

# Mental health conditions and suicide

Developed by the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

While the presence of a mental health condition may contribute to increased suicide risk, it is important to note that the majority of people who live with mental health conditions will not die by suicide.

## Managing mental health

Many people learn to manage their mental health conditions just as they would other health conditions. Becoming knowledgeable about your own, or a loved one's, mental health condition, and participating in effective [treatment](#) for it, is an important way to manage it, and live more fully at home, and in relationships and at work.

If you or someone you love struggles with a mental health condition, early detection and adequate [treatment](#) are key to reducing suicide risk. Therapy, medication, exercise, getting solid sleep, making strategic lifestyle changes, staying connected to others and taking care of overall health are all ways we can take care of our mental health. It is important to follow the recommendations of your treatment provider and to communicate with them about any changes in a timely way, as part of your overall treatment plan.

It is also important to be vigilant about suicide risk during certain times, such as when someone is experiencing a worsening of their mental health symptoms, making changes in their treatment (such as a change in medication or following a hospitalization), or when life stressors, losses, or life transitions are happening.

## Find a mental health professional

### Who is a mental health professional?

A mental health professional is someone who can help people get relief from mental health conditions, and find ways to improve mental wellness and resiliency. They may be a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, marriage and family therapist, psychiatric nurse, or counselor with mental health training. You may find these professionals in emergency departments, hospitals, clinics, schools, community and religious centers, and in private practices.

### How can a mental health professional help?

If you feel unhappy, depressed, anxious, fearful, moody, or in need of emotional help, a mental health professional can help you to better understand your problems and, with time, to feel better.

Mental health professionals have specialized training to identify and understand problems that may be causing you discomfort or putting you at risk, and also in helping people with a variety of mental disorders. They can prescribe medicine, or can connect you with someone who can determine whether you need medication. They are trained to offer an objective, independent viewpoint, and can help you to connect with other professionals and specialists, if needed.

## How do I find mental health care?

Ask your primary care physician, pediatrician or ob-gyn for a referral. Employees can also refer to your workplace's employee assistance program or health benefits. Additional mental health professionals may be found in emergency departments, hospitals, clinics, community centers and private practices.

## Mental health resources

The links below may be helpful in finding mental health providers in your area, along with more information about choosing the right provider for you. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention also offers [general suicide prevention resources](#) as well as resources focused on [supporting individuals in underrepresented communities](#).

### Find a Mental Health Provider

- Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other mental health services provided by your employer.
- Visit [afsp.org/find-a-mental-health-professional](https://afsp.org/find-a-mental-health-professional)
- Visit [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov) to locate behavioral health treatment services.
- Visit [mhanational.org/finding-help](https://mhanational.org/finding-help) to find mental health resources and support services.
- Call the National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for treatment referral and information, 24/7.

## Crisis Services

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Find more information about the Lifeline at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

### Veterans Crisis Line: 800-273-8255 and press 1

Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves. Find more information about the Veterans Crisis Line at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net).

### Crisis Text Line: text TALK to 741741

Text from anywhere in the USA to text with a trained Crisis Counselor. Every texter is connected with a Crisis Counselor, a real-life human being trained to bring texters from a hot moment to a cool calm through active listening and collaborative problem solving. Find more information about the Crisis Text Line at [crisistextline.org](https://crisistextline.org).