**Advice for Life Situations and Events**

Advice and support for your mental health in life situations and events.

Links for pages included below:

* [Where to get urgent help for mental health - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/)
* [Bullying at work - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/support-for-workplace-bullying/)
* [Coping with financial worries - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/how-to-cope-with-financial-worries/)
* [Help for mental health problems if you're LGBTQ+ - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/mental-health-support-if-you-are-gay-lesbian-bisexual-lgbtq/)
* [How to help someone with depression - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/how-to-help-someone-with-depression/)
* [Loneliness in older people: how to help - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/loneliness-in-older-people-how-to-help/)
* [How to help someone with eating disorder - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/how-to-help-someone-with-eating-disorder/)
* [Bereavement - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/bereavement/)

Further advice on coping with life situations:

* [Where to get help for self-harm](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/getting-help/)
* [Help for suicidal thoughts](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/help-for-suicidal-thoughts/)
* [Student stress](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/student-stress-self-help-tips/)
* [Tips on preparing for exams](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/tips-on-preparing-for-exams/)
* [Mental health in pregnancy](https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/mental-health/)
* [Veterans: NHS mental health services](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-and-veterans-healthcare/veterans-nhs-mental-health-services/)
* [Serving personnel: mental health services](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-and-veterans-healthcare/serving-personnel-mental-health-services/)

**Where to get URGENT HELP for Mental Health**

**If you need help for a mental health crisis or emergency, you should get immediate expert advice and assessment.**

It's important to know that support services are available for you to access, whatever you’re going through.

**\*\*\* URGENT ADVICE \*\*\***

**Get advice from 111 or ask for an urgent GP appointment if you need urgent help for your mental health**

[Get help from 111 online](https://111.nhs.uk/triage/check-your-mental-health-symptoms) or call [111](tel:111) and select the mental health option.

111 will tell you the right place to get help. You may be able to speak to a trained mental health professional over the phone.

A GP can advise you about helpful treatments and also help you [access mental health services](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/social-care-and-your-rights/how-to-access-mental-health-services/). You may be able to refer yourself to some services.

**Other ways to get help with your mental health**

**Free listening services**

These services offer confidential support from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult:

* Call [116 123](tel:116123) to talk to [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/), or email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) for a reply within 24 hours
* Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the [Shout Crisis Text Line](https://www.giveusashout.org/), or text "YM" if you're under 19

If you're under 19, you can also call [0800 1111](tel:0800%201111) to talk to [Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/). The number will not appear on your phone bill.

These services will only share your information if they are very worried about you or think you are in immediate danger.

**Coping during a crisis**

The mental health charity Mind has information on [ways to help yourself cope during a crisis](https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/what-can-i-do-to-help-myself-cope/).

This includes calming exercises and a tool to get you through the next few hours.

**IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED**

**Call 999 or go to A&E now if:**

Someone's life is at risk – for example, they have seriously injured themselves or taken an overdose

You do not feel you can keep yourself or someone else safe

A mental health emergency should be taken as seriously as a physical one. You will not be wasting anyone's time.

Call: [999](https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/when-to-call-999/)

**How a mental health emergency is treated in A&E**

If you go to A&E, the staff should treat you with respect and look after any immediate physical and mental health needs.

They should also refer you to a liaison psychiatry service or local crisis resolution and home treatment team (CRHT).

Find out about:

* [liaison psychiatry services on the Royal College of Psychiatrists website](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/liaison-psychiatry-services)
* [crisis resolution and home treatment teams (CRHTs) on the Mind website](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/crisis-teams-crhts/)

The team in charge of your care will assess you and decide on the best course of care.

This usually involves supporting you with your mental health at home. They may also refer you to other services to support your needs.

**Making a safety plan**

If you struggle with suicidal thoughts or are supporting someone else, it may help to make a safety plan to use if you need it:

* the [Staying Safe website provides information on how to make a safety plan](https://stayingsafe.net/), including video tutorials and online templates to guide you through the process
* the mental health charity [Mind also provides information on planning for a mental health crisis](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/planning-for-a-crisis/)

[Where to get urgent help for mental health - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/)

Page last reviewed: 26 April 2023  
Next review due: 26 April 2026

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**Bullying at Work**

**How to identify if you're being bullied at work, how to stop it, and advice on getting support.**

**What is workplace bullying?**

Bullying can involve arguments and rudeness, but it can also be more subtle.

Other forms of bullying include:

* excluding and ignoring people and their contribution
* overloading people with work
* spreading malicious rumours
* unfair treatment
* picking on or regularly undermining someone
* denying someone's training or promotion opportunities
* using social media to humiliate, threaten or offend

Bullying can also happen in emails or on phone calls.

**What effect does it have?**

Bullying can make working life miserable. You can lose all faith in yourself, you can feel ill and [depressed](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/low-mood-sadness-depression/), and find it hard to motivate yourself to work.

