711d5cd11010d?v=97122eb9)

Our feelings and mood before bed (e.g. stress, anxiety, low mood)

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/66fb1ccd12d74efab8184bf7dd80a5d7?v=d804b438)

Medications or drugs taken, including time of consumption and dose

Sleep centres

=============

If we are concerned about our sleep, or if our sleep problems persist, are bothersome or interfere with how we feel or function during the day, we may need to seek advice from a healthcare professional from any of the sleep centres listed below.

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Changi \

General Hospital](#center-one "Changi General Hospital")

###### Department of Sleep Medicine, Surgery & Science

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

Level 2D (Lung Clinic & Integrated Sleep Centre)

Level 8 (Sleep Laboratory)

2 Simei Street 3

Singapore 529889

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm

Sat: 8:30am – 12:30pm

Closed on Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6788 8833

\*\*Appointment for Specialist\*\*

\*\*Clinics:\*\* 6850 3333

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Khoo Teck Puat \

Hospital](#center-two "Khoo Teck Puat Hospital")

###### Department of Otolaryngology (ENT)

– Head and Neck Surgery

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea Clinic

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

90 Yishun Central

Singapore 768828

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:00am – 5:30pm

Sat: 8:00am –1:00pm

Closed on Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6555 8828

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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KK Women’s and \

Children’s Hospital](#center-three "KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital")

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

100 Bukit Timah Rd

Singapore 229899

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

24 hours

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6225 5554

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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National Dental Centre \

Singapore](#center-four "National Dental Centre Singapore")

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

5 Second Hospital Avenue

Singapore 168938

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:00am – 5:30pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6324 8802

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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National Neuroscience \

Institute](#center-five "National Neuroscience Institute")

###### Sleep Disorder Clinic

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

NNI @ TTSH Campus

Neuroscience Clinic, Level 1

National Neuroscience Institute

11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng

Singapore 308433

\*\*Opening Hours (Clinic):\*\*

Mon – Wed, Fri: 8:00am – 5:30pm

Thu: 8:00am – 5:00pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6330 6363

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

NNI @ SGH Campus

Neuroscience Clinic, Block 3

Singapore General Hospital

Outram Road

Singapore 169608

\*\*Opening Hours (Clinic):\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:00am – 6:00pm

Sat: 8:00am – 1:00pm

Closed on Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6321 4377

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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National University \

Hospital](#center-ten "National University Hospital")

###### [Paediatric Sleep and Airway Clinic (Multidisciplinary clinic)](https://www.nuh.com.sg/our-services/Specialties/Paediatrics/Pages/Paediatric-Pulmonary-and-Sleep.aspx)

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute, 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

1st and 3rd Saturday of the month, 9am – 1pm (By appointment only)

\*\*Email:\*\* [ktpnucmi\\_appt@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:ktpnucmi\_appt@nuhs.edu.sg)

\* ###### [Respiratory Clinic and Sleep Clinic](https://www.nuh.com.sg/our-services/Specialties/Medicine/Respiratory%20and%20Critical%20Care%20Medicine/Pages/default.aspx)

\*\*Address:\*\*

NUH Medical Centre, 13b Medicine Clinic, 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Monday to Friday,

8.30am to 5.30pm

Closed on weekends and public holidays

\*\*Email:\*\* [appointment@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:appointment@nuhs.edu.sg)

\* ###### [Sleep Surgery Clinic](https://www.nuh.com.sg/our-services/Specialties/Otolaryngology/Pages/NUH-Sleep-Centre-Services.aspx)

\*\*Address:\*\*

NUH Medical Centre, 15c ENT – Head and Neck Surgery Centre, 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Every Monday,

9am to 12.30pm

\*\*Email:\*\* [ent@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:ent@nuhs.edu.sg)

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Ng Teng Fong \

General Hospital](#center-six "Ng Teng Fong General Hospital ")

###### Sleep Disorder Multidisciplinary Care

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

1 Jurong East Street 21

Singapore 609606

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Tues – Fri: 8:30am – 12:30pm

Closed on Mon, Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6716 2222

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Sengkang \

General Hospital](#center-seven "Sengkang General Hospital ")

