

Worried about your mental health?

How to get treatment and support

This factsheet explains how you can get help if you are worried about your mental health. It explains about options for treatment and support. Such as seeing your GP, talking therapy and self-help and support from charities. This factsheet is for anyone worried about their mental health.

Key Points.

- Mental health problems are common. Up to 1 in 4 people have experienced mental illness.
- You may want support if you have noticed changes in the way you think or feel which cause problems in your day-to-day life.
- If you think you need help, it's best to get support and treatment as soon as you can. Seeking help early can speed up your recovery.
- You can get support and treatment from the NHS and from other places too. There are also things you can do to help yourself.

This factsheet covers:

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1. How common are mental health problems?

Mental health problems are common. Up to 1 in 4 people have experienced mental illness.¹

Stressful events such as losing a job, relationship issues, bereavement or money issues can lead to mental illness. But there can be other factors, like a family history of mental illness.

Most people who live with mental illness have mild to moderate symptoms and conditions such as anxiety disorder or depression. But some people experience severe symptoms of these conditions. Also, others live with less common but challenging conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or personality disorders.

You can find more information about:

- Anxiety disorders
- Borderline personality disorder (BPD)
- Depression
- Dissociation and dissociative disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- Personality disorders
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Psychosis
- Schizoaffective disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Stress – how to cope

at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

2. What are common symptoms of mental illness?

Most people will feel low, anxious, or irritable at some point in their lives. But if you have several symptoms at the same time, this could mean you have a mental illness. Especially if you have had them for some time.

Your symptoms might be having a significant effect on your day-to-day life. It could also be a sign that you are experiencing mental illness.

The following symptoms could be signs of mental health problems.

- Being anxious and irritable.
- Having a low mood.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate or remember things.
- Sleeping less or too much.

- Changes in your mood.
- Finding it difficult to manage everyday life, for example, preparing food and washing regularly.
- Feeling teary.
- Becoming suspicious or paranoid.
- Becoming isolated and withdrawn.
- Having suicidal thoughts.
- Believing that your family and friends want to do you harm.
- Believing that people or organisations are out to get you.
- Experiencing hallucinations. This means sensing things that other people don't, this can include seeing and hearing things.
- Believing that you have special powers or are on a mission.
- Excessive spending and problems managing your money.
- Having flashbacks or nightmares after a traumatic event.

These feelings can often be distressing and hard to cope with. But with the right support and help you can make positive steps towards recovery.

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3. What help can I get from the NHS?

Getting help as early as possible is a good idea if you're worried about your mental health. The sooner you get help and treatment, the quicker you'll start to recover.

What help can my GP give me?

You can visit your GP to discuss your options for help and treatment. GPs are experienced in dealing with mental health problems, so try to be open about how you have been feeling.

Your GP can:

- offer you suitable medication,
- refer you to NHS talking therapy services or explain how you can refer yourself,
- give you advice on things like sleep, exercise and diet, and
- refer you to a specialist NHS mental health service, such as the community mental health team (CMHT).

Your GP might refer you to a specialist NHS mental health team if they:

- Have tried all options available to them and you're still very unwell,
- Think your symptoms are severe, or
- Feel you're at risk of suicide or self-harm.

Some mental health conditions need to be diagnosed by a psychiatrist. A psychiatrist is part of the community mental health team (CMHT).

How can I prepare to see a GP?

You can do the following things.

- Ask if there is a GP in the practice who has a mental health interest and try to see that GP.
- Ask for a double appointment if you need more time to talk about how you are feeling or your symptoms. GP appointments only normally last up to 10 minutes.
- Write down how you have been feeling over time and what your symptoms are. This could help you tell the GP everything you want to say.
- Think about what you would like to try and achieve by the end of the appointment.
- Ask someone you trust to go with you.

Can my GP share information about me with others?

Your GP should keep information about you confidential.² This means that they shouldn't give information about you to anyone else, unless you agree.

