

Getting Professional Mental Health Help

There are lots of ways to get help for your mental health. This information in this fact sheet is general and does not cover all options for getting help.

There are different options to get help if it is an emergency and if it is not an emergency.

Getting help in an emergency

If you are having a mental health emergency, you can:

- Call 000. Ask for ambulance or police.
- Go to a hospital emergency department.
 - You will be seen by an emergency doctor at the hospital. You may then talk to a psychiatrist or other mental health professional.
- Call a mental health crisis team.
 - A mental health crisis teams provides support for people having a mental health emergency. They often provide treatment in your home.
 - Call your closest major hospital and ask to speak to the mental health crisis team in your area.
- Call Lifeline on 13 11 14

An emergency may be:

- You think you might hurt yourself.
- You think you might hurt someone else.
- You have taken too much medicine, alcohol, or drugs. This is called an overdose.
- You are thinking about suicide.
- You have attempted suicide.

Getting help if it is not an emergency

There are different people you can talk to about mental health. Your doctor is a good person to start talking to when you would like help with your mental health.

You should see your doctor if:

- You have symptoms that have been going on for more than 2 weeks.
- You are feeling worried about your symptoms.

There are lots of different mental health symptoms. These include:

- feeling anxious
- feeling sad or depressed
- getting easily annoyed
- not wanting to see other people
- sleeping a lot more or less
- eating a lot more or less
- using alcohol or drugs to cope
- having angry or emotional outbursts

Before your appointment

You can ask questions when you book your appointment. You might like to ask:

- If the doctor training or experience with mental health.
- If the doctor can meet any preferences you have. This could include the languages that the doctors speaks or their gender.
- What the appointment will cost.

Medicare can help with the cost of seeing a doctor or another health professional. Some of the cost may be covered if you are eligible for Medicare.

You will pay the full cost if you are not eligible for Medicare.

It is important that you feel comfortable talking to your doctor about your mental health. It can take time to find a doctor you feel comfortable with.

Your family or friends may be able to help you find a doctor if you do not have one or if you do not feel comfortable talking to your usual doctor about mental health.

During the appointment

There are different things about your mental health that you can talk to your doctor about.

You might like to talk about:

- How you are feeling.
- Any concerns that you have about your feelings or behaviours.
- How your mental health is affecting your life.

Your doctor might have some options for how to manage your mental health.

You might like to ask your doctor:

- What are my options for treatment?
- What do you think are the best options for me?
- How much better might I feel?
- When might I feel better?

It is normal to ask questions at your appointment. This will help you to understand what is happening.

You can take a family member or close friend along for support. They can help to explain your situation to the doctor if you want them to.

They can also listen to the discussion between you and the doctors and help you to remember what was spoken about.

After your appointment

After seeing your doctor about your mental health, they might do one or more of the following:

- Suggest online programs or resources that you can use to help you to take care of yourself.
- Suggest that you make changes to your exercise, eating and sleep habits. These changes may help you to manage your symptoms.
- Give you a diagnosis. For example, your doctor might give you a diagnosis of depression or anxiety.

- Your doctor may not give you a diagnosis at your first appointment.
- Your doctor may give you a diagnosis after they have more appointments with you.
- Your doctor may not give you a diagnosis at all.

- Refer you to another mental health professional such as a psychologist, social worker or occupational therapist.
- Ask you to come back for another appointment.

They may ask you to come back for a longer appointment to create a mental health treatment plan.

- Having a mental health treatment plan lets you claim a Medicare rebate for up to 10 individual and 10 group sessions with a mental health professional each calendar year.
- A Medicare rebate means that you will not have to pay the full cost for these sessions.
- You can see different professionals like psychologists, occupational therapists and social workers with a mental health treatment plan.

This information is on how to get professional mental health help.

For information on mental health and to access translated resources, please visit

<https://embracementalhealth.org.au/>.

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For more translated resources visit:
<https://embracementalhealth.org.au/>

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