###### Sleep Clinic

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

Medical Centre, Level 6E

110 Sengkang East Way

Singapore 544886

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6930 6000

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Singapore \

General Hospital](#center-eight "Singapore General Hospital ")

###### Sleep Disorders Clinic

Obtain a referral letter to enjoy subsided rates\\*

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

SingHealth Tower, Level 3

(Outram Community Hospital)

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Appointment-based; no walk-ins

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6321 4377

[![View more](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/68c85392fd3c4237ade861b2e3206984?v=aa48d909)\

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Tan Tock Seng \

Hospital](#center-nine "Tan Tock Seng Hospital")

###### Department of Otolaryngology (ENT)

Sleep Disorder Clinic

Clinic 1B

\* \*\*Address:\*\*

Level 1, TTSH Medical Centre

11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng

Singapore 308433

\*\*Opening Hours:\*\*

Mon – Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm

Closed on Sat, Sun and PH

\*\*Tel:\*\* 6357 7000

What can we do to get a good night's sleep?

===========================================

Our daily habits and sleep environment are vital to ensuring a good night’s sleep and preventing sleep deprivation.

Here are some self-help tips:

What can we do to get a good night's sleep?

===========================================

Our daily habits and sleep environment are vital to ensuring a good night’s sleep and preventing sleep deprivation.

Here are some self-help tips:

1. Avoid electronics

2. Relaxation exercises

3. Read

4. Listen to music

5. Eat smart

6. Exercise regularly

7. Stick to a routine

8. Avoid caffeine or alcohol

9. Comfortable sleep environment

10. Avoid evening naps

11. Quit smoking

Avoid using electronics at least 30 mins before bedtime

The blue light coming from the phone/television/tablet suppresses melatonin, a hormone that supports our sleep/wake cycle. When our cycle is disrupted, we would feel less rested.

Reading emails, sending texts, and checking social media, etc. can also stimulate our mind, making it harder for us to fall and remain asleep.

![Avoid using electronics at least 30 mins before bedtime](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c1cce2876eec49ea926ca55c16792798?v=4568d5b4)

Practise relaxation techniques

Relaxation techniques such as [deep breathing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PqcxsiZ4KQ "deep breathing techniques")

and muscle relaxation can help us calm our mind and body.

![Practise relaxation techniques](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/25411df240aa4ca0b2dd0adb896c4cfb?v=72dfad93)

Read a book

Stick to an old-fashioned physical book, or use an e-reader, rather than a bright tablet or mobile phone.

![Read a book](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/935fbdfa2ece42fe912313a94b7297a2?v=a33e13be)

Listen to relaxing music

Slow and soothing music has the power to help us feel relaxed and at ease, making it easier for us to fall asleep.

Once we integrate music into our bedtime routine, we should stick with it. It will become a habit that cues our body to prepare for shuteye.

Check out this [playlist](https://open.spotify.com/user/hpb\_singapore/playlist/23lVA8jLlZZndUtfubMjbs?si=zI-jWX5jRYW7mKOFEOYDfw "spotify relaxing music playlist")

that can help us sleep better.

![Listen to relaxing music](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/a9e13622287248c98aec3ccfe0b92621?v=1364f2b7)

Eat smart

Avoid going to bed with an overly full belly. It will make us feel uncomfortable and could keep us awake longer. Sometimes, heartburn or gas will further increase the discomfort, thus affecting sleep.

Also, avoid satisfying hunger pangs before bed with large meals. Instead, have light and healthy snacks like low-fat yoghurt, a cup of milk, or a serving of fruit.

![Eat smart](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/827c58b3f77d455ba9d275d4b634e560?v=eb8f3aa3)

Exercise regularly

Moderate-to-vigorous physical activities help us fall asleep more quickly and improve our sleep quality. Being exposed to sunlight while exercising outdoors helps our body regulate its sleep/wake cycle.

Exercise also leads to changes in body temperature that facilitate a good night’s sleep. Current science suggests the best time to exercise for better sleep differs from individual to individual.