Bullying is not always a case of someone picking on the weak. Sometimes a person's strengths in the workplace can make the bully feel threatened, and that triggers their behaviour.

**What can I do?**

Do not be ashamed to tell people what's going on. Bullying is serious, and you need to let people know what's happening so they can help you. By sharing your experiences you may discover that it's happening to other people, too.

**Get advice**

Speak to someone about how you might deal with the problem informally. This person could be:

* an employee representative, such as a trade union official
* someone in the firm's human resources department
* your manager or supervisor

Some employers have specially trained staff to help with bullying and harassment problems. They're sometimes called "harassment advisers". If the bullying is affecting your health, visit a GP.

**Stay calm**

Recognise that criticism or personal remarks are not connected to your abilities. They reflect the bully's own weaknesses and are meant to intimidate and control you. Stay calm, and do not be tempted to explain your behaviour. Ask them to explain theirs.

**Talk to the bully**

The bullying may not be deliberate. If you can, talk to the person in question as they may not realise how their behaviour has affected you. Work out what to say beforehand. Describe what's been happening and why you object to it. Stay calm and be polite. If you do not want to talk to them yourself, ask someone else to do it for you.

**Keep a diary**

This is known as a contemporaneous record. It will be very useful if you decide to take action at a later stage. Try to talk calmly to the person who's bullying you and tell them that you find their behaviour unacceptable. Often, bullies retreat from people who stand up to them. If necessary, have a colleague with you when you do this.

**Make a formal complaint**

Making a formal complaint is the next step if you cannot solve the problem informally. To do this, you must follow your employer's grievance procedure.

**What about legal action?**

Sometimes the problem continues even after you've followed your employer's grievance procedure. If nothing is done to put things right, you can consider legal action, which may mean going to an employment tribunal. Get professional advice before taking this step.

Find out more about the law covering workplace bullying from [GOV.UK: workplace bullying and harassment](https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment).

**Where can I get help?**

Let your manager or union or staff representative know of the problem, or seek advice elsewhere, such as:

* [Acas helpline](https://www.acas.org.uk/contact)
* [Citizens Advice: If you're being harassed or bullied at work](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/discrimination-at-work/discrimination-at-work/checking-if-its-discrimination/if-youre-being-harassed-or-bullied-at-work/)
* [Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en)

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# Coping with Financial Worries

**Feeling low or anxious is a normal response when you've lost your job, been made redundant, or you're struggling with debt.**

You may be feeling, behaving or thinking in ways that are unfamiliar. But that does not necessarily mean you've got [depression](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/depression-in-adults/overview/) or an [anxiety disorder](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/overview/).

## How to survive financial stress

### **Stay active**

Keep seeing your friends, keep your CV up to date, and try to keep paying the bills. If you have more time because you're not at work, do some form of [exercise](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/) – physical activity can improve your mood if you're feeling low.

### **Get advice**

If you're going into debt, get advice on how to prioritise your debts. When people feel anxious, they sometimes avoid talking to others. Some people can lose their confidence about driving or travelling. If this starts to happen, facing these situations will generally make them easier.

### **Do not drink too much alcohol**

For some people with money worries, alcohol can become a problem. You may drink more than usual as a way of dealing with your emotions or just to fill in time. But alcohol will not help you deal with your problems and could add to your stress.

[Get tips on how to cut down on alcohol](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/tips-on-cutting-down-alcohol/)

### **Do not give up your daily routine**

Get up at your normal time and stick to your usual routine. If you lose your routine, it can affect your eating – you may stop cooking, miss breakfast because you're still in bed, or eat snacks instead of having proper meals.

[Find out how to eat a balanced diet](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-eat-a-balanced-diet/)

## More help for money problems

[GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/) has information about a range of work and money-related issues including:

* [GOV.UK: redundancies, dismissals and disciplinaries](https://www.gov.uk/browse/working/redundancies-dismissals)
* [GOV.UK: benefits](https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits)
* [GOV.UK: court claims, debt and bankruptcy](https://www.gov.uk/browse/tax/court-claims-debt-bankruptcy)

### **Finding a new job**

GOV.UK also has a lot of information and advice if you're looking for work, including tips on writing a CV, planning your job hunt and applying for jobs online.

* [GOV.UK: finding a job](https://www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job)

### **Coping with debt**

[Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/) is a good place to get information about benefits, how to deal with debt, what you're entitled to if you're made redundant and who to speak to if you're at risk of losing your home:

* [Citizens Advice: work](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/)
* [Citizens Advice: benefits](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/)
* [Citizens Advice: help with debt](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/help-with-debt/)

Other organisations offering helpful advice online include:

* [Money Helper](https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en), or call [0800 011 3797](tel:0800%20138%207777) Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm
* [National Debtline](https://www.nationaldebtline.org/), or call [0808 808 4000](tel:0808%20808%204000) Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm and Saturday 9.30am to 1pm
* [StepChange Debt Charity](http://www.stepchange.org/), or call [0800 138 1111](tel:0800%20138%201111) Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 2pm

### **Mental health and money**

The charity Mind has a money and mental health section on its website, which includes advice on how to manage debt.