But there are times when your GP can share information about you without your consent, such as:

- you lack mental capacity and it's in your best interests,
- it is required by law, or
- it is in the public interest.³

You can find more about:

- GPs – What to expect from your doctor
- Talking therapies
- NHS mental health teams
- Confidentiality

at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

What are NHS talking therapy services?

NHS talking therapy services are sometimes known as 'IAPT' services. IAPT stands for Improving Access to Psychological Treatments.

They.

- Provide talking therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), group therapy and counselling.
- Sometimes provide a treatment called eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) for trauma-based conditions, including PTSD.
- Usually provide online tools too.

- Treat mild to moderate anxiety and depression, and associated conditions.
- Are free to use.
- Are available in all areas of England.

You can self-refer to your local IAPT service. This means that you can contact them directly to get an appointment, so you don't have to see your GP to do this.

Your local service can tell you what therapies are available and how long you might have to wait to get it.

You will normally get a telephone assessment to begin with to talk about your condition and symptoms. This will help the service to decide if it is right for you and what therapies are suitable.

The service will only treat mild to moderate mental health symptoms. The service might think that you have severe or complex symptoms. If they do, they will refer you to a specialist NHS mental health team. Or say you should see your GP to get a referral.

You can find your local NHS talking therapy service by:

- searching on the following NHS website: www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies,
- calling NHS 111 and asking, or
- Asking your GP.

You can find more information about 'Talking therapies' at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

Where can I get help if I'm having a mental health crisis?

If you are in crisis means that your mental health is very bad, so you might need urgent support and treatment.

If you need urgent help you can do the following.

- **Contact your local NHS urgent mental health helpline.** Most areas will have one. In some areas this service is called the Single Point of Access team. You can find details of your local NHS urgent mental health helpline at: www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline. Or you can call NHS 111 to ask them for details.
- **Contact your local crisis team.** The crisis team support people who are in a mental health crisis and need urgent help. You might need a medical or social care professional to refer you to the team. But you can ask the team about this if you aren't sure. Sometimes you can refer yourself. You can find details of your local team by

asking your GP or calling NHS 111. You can also search online. You can use a search term like 'Crisis team Leicestershire', or 'Crisis team Camden.'

- **Ask your GP for an emergency appointment.** GPs usually keep some appointments free for urgent cases. The GP can make a referral to the local crisis team if necessary.
- **Go to the accident and emergency (A&E)** of the local hospital. A&E will assess the situation and may arrange for a mental health professional to see you. You could get admitted to a mental health ward in hospital or referred to the crisis team.
- **You can call the emergency services on 999** if you can't get to A&E. They may then get in touch with mental health services such as the crisis team or take you to A&E.
- **You can contact NHS 111.** The phone line is for when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. You can call 111 if you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call. Or if you need health information or reassurance about what to do next.
- **Use Shout text service:** You can text Shout to 85258 to connect to a trained person to help you. See <https://giveusashout.org> for more information.

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4. What if I have problems getting help from the NHS?

You might have seen your GP or had a referral to NHS talking therapy services. But you might not be happy with how they dealt with you.

If this happens you can:

- make an appointment with a different GP,
- change GP surgeries,
- get a community advocate to help make your views and wishes heard,
- get a friend or relative to help you, or go to an appointment with you,
- speak to your local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS),
- make a complaint, or
- Get a NHS Complaints Advocate to help you complain.

You can find more information about:

- Advocacy
- Complaints

at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

5. What other help can I get?

There are other options for help other than support from the NHS.

How can I get private talking therapy?

Private therapy is therapy that isn't provided by or funded by the NHS. You will have to pay for it yourself or you may have cover through an insurance policy.

The cost of therapy will be different across the country and by therapist. You can ask about charges and agree a price before you start your therapy sessions.

You may get a free first session, or get lower rates for students, job seekers or if you are on a low income.

What should I look for when choosing a therapist?