Try exercising at different times to determine an exercise schedule that helps us sleep better. [Stay active with our exercise tips!](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/142/MoveIt/moveit-guides#guide-videos "stay active with our exercise tips!")

![Exercise regularly](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d07ab09e103644e49423ff357d18284a?v=5969a3e2)

Stick to a bedtime routine

The consistency of a routine signals for our body and brain to sleep. Create a routine and schedule by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day (including weekends).

![Stick to a bedtime routine](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2f68bcfd01624c148169edb3b51f612e?v=358d5158)

Stay away from caffeine and alcohol at night

Caffeinated beverages, such as coffee or tea, are stimulants that can temporarily make us feel more alert by blocking sleep-inducing chemicals in the brain and increasing adrenaline production.

Avoid consuming alcohol at night. Although we may fall asleep faster, it can disrupt our sleep later in the night, leading to poorer quality sleep.

![Stay away from caffeine and alcohol at night](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/ea5ff0705be6486d89012046e2814a41?v=79e5b1d1)

Keep our sleep environment comfortable

Block out light using thick curtains or eye shades, and consider using earplugs to shut out loud noises.

![Keep our sleep environment comfortable](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c2215a3f2dd64855862bce1a30b44b5f?v=d98b86e3)

Avoid evening naps

Napping later in the evening may disrupt our ability to fall asleep at night. Research has shown that the best time to take a power nap is in the early to mid-afternoon, and the nap should last approximately 10 to 20 minutes.

![Avoid evening naps](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f1324657748b4f5286370d77626c6e26?v=5af153af)

Quit smoking

People who smoke have a dependence on nicotine. As smoking is highly addictive, it can lead to poor sleep and sleep-related issues.

Heavy smokers may experience withdrawal symptoms throughout the night, when going for hours without a cigarette. The body may begin to crave nicotine, resulting in the need to wake up for a puff. As a result, sleep cycles are disrupted and less deep sleep occurs.

[Quitting smoking](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/88/IQuit#home "Quitting smoking")

can reduce our health risk and help us begin to get better sleep.

![Quit smoking](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/058fe6e194324127bea0ec47d1b3a040?v=223f70de)

[< Previous](#good-night-sleep-carousel "Previous")

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[\> Next](#good-night-sleep-carousel "Next")

What if we cannot fall asleep?

==============================

Lying awake in bed for too long can create an unhealthy mental association between our sleeping environment and wakefulness. Instead, we should create positive associations that promote thoughts and feelings conducive to sleep.

If we cannot fall asleep after 20 minutes, we should not force ourselves to stay in bed. We should get up and do another activity, e.g. go to another part of our house and do something relaxing, such as reading or listening to soothing music.

![What if we cannot fall asleep?](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9058c7eb11da4a8ba92293d265938fb9?v=9d1f3155)

Useful self-help tools

======================

Finding it hard to fall asleep? Try out these self-help tools that can help us relax and better ease into a good night’s sleep.

[<](#previous "Useful self-help tools")

[![Guided Imagery](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/215cb4332c034c09b3dd9e0fa3a70b72?v=8fd8acec)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/1386dc97fc7442e994a5f2e247510d92?v=36ca3616 "Guided Imagery")

[![Progressive Relaxation](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8916e7ddba404720bdac229b0c6bf95d?v=d903cc25)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5c7e1c7c72a8481781463dc5041ab459?v=a4e85f67 "Progressive Relaxation")

[![Mindfulness](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6c16d1baa1394db2af8e267639d41819?v=842fb979)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6b2e9fcf26044964b136122a744cf49a?v=a54c2565 "Mindfulness")

[![Deep Breathing](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/3060d8f370bf466691a4a6b9337b25fa?v=5fd8720b)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/69a470a5ea634ef586da74dec647685f?v=0cfc96d0 "Deep Breathing")

[![Yawn Your Way Sticker Set](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/2f1150d694ec4b5fa9bcae7aeb0126e7?v=b99bc87d)](https://t.me/addstickers/yawnyourway "Yawn Your Way Sticker Set")

[![Sleep Tips for Your Family](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8f0343454e7d44da86e921d94dd76521?v=749e247c)](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/8b4c1d65a4124dd58009d2cbe3aaddac?v=bdc63ced "Sleep Tips for Your Family")