* [Mind: money and mental health](http://www.mind.org.uk/money)

[Mental Health & Money Advice](https://www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/) offers information and advice for anyone struggling with money because of mental illness, or whose financial situation is affecting their mental health.

## When you should get medical help

Most people who experience emotional distress find that after a few days or weeks they're able to tackle challenges, such as finding a new job.

See a GP if you're still feeling worried, anxious or low after a few weeks. If you think it will help, the GP can advise you about talking therapy services in your area.

[You can also refer yourself directly to an NHS talking therapies service](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-a-psychological-therapies-service/)

Get help immediately if you cannot cope, if life is becoming very difficult or if you feel it is not worth living.

See a GP, call NHS 111 or contact a helpline such as [Samaritans](http://www.samaritans.org/) (call free on [116 123](tel:116%20123)) for confidential, non-judgemental emotional support.

[Find out more about mental health services](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/)

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**Mental Health Support if you're Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans (LGBTQ+)**

**Mental health problems such as depression or self-harm can affect any of us, but they're more common among people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBTQ+).**

This may be linked to LGBTQ+ people's experience of discrimination, homophobia or transphobia, bullying, social isolation, or rejection because of their sexuality.

Other things, such as their age, religion, where they live, and their ethnicity can add extra complications to an already difficult situation.

**How talking therapy can help**

It might not be easy, but getting help with issues you're struggling to deal with on your own is one of the most important things you can do.

Talking with a therapist who's trained to work with LGBTQ+ people may help with issues such as:

* difficulty accepting your sexual orientation
* coping with other people's reactions to your sexuality
* feeling your body does not reflect your true gender [(gender dysphoria)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/)
* transitioning
* [low self-esteem](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/tips-and-support/raise-low-self-esteem/)
* [self-harm](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/getting-help/)
* [suicidal thoughts](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/help-for-suicidal-thoughts/)
* [depression](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/low-mood-sadness-depression/)
* coping with bullying and discrimination
* anger, isolation or rejection from family, friends or your community
* fear of violence

Read about [different types of talking therapy](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/types-of-talking-therapies/) and how they can help.

**When to get help**

Do not suffer in silence. You should get help as soon as you feel you need it. It's never too late to get help, no matter how big or small your problems might seem.

You could benefit from getting help if you:

* feel tired, lack energy or have problems sleeping
* feel anxious, agitate, irritable, low or depressed
* shut yourself away from people
* no longer want to do things you used to enjoy
* use alcohol or drugs to help you cope with your feelings
* harm yourself or have thoughts about self-harming
* think about suicide

If you're struggling to cope right now, contact [Samaritans](http://www.samaritans.org/):

* call [116 123](tel:116%20123) (open 24 hours, every day)
* email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Samaritans offers a safe place for you to talk about whatever's on your mind, at any time.

Find out more about [where to get urgent help for mental health](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/).

**Where to get help**

**Speak to a GP**

Consider talking to a GP. They'll know what help is available locally and can help you decide which treatment is best for you.

When discussing your situation, try to be as honest as possible with the GP so they can suggest the best type of support for you.

**Support organisations**

These organisations offer mental health advice, support and services for LGBTQ+ people.

[Gendered Intelligence](http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/)  
The organisation runs youth groups in London and Leeds for trans, non-binary and questioning young people. It also runs a peer-led support group in London for people aged 18 to 30.

[Consortium](https://www.consortium.lgbt/)  
This membership organisation works to support LGBTQ+ organisations and projects around the country. Use the site's [Member's Directory](https://www.consortium.lgbt/member-directory/) to find local mental health services.

[LGBT Foundation](https://lgbt.foundation/)  
The LGBT Foundation offers information, advice, and support services, including a [Talking Therapies Programme](https://lgbt.foundation/talkingtherapies) to LGBT people.

[London Friend](http://londonfriend.org.uk/)  
London Friend offers support groups and services, such as counselling and drug and alcohol support, to LGBTQ+ people in and around London.

[Mind](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/lgbtiqplus-mental-health/about-lgbtiqplus-mental-health/#.WVzoNUUrKM8)  
Get information about mental health support for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, non-binary, queer or questioning (LGBTQIA+).

[Pink Therapy](http://www.pinktherapy.com/)  
Pink Therapy has an [online directory](http://www.pinktherapy.com/en-gb/findatherapist.aspx) of therapists who work with people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer or questioning (LGBTQIA+), and people who are gender- and sex-diverse (GSD).

[Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline](https://switchboard.lgbt/)  
Switchboard provides a listening service for LGBT+ people over the phone, via email and online chat. It can provide you with contact details of an LGBT-friendly therapist.

