

# Who Can I Talk to About My Mental Health?

Depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety are common disorders around the world and in the U.S. About [51 million US adults](#) will experience a mental illness in any given year, while 13 million Americans suffer from a severe mental illness. These disorders play havoc with our emotions, our thoughts, and our behaviors. Having a psychological disorder can be lonely and isolating, and the thought of reaching out to another person may be terrifying. After all, mental illness still carries some stigma with it, even though so many live with it.

When troubled, our instinct is to turn to someone we know well, someone who has positive regard for us—someone who will build us up. But that's not always possible, and even in situations where you can turn to a friend or loved one, chances are they'll be able to offer emotional support, but not professional assistance that can reduce your problems for the long term.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't reach out to those closest to you if you can. Having a strong support system is one of the most important parts of recovery from psychological disorders.

However, psychological disorders can be professionally treated so effectively that a person's symptoms become much less harmful and far less intrusive. This requires the services of a professional helper.

## Choosing Someone to Talk to About Your Mental Health

Talking about your mental health is the first step in getting the help you need. When choosing someone to talk to, you can pick someone you know, a mental healthcare professional, or both. As well, there are resources on the internet that can provide assistance, as well as helping you get in touch with people who can help.

### Tips for Talking to a Loved One about Your Mental Health

When you choose someone in your life to talk to concerning your mental health, consider these hints.

1. Think about what your needs from the conversation are. Do you want to be validated and reassured, or do you need something more involved?
2. Choose when to have the conversation and pick a time when you and your trusted person will have enough quiet time to discuss the issues.
3. Plan what you want to say. If necessary, write notes you can look at when you have the conversation.
4. Have a good idea of how they can help you.
5. You may not get the reaction you need, so be prepared to choose another person. People often don't know what to say and jump right into trying to solve your problems. Others might lack any useful context in which to respond. The important thing is that you reach out and let someone know what's going on with you. If you don't get the response you need, choose someone else and try again.

6. If you don't get what you need from the conversation, pick someone else and try again.

## Talking to a Mental Healthcare Professional

A mental healthcare professional can offer a high level of confidentiality and expertise. But who counts as a mental health professional? Typically, counselors and psychotherapists spring to mind, as do psychologists and psychiatrists. Some social workers and psychiatric nurses are also licensed to provide mental health therapy.

[Psychotherapists](#) usually have at least a master's degree and are licensed in counseling, psychotherapy, or other psychiatric services. Psychologists must have at least a doctoral degree, and a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner will have a medical degree.

All mental healthcare providers will be licensed to do so.

They can help you:

- Learn coping skills to help deal with anxiety, depression, and stress more effectively
- Better understand what causes, maintains, and worsens your symptoms
- Reduce, manage, or eliminate your symptoms
- Learn to communicate better with other people, establish healthy boundaries, and get your needs met.

## Finding Mental Health Help Today

There are many [resources on the internet](#), but here are some of the most reliable.

- Medicare offers lists of participating professionals on its [website](#).
- Your local [Medicaid office](#) will be able to provide you with a list of Medicaid-approved providers in your area.
- Your family doctor can give you a referral to a counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist.
- Your insurance company or [ACA Exchange](#) can provide a list of affordable or pro bono mental healthcare providers in your area
- Eligible veterans can get care through the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#).
- Your county or parish health [community mental health center](#) provides low to no-cost treatment and services on a sliding scale based on income.
- For issues relating to substance abuse or alcoholism and mental health, check out the affordable mental health services found at the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) or call 1-800-662-HELP (4357).
- If you're employed, your company may have an employee assistance program (EAP). These programs usually provide resources for getting help. Sometimes initial visits to a therapist are covered through the EAP with no cost to the employee.

## Online Mental Health Resources

- [MentalHealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov) is a government-based resource for all mental illnesses. including online and in-person resources. It's free to access.
- [Daily Strength](https://www.dailystrength.com) is a peer-based online forum and support group for anxiety.
- [Turn2Me](https://www.turn2me.com) provides free online support groups for depression, anxiety, and stress. Turn2Me is free and allows you to set up an appointment with a [mental health professional](#).
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](https://www.nami.org) The National Association of Mental Illness is a resource hub for support and assistance with psychological disorders. They provide access to [national and local resources](#) for those needing help with mental health issues.

### Works Cited

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