

Mental Health: How to Find Help



Directly or not, mental health conditions affect all of us. In fact, one in four people have some sort of mental health condition. This means that all of us are likely to at least know someone living with one of these illnesses. If you or someone you know is struggling, you are not alone. There are many supports, services and treatment options that may help.

A change in behavior or mood may be the early warning signs of a mental health condition and should never be ignored. There are many different types of mental health conditions, and it isn't easy to simplify the range of challenges people face. One way to begin to get a handle on this is to get an evaluation by a mental health provider.

Mental Health Providers

Clinical social workers are trained to help with individual and family problems, including mental health conditions.

Psychologists are trained in mental health issues. They provide counseling (therapy).

Psychiatrists are medical doctors, so they can prescribe medications. They specialize in mental health conditions.

Here are some things to consider when reaching out:

- If it's an emergency in which you or someone you know is suicidal, you should immediately call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room. Do not leave a suicidal person alone.

- If you can wait a few days, make an appointment with your primary healthcare provider or pediatrician if you think your or your loved one's condition is mild to moderate.
- If the symptoms are more severe, make an appointment with a specialized doctor such as a psychiatrist. You may need to contact your community mental health center or primary health care provider for a referral.
- Seek out support groups in your community and educate yourself about the symptoms and diagnosis. Social support and knowledge can be valuable tools for coping. You can contact the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950- 6264 for a referral.
- If you or your loved one is in school or at college, contact the school and ask about their support services.
- Remember that you are a partner in your or your loved one's treatment. You can ask the health care provider questions and be a part of decisions about your treatment.

If your family member or friend is an adult who doesn't want treatment, it can be difficult to get them help. But you will still benefit from learning as much as you can and finding support groups for yourself. Your NAMI peers and health care providers can advise you on how to offer encouragement and keep yourself or your loved one safe.

For more information visit www.nami.org/aka.