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**How to Help Someone with Depression**

**Feeling down or depressed from time to time is normal. But if these feelings last 2 weeks or more, or start to affect everyday life, this can be a sign of depression.**

Depression can develop slowly. Someone who's depressed does not always realise or acknowledge that they're not feeling or behaving as they usually do.

Often it's a partner, family member or carer who first realises that help is needed. They may encourage their friend or relative to see a GP or find some other source of support.

**Signs that someone may be depressed**

Depression has lots of possible symptoms.

You may notice that someone:

* has lost interest in doing things they normally enjoy
* seems to be feeling down or hopeless
* has slower speech and movements or is more fidgety and restless than usual
* feels tired or does not have much energy
* is overeating or has lost their appetite
* is sleeping more than usual or is not able to sleep
* has trouble concentrating on everyday things, such as watching TV or reading the paper

[See more symptoms of depression](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/depression-in-adults/symptoms/)

**Signs of depression in older people**

Signs of depression in older people can include:

* empty fridges and cupboards (which suggest a poor diet)
* neglected appearance
* poor hygiene
* someone showing little joy in receiving visitors

**Tips to help someone who seems down:**

* Let them know you care and are there to listen.
* Accept them as they are, without judging them.
* Gently encourage them to help themselves – for example, by staying [physically active](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/exercise-for-depression/), eating a [balanced diet](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/) and doing things they enjoy.
* Get information about the services available to them, such as an [NHS talking therapy service](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-a-psychological-therapies-service/) or [depression support groups](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/depression-in-adults/support-groups/) in their area.
* Stay in touch with them by messaging, phoning or meeting for coffee. People who are depressed can become isolated and may find it difficult to leave their home.
* Try to be patient.
* Take care of yourself.

[Read about how friends and family can help someone with depression on Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/for-friends-and-family/#HowCanISupportSomeoneWithDepression)

**When to get help urgently**

If the person you're worried about expresses suicidal feelings, you or they should contact a GP or [NHS 111](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care-services/when-to-use-111/).

You can also contact [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/) on 116 123 for confidential 24-hour support.

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**Loneliness in Older People: how to help**

**There are lots of ways you can do your bit to help lonely or socially isolated older people in your community. The person you're helping will reap health benefits, and you'll find you will as well.**

Volunteering for an organisation that supports older people is a key way of helping a lonely or socially isolated older person. But a simple friendly chat or phone call can make all the difference, too.

Evidence suggests giving your time in this way could be as valuable to you as the person you support.

It's likely to boost your self-esteem and sense of purpose. And helping others takes your mind off your own problems for a while.

[Read our 5 steps to mental wellbeing](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/) and where volunteering fits in.

[Read about the benefits of volunteering on the Royal Voluntary Service website](https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteering/why-volunteer/benefits-of-volunteering/)

**Start a conversation**

It's not always easy to know who or how to help. A good start is simply to stop and talk to an older neighbour if you pass them on the street.

If you think an older person may have trouble hearing or has memory problems, make sure to speak clearly (but do not shout!).

Pause between sentences and questions to give them chance to digest the information. And allow a little extra time for them to respond – do not hurry them.

**Offer practical help**

Do you know an older person who lives alone, rarely leaves the house, has recently suffered a bereavement, is in poor health, disabled, has sight or hearing loss, or does not seem to have close family living nearby?

Ask them if they need any help with tasks such as shopping, posting letters, picking up prescriptions and medicines, or dog-walking.

Offer to accompany them or give them a lift to activities or doctors' and hospital appointments, the library, hairdressers or faith services.

**Share your time**

Volunteer for organisations that support older people. These often offer "befriending" schemes for isolated older people and rely on volunteers for one-to-one contact as a telephone "buddy", visitor or driver, or hosting social events for groups.

Your contribution could be as simple as a weekly telephone call to an isolated older person or extend to regular home visits for a chat and to help with shopping and so on, driving an older person to a social event, or even hosting coffee mornings for groups of older people.

You can find more information on volunteering to befriend and support older people from these organisations:

* [Age UK: volunteering to support your local Age UK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/local-services-volunteer/)
* [Independent Age: Volunteering with us](https://www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering)
* [Royal Voluntary Service: Start your volunteering journey](https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteering/)

**Help with household tasks**

Getting older can make it hard to tackle even simple jobs around the house.

Older people often really appreciate any offer of help with basic chores such as taking out the rubbish, changing light bulbs, fastening sash windows, clearing snow off the path, putting up pictures, and so on.

**Share a meal**

Older, isolated people often need a hand cooking for themselves, so why not take round an extra plate of hot home-cooked food, or a frozen portion they can heat up or microwave?

As well as being practical, it's a nice way to share your time with a neighbour.

Try to provide the meal in a container that you do not need back – it's hard work for both of you to keep track of serving bowls.