[![Sleep Deeply](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/17c5cb56309e4e3bbb8b667d1187c656?v=afcc5b2b)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=sleep\_deeply "Sleep Deeply")

[![Amazon Forest](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/da07dd874bd3401ea9280f4637aac80b?v=ccbc330f)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=amazon\_forest "Amazon Forest")

[![Daily Routine](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9fa784472a7349a2b99436caa1af01cb?v=1497f1c6)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=daily\_routine "Daily Routine")

[![Drift to Sleep](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/9096942262e84c63a81c97373d2e1b78?v=dfecae68)](https://www.mindline.sg/home?wysa\_tool\_id=drift\_to\_sleep "Drift to Sleep")

[\>](#next "Useful self-help tools")

\* 1

\* 2

\* 3

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[![SingHealth](https://cdn.healthhub.sg/-/media/ihis/images/singhealth-logo.svg?rev=bf7ba047726a4860a9f5de05e6eda604)](https://www.singhealth.com.sg/)

[![Ministry of Health Singapore](https://cdn.healthhub.sg/-/media/ihis/images/moh-logo.svg?rev=c29a7294e92d4a9ba6ad95cf85ac1efc)](https://www.moh.gov.sg/)

[![](https://cdn.healthhub.sg/-/media/ihis/images/programmes/hpb\_r\_v\_cmyk\_logo.jpg?rev=c25ae461a452440abc4e6edbebdfcc36)](https://www.hpb.gov.sg/)

[![Agency for Integrated Care](https://cdn.healthhub.sg/-/media/ihis/images/aic-logo.svg?rev=d1e0fad494d44a33be75e9e636d0801c)](https://www.aic.sg/)

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MindSG

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[![Helplines](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/88bbcdcc2a3a43ea9954937c7ba75eb4?v=67c6e7a0)](#helplines "Helplines")

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My Friend

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\* [Why is support important for our friend?](#supporting-our-friend "Why is support important for our friend?")

\* [How can we support our friend?](#tips-on-supporting-our-friend "How can we support our friend?")

\* [Mental health challenges they may face](#different-mental-health-challenges "Mental health challenges they may face")

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Supporting our friend

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Whichever stage of our lives, friendships can enrich our lives in many ways. They can provide us with the companionship and the support we need, but a healthy friendship is also a two-way street.

When our friends are going through difficult times, we can provide them with the comfort and support they need to manage life’s challenges. We can often be a key source of support, especially if we notice that they are struggling.

Read on to learn how we can better support our friends’ mental health and well-being.

![Supporting friends with stress, sleep and other mental health challenges](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/79eb5e65b71640848c54c4c2d9e9b81b?v=0d6cd85d)

Tips on supporting our friend

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We are an important source of support to our friends and may have a healthy and strong relationship with them. We might also be better able to tell if they are dealing with day-to-day challenges or struggling with a larger problem.

Here are some tips on how to check in with them and provide support:

[<](#previous "Common causes include")

Starting a conversation

Starting a conversation with our friends about their well-being can be difficult. To help us navigate challenging conversations with empathy and care, you can pick up some useful conversation tips [here](/programmes/186/MindSG/Caring-For-Others/How-To-Better-Support-Others/#how-can-we-provide-support)

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![Learn how to provide emotional support to friends facing mental health or mental wellbeing issues](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/79847f499ca44a50bc50508c31ddb526?v=eb11bc8f)

Be supportive and let

them know they are

not alone

Our friends may have a hard time asking us for help for fear of burdening us. If we sense that something is troubling them, we can offer them a safe space to share their thoughts and let them know that we are here to support them.

When they open up, listen to their feelings, thoughts and needs. We should give them the space and time to express what is on their mind. Offering comfort and reassurance can help them feel better, even if we may not be able to help address the problems they are facing.

