

Make Your Mental Health a Priority



PARAMOUNT



Taking Care of Yourself Should Include Your Mental Health

Your mental health affects your personal and professional life — as well as your physical health. It is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Many factors can impact your mental health, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental illness or substance abuse
- Daily stressors, such as work or family concerns
- Grief or loss of a loved one
- Relationship problems or divorce
- Persistent feelings of “baby blues” after the birth of a child (postpartum depression)

Many people are reluctant to seek help for their mental health due to fear, shame or embarrassment. But if you are experiencing mental health struggles, you are not alone. And there are many resources available to help you feel better.

Anxiety

When worry and fear about everyday situations become frequent, intense, excessive and persistent, it is known as an anxiety disorder.

Feelings of anxiety and panic can interfere with daily activities and are difficult to control. They are often out of proportion to the actual danger and can last a long time. Symptoms may start during childhood or the teen years and continue into adulthood.

Common anxiety signs and symptoms include:

- Feeling nervous, restless or tense
- A sense of impending danger or panic
- Increased heart rate and rapid breathing (hyperventilation)
- Sweating or trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal problems

In 2022, about

one in five adults

**age 18 and older (18.2%)
experienced symptoms of anxiety**

Anxiety disorders also affect 25.1% of children between 13 and 18 years old. Research shows that children with untreated anxiety disorders are at high risk of performing poorly in school, missing out on important social experiences and engaging in substance abuse.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Experiencing a traumatic event can sometimes lead to PTSD. People who have PTSD can feel anxious, sad, angry — or have trouble concentrating or sleeping. Those symptoms can interfere with aspects of their daily life, such as relationships and work. Treatment for PTSD includes “trauma-focused” talk therapy and sometimes medication.



Depression

It's not uncommon for someone with an anxiety disorder to also suffer from depression, and vice versa. In fact, nearly half of those diagnosed with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.

Depression is a common but serious mood disorder that affects how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating or working. As of 2021, depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States among people ages 15 to 44.

Some common signs and symptoms of depression include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood
- Irritability or restlessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes

To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks. Some people may experience many of these symptoms while others will only experience a few. Symptoms may also vary depending on the stage of the illness.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Many people feel “down” as winter approaches and the days get shorter. However, more serious mood changes can be a form of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD can affect a person's appetite, energy, sleep habits and cause physical pain or distress.

Grief

Grief is a response to loss — often caused by the death of a loved one, losing a job, getting divorced or other major life changes. Symptoms may include helplessness, hopelessness, anger, sadness, numbness or confusion. Some people will express feelings to others, while others will want to keep feelings private.

Suicide

Suicide affects people of all ages and is a serious public health problem. In 2023, suicide was responsible for approximately one death every 11 minutes and was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 34.

Sources: Anxiety & Depression Association of America, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Most people occasionally experience symptoms of anxiety, stress or depression. While everyone's experience is different, there are several actions you can take that support good mental health and reduce negative effects on your mind and body.

- Exercising regularly
- Eating a healthy diet
- Connecting with family or friends
- Taking breaks from news and social media
- Making time for a hobby or relaxing activity
- Getting enough sleep and rest
- Focusing on what you can control
- Practicing meditation or deep breathing techniques
- Keeping a regular schedule (e.g., for meals and sleep)
- Setting boundaries on things you don't enjoy
- Incorporating humor into your day as often as possible

When You're Ready for Help

If you're experiencing persistent mental health symptoms and have concerns, the best thing you can do is to seek help. Talk to your primary care provider (PCP) about treatment options and how it could improve your quality of life.

Your PCP can help you understand what treatments might be right for you — or even give you a referral. Some mental health providers offer telehealth visits where you can connect virtually using a smartphone, tablet or laptop.

Important Questions to Ask

Different types of mental health providers can help you with different concerns, so you might need to try a few before you find a good fit. Try to remain open and ask lots of questions at your first appointment or when you call to schedule. This will help you decide if the provider is right for you.

Here are a few examples of what to ask:

- Do you offer telehealth visits?
- Are you willing to communicate with my PCP and other healthcare providers to coordinate my care?
- How long will my therapy sessions last?
- Will I have to talk about anything I do not want to?
- How soon might I start to feel better?
- Do you have someone I can contact during off-hours to help me in case of an emergency?
- Are there self-help tools available?
- Are there local support groups?

Consult with Your Provider on Medications

If you are taking a medication, it will be important to continue taking them as prescribed. You should always talk to your PCP and/or mental health provider before you make any changes concerning your medications.

Need help finding a mental health provider?

Call Member Services at the number on your ID card.



Mental Health Resources

- **Virtual Therapy.** SonderMind is in-network with most Commercial and Medicare Advantage plans. Connect with a therapist or psychiatrist through SonderMind, visit [SonderMind.com](https://www.sondermind.com) or call 1-866-646-8581 to see if you qualify.
- **Employee Assistance Programs.** Call your EAP if your employer offers one. Many EAPs provide a free phone consultation and short-term mental health counseling.
- **Grief Counseling.** Access grief resources at Cornerstone of Hope, an Ohio-based organization.
 - Paramount Ask a Nurse Hotline -1-800-234-8773
 - Connect with Paramount's Case Management team. Call 1-800-462-3589 (TTY 711 for hearing impaired).
- **Mental Health Organizations.**
 - Mental Health America (MHA) at [MHANational.org](https://www.mhanational.org).
 - The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at [NAMI.org](https://www.nami.org).
 - The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at [SAMHSA.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov).

IF YOU NEED HELP RIGHT AWAY

- **SAMHSA National Helpline: Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (TTY: 1-800-487-4889).** This is a free, confidential service available 24/7 for individuals and families facing mental health or substance use issues.
- **Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, call or text 988 the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or chat 988lifeline.org. Trained crisis counselors are available 24/7. If the danger is immediate, be sure to call 911.



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