[Find easy dinner ideas and recipes](https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/dinner/)

**Watch out for signs of winter illness**

Older people are particularly vulnerable during the winter as cold weather increases their risk of illnesses, such as [colds](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/), [coughs](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cough/), [flu](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/), [heart attacks](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-attack/), [strokes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stroke-old/), breathing problems and [hypothermia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hypothermia/) (a dangerous fall in body temperature).

Check (ideally in autumn or early winter) if they have had a free [flu vaccine](https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine/) and, if not, offer to make an appointment at the GP surgery.

Look out for signs of serious illness, such as drowsiness, slurred speech and the person not complaining of feeling cold even in a bitterly cold room.

[Read about how to stay well in winter](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/)

If you're worried, ask if there's a relative or close friend you can phone, or call their doctor or [NHS 111](https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/nhs-111/).

You could also contact your local council or ring the Age UK helpline on 0800 678 1602.

[Find out how to spot and treat hypothermia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hypothermia/)

**Useful resources**

If you suspect your parents are lonely, read the [When They Get Older website's loneliness guide](https://whentheygetolder.co.uk/downloads/).

Get advice on [how to cope with loneliness on the Mind website](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/friends-and-family/?o=9226).

[Get more ideas for how to volunteer in your area from GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/volunteering)

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# How to Help Someone with an Eating Disorder

**If a friend or relative has an eating disorder, such as**[**anorexia**](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/anorexia/overview/)**,** [**bulimia**](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/bulimia/overview/)**or** [**binge eating disorder**](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/binge-eating/overview/)**, you will probably want to do everything you can to help them recover.**

You're already doing a great job by finding out more about eating disorders and how to try to support them – it shows you care and helps you understand how they might be feeling.

Getting professional help from a doctor, practice nurse, or a school or college nurse will give your friend or relative the best chance of getting better.

But this can be one of the most difficult steps for someone living with an eating disorder, so try to encourage them to get help or offer to go along with them.

You can support them in other ways, too:

* **Keep trying to include them** – they may not want to go out or join in with activities but keep trying to talk to them and ask them along, just like before. Even if they do not join in, they would still like to be asked. It will make them feel valued as a person.
* **Try to build up their self-esteem** – perhaps by telling them what a great person they are, and how much you appreciate having them in your life and that you're happy to support them.
* **Give your time, listen to them** **and try not to give advice or criticise** – this can be tough when you do not agree with what they say about themselves and what they eat. Remember, you do not have to know all the answers. Just making sure they know you're there for them is what's important. This is especially true when it feels like your friend or relative is rejecting your friendship, help and support.

## How are eating disorders treated?

Treatment will be different depending on the type of eating disorder your friend or relative has.

### **Talking therapies**

It will usually involve some kind of talking therapy because help with eating and getting to a healthy weight, if needed, is usually not enough.

Your friend or relative will talk to a therapist about the emotional difficulties that led to their eating disorder, and they will learn healthier ways to cope with these feelings. Their treatment may also involve them working through a guided self-help programme.

### **Family therapy**

Some people may also have family therapy, which is a type of group therapy. The person with the eating disorder is encouraged to work with family members to try to treat their eating disorder.

Family therapy usually involves parents and siblings but may sometimes include close friends or other family members.

### **Length of treatment**

Treatment will take place over several months, so your friend or relative can get used to the changes slowly. The earlier they start, the better their chances of making a good recovery.

During their treatment, they will also have regular health checks to look after their physical health.

[Find eating disorders services in your area](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Eating%20disorders/LocationSearch/1797)

[Read more about how eating disorders are treated](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/eating-disorders/overview/)

## Will they have to go into hospital?

Most people with eating disorders will not have to stay in hospital. They are seen as outpatients, which means they visit the hospital for their appointments or any treatments.

Some people who have a more advanced or serious eating disorder might need to visit the hospital for longer appointments as a day patient or be admitted to hospital for more intensive support and treatment (known as inpatient care).

## Should I visit them in hospital?

This depends on what your friend or relative wants, how you feel and what the treatment centre allows.

Let them know you're thinking of them and would like to visit. If this is not possible, you can always call, text or email them to let them know you're still there to support them.

## Can people be forced to get help for eating disorders?

If your friend or relative has lost an extreme amount of weight, they may be in danger of starving themselves and developing serious complications. They may not be able to think clearly because of the lack of food and may have to be forced into life-saving treatment.

In these circumstances, their doctor may decide to admit them to hospital for specialist treatment. This can only be done after the doctor has consulted with colleagues and they all agree with the doctor's decision. This is called being sectioned and is done under the rules of the Mental Health Act.

[The mental health charity Mind has more information about the Mental Health Act](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/mental-health-act-1983/about-the-mha-1983/).

## Will they be cured when they come home?

Your friend or relative will still need your support. Most people with an eating disorder do recover and learn to use more positive ways of coping.

But recovery from an eating disorder can be very difficult and take a long time. Your friend or relative may even relapse into old behaviours or have periods of living with their illness again during their recovery.