We always advise that you find a therapist who is a member of a professional body. This means that they will meet certain standards, have a complaints procedure, and follow a code of ethics. You can search for private therapists in your local area on the following websites:

- **British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists:** www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists
- **UK Council for Psychotherapy:** www.psychotherapy.org.uk
- **Counselling Directory:** www.counselling-directory.org.uk

How can I get talking therapy through a charity?

You can search online to see if you can find any charities that provide free or low-cost talking therapy. You can try terms such as:

- 'free counselling in Camden' or
- 'low cost counselling in Leicestershire'

You can find more information about '**Talking therapies**' at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

What are complementary and alternative treatments

Complementary and alternative therapies are health-related therapies that aren't part of mainstream medical care.

They are thought to increase wellbeing, aid relaxation, and promote good mental health.

You can use complementary and alternative therapies for different mental health needs and symptoms. Examples are.

- Acupuncture
- Aromatherapy

- Herbal medicine
- Homeopathy
- Massage
- Meditation
- Spiritual/ energy healing
- Yoga

You can find out more about, '**Complementary and alternative treatments**' at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

What can I do to help myself?

There are things that you can do to help yourself. Everyone is different, so you can find out what works for you.

You can:

- **Learn ways to relax.** Such as listening to meditation CDs or relaxing music. You can find free meditation videos on websites like YouTube.
- **Practise mindfulness and meditation.** You can get more information here: www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started
- **Eat healthy foods and have a balanced diet.** You can get more information here: www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well
- **Keep physically active.** Exercise can help to reduce stress and anxiety. It can increase the levels of serotonin and endorphins which are your body's natural 'happy' chemicals. You can get more information here: www.weareundefeatable.co.uk and www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/information-on-wellbeing-physical-health-bame-lgbtplus-and-studying-and-mental-health/physical-activity-and-mental-health
- **Choose healthier drinks and make sure you're hydrated.** You can get more information here: www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/water-drinks-nutrition
- **Have a daily routine.** Keeping a routine can help you to keep your mind occupied and focused on healthy thoughts and activities.
- **Have healthy relationships.** You can get more information here: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/publications/guide-investing-your-relationships
- **Have enough sleep.** Without regular sleep, your mental health can be affected. You can get more information here: www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/wellbeing-physical-health/how-can-i-improve-my-sleep
- **Avoiding alcohol, drinking only moderately or cutting down.** You can get more information here: www.rethink.org/advice-and-

[information/about-mental-illness/learn-more-about-conditions/drugs-alcohol-and-mental-health](#)

- **Avoiding smoking or cutting down.** You can get more information here: [www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/information-on-wellbeing-physical-health-bame-lgbtplus-and-studying-and-mental-health/smoking-and-mental-health](#)
- **Keep a mood diary.** This may help you to be more aware of your symptoms and what makes you better and worse. You can simply use a notebook for this. Or you may want to try online resources or smartphone apps.

You can read more about how physical health and lifestyle changes below:

- **Wellbeing and physical health.** [www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/information-on-wellbeing-physical-health-bame-lgbtplus-and-studying-and-mental-health](#)
- **Physical and mental health.** Look at 'lifestyle factors.' [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/p/physical-health-and-mental-health](#)

Can I get self-help online?

There are websites which give information about how to manage your mental health. There are also websites which explain how you can use cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques to improve and manage your mental health. Some people find these useful.

- **Public Health England – Every Mind Matters:** [www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters](#)
- **Get Self Help:** CBT self-help: [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](#)
- **Ieso:** online CBT. Only certain NHS trusts: [www.iesohealth.com](#)
- **Live life to the Full:** Online courses: https://littf.com/?section=page&page_seq=8
- **Psychology Tools:** [www.psychologytools.com](#)

How can I get emotional support?

Talking about your mental health can have big benefits. And people who care about you like friends and family are usually happy to listen and support you. But you can also call the following lines to talk about how you are feeling.

Samaritans

They offer emotional support for people in a crisis, available 24 hours a day.