Read More

![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)

Read Less

![arrow](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/73626b73d8f24890aeb6da0373ea3f99?v=ea8e2d3b)

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Be mindful of our tone and volume

Our friend may just need a listening ear and for someone to acknowledge their concerns. We can speak in a softer volume and a gentler tone to show them that we care.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7f7c60588777487ca4c619b932ba56af?v=61f114be)

Prioritise their well-being

If our friends are acting unusual, neglecting themselves or endangering their own safety, they may need professional help.

Share with them relevant [helplines](#helplines "Helplines")

or [mental health resources](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/seeking-support#Seek\_mental\_health\_resources\_services)

and let them know that reaching out for support is the first step to feeling better.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/c7fde134a35c41e9aff85557011307f9?v=996fb2fb)

[\>](#next "Common causes include")

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Different mental health challenges

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Like all of us, our friends may experience life changes that can affect their mental health and well-being. As a friend, we can learn about some of the mental health challenges they may face so that we can better support them.

![Sleeping Well](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4e1f18f37c7a42eea808da31fb88a4aa?v=02414454)

Sleeping Well

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Sleeping Well")

![Coping with Stress](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7be4e3c3cb4141649d90c04a470ad1df?v=0fb2d441)

Coping with Stress

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Coping with Stress")

![Managing Emotions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/65ddb60721974f88ab5fa5580fb39ee9?v=ae4b5f2c)

Managing Emotions

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Managing Emotions")

![Understanding Depression](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/79f8479756c343c3aa018ee1a58d5e6b?v=d09e2fa0)

Understanding Depression

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Understanding Depression")

![Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/mindsg/caring-for-others/OCD)

Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)")

![Managing Anxiety Disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/5125169c26ef4c23adec340d71e8ccce?v=bda9df80)

Managing Anxiety Disorder

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Managing Anxiety Disorder")

![Preventing Self-harm and Suicide](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/36e2319ca24f4351b2705bf7c6ce935e?v=d896b540)

Preventing Self-harm and Suicide

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Preventing Self-harm and Suicide")

![How to support a friend coping with grief](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/14efce91a9d74a80b5da9bb2f38b62b9?v=c62ea94f)

Coping with Grief

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Coping with Grief")

![How to help a friend undergoing transitions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7848181b9de84a758d804550fade31a2?v=34464e30)

Undergoing Transitions

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Undergoing Transitions")

NEW

![Understanding Bipolar Disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e4fb35fb4a06490b8998204c2ca987c8)

Understanding Bipolar Disorder

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[READ MORE](#different-mental-health-challenges-modal "Understanding Bipolar Disorder")

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4e1f18f37c7a42eea808da31fb88a4aa?v=02414454)\

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### Sleeping Well](#challenges-accordion\_sleeping-well "Sleeping Well")

There are times when our friends may have trouble falling or staying asleep. If we notice them going through this, we can [read more](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Sleeping-Well-Adults#importance-of-sleeping-well)

about sleep health and share useful tips to support them in adopting better sleep habits.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7be4e3c3cb4141649d90c04a470ad1df?v=0fb2d441)\

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### Coping with Stress](#challenges-accordion\_coping-with-stress "Coping with Stress")

New experiences and life transitions can bring about stress. If we find our friends feeling stressed or overwhelmed, we can proactively support them.

For example, we can hear them out or invite them to do activities together to help them de-stress. You can also learn some stress management tips [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Coping-With-Stress-Adults#manage-stress-and-burnout "Coping With Stress")

and share with them.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/65ddb60721974f88ab5fa5580fb39ee9?v=ae4b5f2c)\

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### Managing Emotions](#challenges-accordion\_managing-emotions "Managing Emotions")

When things get overwhelming, it is normal to experience intense emotions. We can help our friends learn to be more aware of their emotions and better manage them.

Click [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Managing-Our-Emotions-Adults#How\_do\_we\_manage\_our\_emotions "Managing Our Emotions")

to pick up some tips that you can share with your friends about managing emotions.

[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/79f8479756c343c3aa018ee1a58d5e6b?v=d09e2fa0)\

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### Understanding Depression](#challenges-accordion\_understanding-depression "Understanding Depression")

It is normal to feel sad occasionally, but if we notice our friends feeling down over an extended period, they could be suffering from depression. To better support them, we can [learn more](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Understanding-Depression-Adults#content "Understanding Depression")

about what they are going through and how to seek help.