Part of them may want to get better, while the other part might be very scared about giving up the eating disorder. They might think: "I want to get better but I do not want to lose or put on any weight."

They will probably have good days and bad days. During times of stress, the eating difficulties may be more likely to return. Changing the way people with eating disorders think and feel is never easy, and it takes time.

[Find out more about supporting someone with an eating disorder from Beat, the eating disorders charity](https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/support-someone-else/tips-for-supporting-somebody-with-an-eating-disorder/)

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**Bereavement**

Find advice and support for coping with bereavement and grief, including help with bereavement in children and young people.

[**Get urgent help now for mental health**](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/)

# Children and Bereavement

**The following information could help if your child has lost or is about to lose someone, such as a family member or friend.**

## If your child is about to lose someone

If a child has a loved one, such as a friend or family member who's going to die, they can benefit from special support.

A child's stress level is often at its highest before bereavement because of fear and the unknown.

Pre-bereavement counselling gives a child a chance to think and talk about their feelings and share their worries.

[The YoungMinds website has more information on counselling services for children and young people](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/counselling-and-therapy/)

### **Making a memory box**

If you're a parent and you know you're going to die, you could make a memory box to give to your child or make one together.

A memory box contains things that remind you both of your time together. It can provide an important link between you and your child once you've gone.

[Macmillan Cancer Support has information about making a memory box](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatment/if-you-have-an-advanced-cancer/end-of-life/making-a-memory-box)

## If a child has lost someone

### **Talk about the person who has died**

During bereavement, it can help a child to talk about the person who's died, whether it was a grandparent, parent, brother, sister or friend.

Direct, honest and open communication is more helpful than trying to protect your child by hiding the truth. If you exclude them from family ceremonies and services after someone has died it could make them feel excluded.

This can also help your child be open about their own feelings and avoid confusion about what has happened. It may be helpful to talk as a family, perhaps with your child, about how to include them in any events that celebrate or say goodbye to the person who has died.

It's important for them to have someone with whom they can talk about that person and share their emotions. This could be through photos, games, memory boxes or stories.

Over time, children may start to talk more about their loss at different times and in different ways. Young children may start talking about death or including it in their play, but this is normal and is a way for them to make sense of what has happened.

### **Further support for your child**

There are also bereavement charities that offer helplines, email support, and online communities and message boards for children.

These include:

* [Child Bereavement UK](http://childbereavementuk.org/) –
  + call [0800 028 8840](tel:%200800%20028%208840) Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
  + email [helpline@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:helpline@childbereavementuk.org)
* [Cruse Bereavement Care](https://www.cruse.org.uk/):
  + call [0808 808 1677](tel:%200808%20808%201677) Monday and Friday, 9.30am to 5pm; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.30am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday 10am to 2pm
* [Grief Encounter](https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/):
  + call [0808 802 0111](tel:%200808%20802%200111) Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm
  + email [contact@griefencounter.org.uk](mailto:grieftalk@griefencounter.org.uk)
* [Hope Again](http://hopeagain.org.uk/):
  + call [0808 808 1677](tel:%200808%20808%201677) Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm
  + email [hopeagain@cruse.org.uk](mailto:hopeagain@cruse.org.uk)
* [Winston's Wish](http://www.winstonswish.org/):
  + call [0808 802 0021](tel:%200808%20802%200021) Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm
  + email [ask@winstonswish.org](mailto:ask@winstonswish.org)

[You can also find out more about children and bereavement from the Childhood Bereavement Network](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/)

### **Make a memory box**

If the person who's died did not leave a memory box, you could make one with your child.

It can include:

* gifts
* shells collected on the beach
* memories written on a card
* anything that makes the child feel connected to that person

## Don't forget to look after yourself

It's important to make sure you're also getting the support you need after a loss. This can also help you to better support your child.

[Read more about getting help with grief after bereavement or loss](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-bereavement-loss/)

## More in [Advice for parents](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/)

* Children and bereavement
* [Helping your child with anger issues](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-with-anger-issues/)
* [Anxiety disorders in children](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/anxiety-disorders-in-children/)
* [Anxiety in children](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/anxiety-in-children/)
* [Depression in children and young people](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/children-depressed-signs/)
* [Talking to your child about feelings](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/talk-to-children-about-feelings/)
* [Teen aggression and arguments](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/teen-aggression-and-arguments/)
* [Coping with your teenager](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/cope-with-your-teenager/)
* [Worried about your teenager?](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/worried-about-your-teenager/)
* [Help your child beat exam stress](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-beat-exam-stress/)
* [Talking to your teenager](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/talk-to-your-teenager/)

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**Bereavement and Young People**

**Losing someone important to you is one of the hardest things to experience in life. If you're young, bereavement can be even more difficult. But support and advice are available to help you get through it.**

Your teenage years can be a lot of fun, but they are also often an emotional time. If someone close to you dies, it can be incredibly hard. Your world may feel as though it has crashed down around you.