Phone: 116123

Address: Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK, P.O. Box 9090, Stirling, FK8 2SA

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: www.samaritans.org

Sane

Work with anyone affected by mental illness, including families, friends and carers. They also provide a free text-based support service called Textcare and an online supportive forum community where anyone can share their experiences of mental health.

Phone: 0300 304 7000 - You might find that because of the COVID pandemic this number isn't in operation. But you can call 07984 967 708 and leave a message and someone will get back to you. The Support Forum, Textcare and other services are operating as normal.

Textcare: www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/textcare

Support Forum: www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/supportforum

Website: www.sane.org.uk

Support Line

They offer confidential emotional support by telephone, email and post. Their opening hours vary so you need to ring them for details.

Phone: 01708 765200

E-mail: info@supportline.org.uk

Website: www.supportline.org.uk

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

CALM is leading a movement against suicide. They offer accredited confidential, anonymous and free support, information and signposting to people anywhere in the UK through their helpline and webchat service.

Phone: 0800 58 58 58

Webchat: through the website

Website: www.thecalmzone.net

Papyrus UK

Charity that offers emotional support to people under 35 who are suicidal. They can also support people who are concerned about someone under 35 who might be suicidal.

Phone: 0800 068 41 41

Text: 07786 209697

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

The Mix

If you're under 25 and need help but don't know where to turn, call the Mix for free. They'll explore your situation with you and find organisations that may be able to help you further. They also offer webchat, text crisis support and phone counselling services.

Phone: 0808 808 4994

Email: www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/email-us

Website: www.themix.org.uk

What are support groups?

Support groups are where people with similar issues share experiences with others and get mutual support.

You can search for local mental health support groups below:

- **Rethink Mental Illness:** www.rethink.org/about-us/our-support-groups
- **Local Minds:** www.mind.org.uk/about-us/local-minds

There are also online support services:

- **Clic:** <https://clic-uk.org>
- **Side by Side:** <https://sidebyside.mind.org.uk>
- **7 Cups:** www.7cups.com
- **Sane:** www.sane.org.uk/how-we-help/sane-community/support-forum
- **Togetherall:** <https://togetherall.com/en-gb>

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6. Can people recover from mental illness?

Recovery can mean different things to different people. But with support and treatment symptoms of mental illness can improve.

If you are concerned about your mental health, you can consider the options in this factsheet. Remember that many services and organisations are there to help and support you.

You can find more information about '**Recovery**' at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

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[information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/health-survey-for-england-2014](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/health-survey-for-england-2014) (accessed: 27 November 2020)

² General Medical Council. *Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information* (2017). http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/confidentiality.asp (accessed 28th April 2017).

³ General Medical Council. *When you can disclose personal information*. http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/30610.asp (accessed 28th April 2017).

This factsheet is available in large print.

Rethink Mental Illness Advice Service

Phone 0808 801 0525
Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 4pm
(excluding bank holidays)

Email advice@rethink.org



Patient Information Forum

Did this help?

We'd love to know if this Information helped you

Drop us a line at: feedback@rethink.org

or write to us at Rethink Mental Illness:
RAIS

PO Box 18252

Solihull

B91 9BA

or call us on 0808 801 0525

We're open 9:30am to 4pm

Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)

Need more help?

Go to rethink.org for information on symptoms, treatments, money and benefits and your rights.

Don't have access to the web?

Call us on 0121 522 7007. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and we will send you the information you need in the post.

Need to talk to an adviser?

If you need practical advice, call us on: 0808 801 0525 between 9:30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Our specialist advisers can help you with queries like how to apply for benefits, get access to care or make a complaint.

Can you help us to keep going?

We can only help people because of donations from people like you. If you can donate please go to rethink.org/donate or call 0121 522 7007 to make a gift. We are very grateful for all our donors' generous support.



Equality, rights, fair treatment, and the maximum quality of life for all those severely affected by mental illness.

For further information on Rethink Mental Illness Phone 0121 522 7007
Email info@rethink.org



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