Here are some tips on caring for friends with depression:

Previous

Be patient and understanding

Depression can drain a person’s energy and drive. At times, our friends might appear irritable, impatient, or say hurtful things but try to not take it to heart as these may be due to their condition and not necessarily directed at us.

Here are other things to take note of when our friends are not acting in their usual ways:

\* Empathise with them

\* Know that they are trying their best

\* Do not judge or criticise them

\* Avoid telling them to be positive or “snap out of it”

\* Refrain from blaming them or pressuring them to get well soon

Look out for warning signs of suicide

People with depression may have an increased [risk of suicide](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Preventing-Self-harm-and-Suicide-Adults#content)

. Be prepared by knowing the concerning behaviours to look out for. If our friends display any signs of suicide, take it seriously and consider seeking professional support.

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[![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/698f321d02d745d1893416ed213e4fa7?v=0b164e87)\

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### Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)](#challenges-accordion\_living-with-obsessive-compulsive-disorder "Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)")

OCD is one of the top three most common mental health conditions. If our friends have OCD, they might constantly have intrusive thoughts and ritualistic behaviours that cause them distress and anxiety. To better support them, we can [learn more](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Living-with-OCD-Adults#content "Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)")

about what they are going through and how to seek help.

Here are some tips on caring for friends with OCD:

Previous

Manage our expectations and recognise small improvements

Give our friends the time that they need to improve. Their progress may sometimes seem insignificant to us (e.g. a decrease rather than complete stop in over washing their hands), but it might have taken a lot for them to accomplish.

We can encourage them to keep trying by consistently acknowledging their small accomplishments and praising them.

Avoid judging or making negative remarks

Try to remain open and refrain from making negative remarks about their behaviours. Show our support by lending a listening ear and encouraging them to share about their struggles.

Be mindful not to accommodate their obsessive thoughts and compulsions

Avoid offering assurance about their obsessive thoughts or helping them perform certain rituals as it will not be in their best interest in the long term.

Remind them that although performing these rituals may make them feel temporarily better, it will worsen their symptoms in the long run. We can also encourage our friends to seek professional help if it interferes with their daily lives.

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### Managing Anxiety Disorder](#challenges-accordion\_managing-anxiety-disorder "Managing Anxiety Disorder")

It is normal to feel anxious at times, but it can be concerning if our friends often feel uneasy and have trouble controlling their worries. If it comes to a point where their daily life is affected, it might be a sign of anxiety disorder. To better support them, we can [learn more](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Dealing-with-Anxiety-Disorder-Adults#content "Managing Anxiety Disorder")

about what they are going through and how to seek help.

Here are some tips on caring for friends with anxiety disorder:

Previous

Understand that supporting avoidance or forcing confrontation are not solutions

Avoidance is not helpful for their anxiety in the long run. Try not to help our friends avoid situations that they are fearful of (e.g. by taking over their task so they can avoid doing them).

However, remember to practise discretion when doing this. If they start to show extreme fear, refrain from forcing them to confront it as this could cause them additional distress and affect their trust in us.

Encourage them to focus on things that they can control

Help our friends identify what they can and cannot control. Being able to divert their attention and energy towards what can be controlled will help them improve their situation.

Refrain from asking them to stop worrying

Lend our friends a listening ear and validate their feelings instead of asking them to stop worrying. Let them know that it is okay not to be okay at times. We can also guide them to refocus their attention on other activities, like taking a walk, listening to music or going to a quiet corner where they can calm themselves down.

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### Preventing Self-harm and Suicide](#challenges-accordion\_preventing-self-harm-and-suicide "Preventing Self-harm and Suicide")

Amid the hustle and bustle of daily lives, we may encounter a fair share of challenges and issues. Be it financial worries, juggling family commitments or pressure at work, these challenges can bring about strong feelings of stress, self-doubt, uncertainty, and fear. When these get too overwhelming, some might hurt or contemplate hurting themselves to seek relief.

Click [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Preventing-Self-harm-and-Suicide-Adults#content)

to learn more about self-harm and suicide as well as how to help our friends cope with it.