It can make you feel very alone, especially as a young person, because you might find that none of your friends have gone through anything similar and won't understand or know what to say.

**Your emotions after a bereavement**

Grieving is a natural part of recovering from a bereavement, and everyone's experience of grief is different. There are no rules about what we should feel, and for how long.

But many people find they feel a mixture of the following:

* sadness
* shock, particularly if the death was unexpected
* relief, if the death followed a long period of illness
* guilt and regret
* [anger](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/anger/)
* [anxiety](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/anxiety-fear-panic/)
* despair and helplessness
* [depression](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/low-mood-sadness-depression/)

These feelings may be very intense, particularly in the early days and weeks. Time eventually helps these intense emotions subside, and there's no need to feel guilty about starting to feel better. It doesn't mean you're not respecting the person's memory or forgetting about them.

Your family may all react differently to a bereavement. You may find it difficult to see your parents or other adults grieving and not know what to say to them. You could try just letting them know you're there for them too while you get support yourself.

There are several things that can help you start to feel better. Looking after your health and talking to someone will help you get through this difficult time.

[Find out more about how to deal with grief and loss on the YoungMinds website](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/grief-and-loss)

**Finding support for bereavement**

Talking about your grief is an important part of getting through a bereavement. Choosing who to talk to about your feelings is a very personal decision. Sometimes the most unlikely person can actually offer the most support.

If you've lost a family member, someone else in your family may also be good to open up to because they're likely to understand how you're feeling.

A close friend can be a good listener and a source of comfort and support, even if they haven't gone through this themselves.

There are lots of other sources of advice and support available, including:

* **websites and blogs** – such as [Hope Again](http://hopeagain.org.uk/), a website for young people going through a bereavement, where you can find information, read other people's experiences and add your own; and the [Winston's Wish](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/), [Child Bereavement UK](http://www.childbereavementuk.org/) and [Health for Teens](https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/bereavement-loss/) websites, which also offer information and advice
* **helplines** – such as the [Cruse Bereavement](http://www.cruse.org.uk/) helpline on 0808 808 1677
* [**your GP**](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-GP) – especially if you're concerned you're not coping, might be depressed, have trouble eating or sleeping, are thinking about hurting yourself, or you're not starting to feel better after a few months: they may suggest you have [counselling](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/counselling/)
* **a teacher or tutor** – you may be distracted or find it hard to concentrate at school or college for a while, so talking to a teacher you feel comfortable with can help them understand what you're going through and take a bit of pressure off you; special circumstances, such as bereavement, can sometimes be taken into account if you're having trouble with coursework or exams

**Looking after yourself during a bereavement**

During a time of grief you may not feel like looking after yourself, but it's important to help you cope with the extreme emotions that come with bereavement.

Some of the following quite simple things can make a big difference, such as:

* **eating** – you may lose your appetite, but try to keep eating as normally as possible: your body needs food, even if you don't want it; ideally, go for [healthy, well-balanced meals](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-eat-a-balanced-diet/)
* **sleeping** – it can be hard to sleep when you're very upset, but there are some things that can help: read more about [insomnia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insomnia/)
* **socialising** – seeing your friends and keeping up a normal social life may help take your mind off things and allow you to talk about how you're doing, if you want to; but don't feel guilty about not thinking about the person you've lost or having a good laugh with friends
* **exercising** – regular [exercise](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/) can make you feel good and help you sleep (but avoid doing vigorous exercise close to bedtime); it can also be a relief to focus on something physical when you're going through an emotional time
* **avoiding** [**smoking**](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/)**,** [**drinking**](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/tips-on-cutting-down-alcohol/)**and** [**taking drugs**](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support/drug-addiction-getting-help/) – you may feel like smoking or drinking because you feel down, but your body has to work hard to deal with substances such as nicotine, alcohol or illegal drugs, especially when you're young, and they'll end up making you feel worse

Read more about [grief after bereavement or loss](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-bereavement-loss/).

**More in**[**Help for teenagers, young adults and students**](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/)

* [Student stress](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/student-stress-self-help-tips/)
* [Tips on preparing for exams](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/tips-on-preparing-for-exams/)
* [Counselling for student mental health problems](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/student-mental-health-counselling/)
* Bereavement and young people

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# Grief After Bereavement or Loss

**Most people experience grief when they lose something or someone important to them. If these feelings are affecting your life, there are things you can try that may help.**

Support is also available if you're finding it hard to cope with stress, anxiety or depression.

## Symptoms of bereavement, grief and loss

Bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different symptoms and they affect people in different ways. There's no right or wrong way to feel.

As well as bereavement, there are other types of loss such as the end of a relationship or losing a job or home.

Some of the most common symptoms include:

* shock and numbness – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about "being in a daze"
* overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
* tiredness or exhaustion
* anger – towards the person you've lost or the reason for your loss
* guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying

These feelings may not be there all the time and powerful feelings may appear unexpectedly.

