Help for Mental Illnesses

[*Esta página también está disponible en español*](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/ayuda-para-la-salud-mental).

If you or someone you know has a mental illness, is struggling emotionally, or has [concerns about their mental health](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/my-mental-health-do-i-need-help), there are ways to get help.

Where can I get immediate help?

**In life-threatening situations, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.**

**If you are suicidal or in emotional distress, consider using the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.**

Call or text 988 or [chat online](https://988lifeline.org/chat/)  to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The Lifeline provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. You can reach a specialized LGBTQI+ affirming counselor by texting “Q” to 988 or by calling 988 and pressing “3.”

Learn more: [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://988lifeline.org/)  ([disponible en español](https://988lifeline.org/es/servicios-en-espanol/) )

**If you are a veteran, consider using the Veterans Crisis Line.**

Call 988, then press “1.” You can also text 838255 or [chat online](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/) . The Veterans Crisis Line is a 24-hour, confidential resource that connects veterans with a trained responder. The service is available to all veterans and those who support them, even if they are not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA healthcare.

Learn more: [Veterans Crisis Line](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/)  ([disponible en español](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/es/acerca-de/como-funciona/) )

**If you have experienced a disaster, consider using the Disaster Distress Helpline.**

Call or text 1-800-985-5990. The Disaster Distress Helpline provides immediate crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. The 24-hour, confidential helpline offers interpretation services in more than 100 languages.

Learn more: [Disaster Distress Helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline) ([disponible en español](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/espanol))

**If you see concerning social media messages, contact the company’s safety team.**

Social media companies have [safety teams](https://988lifeline.org/help-someone-else/safety-and-support-on-social-media/)  that can reach out to connect the person with the help they need.

Learn more about[action steps for helping someone in emotional distress](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/5-action-steps-for-helping-someone-in-emotional-pain).

How can I find a health care provider or treatment?

Treatment for mental illnesses usually includes [therapy](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies) (virtual or in person), [medication](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-health-medications), or a combination of the two.

There are many ways to find a provider who will meet your needs.

**Primary care provider:** A primary care provider can perform an initial mental health screening and refer you to a mental health professional (such as a social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist). If you have an appointment with a primary care provider, consider [bringing up your mental health concerns and asking for help](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/tips-for-talking-with-your-health-care-provider).

**Federal resources:** Some federal agencies offer resources for identifying mental health professionals. These include:

* Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [helpline and online locator for mental health services](https://findtreatment.gov/)
* Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [online tool for finding Medicare providers](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/)
* U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [online tool for finding VA locations and providers](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/)

**National organizations:** Many advocacy and professional organizations have online tools for finding a provider. View a list of [organizations that offer directories or locators](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies#part_10802) for finding mental health professionals.

**State and county agencies:** Your state or county government website may have information about health services in your area. Your local health services department website is a good place to start.

**Insurance companies:** If you have health insurance, a representative of your insurance company will know which local providers are covered by your insurance plan. Your health insurance company may have an app or online database that you can use to find a participating provider in your area.

**Universities and colleges:** If you’re a student, you may have access to mental health services and support through your school’s health center or peer support groups. Try searching your school’s website for mental health resources.

**Employee assistance:** If you have a job, ask your employer’s human resources department if they have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). An EAP is a free and confidential service that your company pays for. The service can help employees with issues related to mental health, drug or alcohol use, grief, and trauma.

How do I know if a provider is right for me?

Preparing a list of questions can help you decide if a potential provider is a good fit for you. These questions might include:

* What experience do you have treating someone with my issue?
* How do you usually treat someone with my issue?
* How long do you expect treatment to last?
* Do you accept my insurance?
* How much will treatment cost?

Find more [tips for talking with a health care provider](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/tips-for-talking-with-your-health-care-provider). SAMHSA has [online resources](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-support) to help people answer questions about finding treatment and support.

Treatment works best when you have a good relationship with your mental health professional. Talk with your provider if you have concerns about treatment or feel like the treatment is not helping. In some cases, you may wish to find a different provider or another type of treatment.

**Do not stop treatment without talking to your health care provider.**

Where can I learn more about mental disorders?

NIMH offers research-based information on mental disorders, treatments and therapies, and a range of related topics. To learn more, browse our [health topic pages](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics) and [brochures and fact sheets](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications). También ofrecemos [recursos del NIMH en español](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/espanol" \o "Información en español sobre la salud mental).

**Please note:** *NIMH is a research funding agency. We cannot provide medical advice or provider referrals. If you need medical advice or a second opinion, please consult your health care provider. Resources on this page are provided for informational purposes only. The list is not comprehensive and does not constitute an endorsement by NIMH*.