[![How to support a friend coping with grief](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/14efce91a9d74a80b5da9bb2f38b62b9?v=c62ea94f)\

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### Coping with Grief](#challenges-accordion\_coping-with-grief "Coping with Grief")

There may be times when our friend experiences losing someone or something precious to them such as a loved one, relationship, their health, or even their job. As they express their grief from this loss, they may experience difficult and overwhelming emotions such as sadness or even despair.

To better support our friend, we can try to be more attentive to how they are coping and keep them company. We can also learn more about the effects of grief and how we can support them through it. Click [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Coping-with-Grief-Adults#home "Coping with Grief")

to find out more about coping with grief.

[![How to help a friend undergoing transitions](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/7848181b9de84a758d804550fade31a2?v=34464e30)\

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### Undergoing Transitions](#challenges-accordion\_undergoing-transitions "Undergoing Transitions")

As our friend progresses through their life, they will inevitably face changes, such as getting a new job, or starting a family. While this might be an exciting time for them, it may often bring about stress, worry or frustration, and may affect their mental and physical health.

Click [here](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Undergoing-Transitions-Adults#home "Undergoing Transitions")

to learn useful tips on coping that we can share with them, as we help them through transitions that may occur in their lives.

NEW

[![How to help a friend to understand bipolar disorder](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/e4fb35fb4a06490b8998204c2ca987c8)\

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### Understanding Bipolar Disorder](#challenges-accordion\_understanding-bipolar-disorder "Understanding Bipolar Disorder")

It is normal to experience mood swings as we go through the ups and downs of life. However, if our friends have persistent and severe changes in mood, it may be a concerning sign of bipolar disorder. To better support them, we can [learn more](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Understanding-Bipolar-Disorder-Adults/#home "Understanding Bipolar Disorder")

about what they are going through and how to seek help.

Here are some tips on caring for friends with bipolar disorder:

Previous

Make plans to prepare for difficult episodes

Mood episodes can be unpredictable and last for days, weeks, or even longer. This can disrupt and cause significant challenges to the daily lives of our friends. Help them identify their triggers, symptoms, and warning signs to discuss ways we can help them to better manage their episodes.

Encourage them to seek treatment

Bipolar disorder can be effectively treated with medication and support from healthcare professionals. Reassure our friends and let them know that we will be there to support them. We can also encourage them to adhere to their prescribed treatments so they can better manage their symptoms.

Be aware of the warning signs of suicide

Our friends with bipolar disorder may have an increased risk of suicide. We can stay alert and prepared by learning to look out for [concerning behaviours](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Preventing-Self-harm-and-Suicide-Adults/#the-signs-someone-is-contemplating-suicide "Be aware of the warning signs of suicide")

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Self-care matters

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Supporting our friends while juggling life’s demands can take a toll on our physical and mental well-being. Ultimately, the lack of self-care will make it more challenging for us to care for our friends.

Practising and prioritising self-care will allow us to recharge and put us in a better state to provide our friends with the support they need. We should not feel guilty about attending to our needs. Refer to these tips on [managing stress](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Coping-With-Stress-Adults#manage-stress-and-burnout "Managing Stress")

and [emotions](https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/MindSG/Caring-For-Ourselves/Managing-Our-Emotions-Adults#How\_do\_we\_manage\_our\_emotions "Emotions")

to keep ourselves healthy.

![](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/d3335c66b8cb46d8bd289ede90d9fcee?v=4d06d418)

Mental health services

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Belle, Beyond the Label helpbot, is an interactive platform for users to find mental health resources and services in a private and convenient manner. If you or anyone you know is overwhelmed with stress or anxiety, you may find the help you need via Belle.

[Get access to Belle](https://go.gov.sg/belle-nmhrp "Get access to Belle")

You may also visit [here](https://go.gov.sg/ncssmh-resources)

for more mental health resources or download the list of community mental health services including your nearest GP [here](https://aic.buzz/mindmatters-directory)

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![Chat with Belle now.](https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/f7fea3f63e7742d381cba8ed6e1b42d8?v=51dfa8ab)

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