It's not always easy to recognise when bereavement, grief or loss are the reason you're acting or feeling differently.

**Stages of bereavement or grief**

Some research suggests that there are 5 stages of bereavement or grief:

* Denial – feelings of shock, disbelief, panic or confusion
* Anger – feelings and behaviours such as blaming yourself or blaming others
* Depression – feeling tired, hopeless or helpless – like you have lost perspective or feel isolated
* Bargaining – feelings of guilt often raise questions like "If only I had done more"
* Acceptance – this does not mean that you like the situation, it’s about accepting your loss and being ready to move forward

These are the most common stages of grief, but you may not experience them all. If you do go through these stages, they may not happen in a particular order and you may not move smoothly between them.

You might also experience other feelings as well as those mentioned.

Your grief might feel chaotic and out of control, but these feelings will eventually become less intense over time.

[Read more about what grief can feel like on the Mind website](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/experiences-of-grief/)

## Things you can try to help with bereavement, grief and loss

## Do:

* try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor – you could also contact a bereavement support organisation such as [Cruse](http://www.cruse.org.uk/) or [call: 0808 808 1677](tel:%200808%20808%201677)
* if you're struggling to sleep, [get sleep tips from Every Mind Matters](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep/)
* consider peer support, where people use their experiences to help each other. [Find out more about peer support on the Mind website](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/peer-support/finding-peer-support/)
* listen to [free mental wellbeing audio guides](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/)
* try the [6 ways to feel happier](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/tips-and-support/how-to-be-happier/), which are simple lifestyle changes to help you feel more in control and able to cope

**Do Not:**

* do not try to do everything at once – set small targets that you can easily achieve
* do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better
* try not to tell yourself that you're alone – most people feel grief after a loss and support is available
* try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve grief – these can all contribute to poor mental health

### **Further information and support**

You can find further information and support about:

* [grief and bereavement](https://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/) on the Cruse website
* [losing your partner or child in pregnancy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/losing-your-partner-or-child-in-pregnancy/)
* [losing someone to suicide](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/bereavement-by-suicide/) on the Mind website

The GOV.UK website also has information about [what to do after someone dies](https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death), such as registering the death and planning a funeral.

## Where to get NHS help for stress, anxiety or depression

### **Referring yourself for therapy**

If you need more support, you can get free talking therapies such as [cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt/overview/) on the NHS.

You can refer yourself directly to a talking therapies service without a referral from a GP.

[**Find an NHS talking therapies service**](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-psychological-therapies-service/)

If you're under 18, or want to get help for someone under 18, find out how to get [mental health support for children and young people](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/mental-health-support/).

### \* Non-urgent advice \*

### See a GP if:

* you're struggling to cope with stress, anxiety or a low mood
* you've had a low mood for more than 2 weeks
* things you're trying yourself are not helping
* you would prefer to get a referral from a GP

### \*\* Urgent advice \*\*

### Call 111 or ask for an urgent GP appointment if:

* you need help urgently, but it's not an emergency

111 can tell you the right place to get help if you need to see someone. Go to [NHS 111 online](https://111.nhs.uk/) or [call: 111](tel:%20111).

### \*\*\* Immediate action required \*\*\*

### Call 999 or go to A&E now if:

* you or someone you know needs immediate help
* you have seriously harmed yourself – for example, by taking a drug overdose

A mental health emergency should be taken as seriously as a medical emergency.

[Find your nearest A&E](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Accident-and-emergency-services/LocationSearch/428)

Do not drive to A&E. Ask someone to drive you or call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Bring any medicines you take with you.

## Prolonged grief disorder

For most people grief will become less intense over time. But for some people, grief lasts many months or years. This is known as prolonged grief disorder or complicated grief.

Symptoms of prolonged grief disorder include:

* very difficult feelings such as sadness or guilt for over 6 months
* spending a lot of time thinking about the person who's died
* difficulty accepting the death
* not being able to return to everyday activities
* suicidal thoughts

You're more likely to have prolonged grief disorder if the death was traumatic or sudden and unexpected.

### \* Non-urgent advice \*

### See a GP if:

* you have symptoms of prolonged grief disorder

[Find out more about prolonged grief disorder on the Cruse website](https://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/effects-of-grief/complicated-grief/)

## More in [Feelings and symptoms](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/)

* [Stress](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/stress/)
* [Anxiety, fear and panic](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/anxiety-fear-panic/)
* [Low mood, sadness and depression](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/low-mood-sadness-depression/)
* [Feeling lonely](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/feeling-lonely/)
* Grief after bereavement or loss
* [Anger](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/anger/)
* [Loneliness in older people](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/loneliness-in-older-people/)
* [Signs of an anxiety disorder](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/anxiety-disorder-signs/)
* [Hallucinations and hearing voices](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/hallucinations-hearing-voices/)

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