

# Mental health support: suicide prevention

We all worry and struggle with feelings at different times. Many people wonder if they have mental health problems and some are afraid to get help. Here's what you should know.

They may feel sad or elated, anxious, depressed, overwhelmed, fearful, disoriented or forgetful. Relationships may become difficult. Work seems harder than it used to be. Something feels wrong. Life may be a struggle. If feelings or symptoms are affecting your life, consider getting help. Mental illnesses can be successfully treated.



## Gaining perspective on suicide

Understand it's not a character flaw to have thoughts of self-harm or a desire to escape mental anguish. For you to feel better, you must acknowledge that you need help and get in touch with someone.

Know that there are some circumstances or conditions that may increase your risk for suicide. They include drug and alcohol use, depression, a family history of suicide or the recent suicide or death of a friend.

Make sure to pay attention to your feelings and get in touch for help. There are people around you who care and would welcome the opportunity to help. Suicidal thoughts are usually a serious symptom of a treatable illness. The key to dealing with suicidal thinking is treatment of the underlying illness.



## Ways to seek help

- **A psychiatrist or other mental health care professional** is an excellent choice. Suicidal thoughts need to be taken seriously and evaluated carefully. If you are in treatment and are feeling suicidal, you should call your general practitioner, physician or therapist right away.
- **Suicide hotlines are another source of help for you.** To reach a trained crisis counselor, call the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (previously known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) at 988 or **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**. You may also text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org. This lifeline provides 24/7 free and confidential support.
- **Find help online if it's more comfortable for you**, but choose the site carefully. Some suicide bulletin boards have little traffic and may not respond very quickly to your needs, although some sites may be excellent in supporting you over time.
- **Clergy, family members and friends** can be good support systems, particularly those you trust enough to confide in. Friends and family members in particular have an emotional investment in their relationship with you and much to lose if you are successful in taking your own life. Allow them to be there for you when you need it.



## Steps you can take

- **Safely store medications** by asking a friend or family member to hold onto them, so they cannot be used in a suicide attempt.
- **Keep phone numbers** for hotlines and mental health professionals easily accessible.
- **Pay attention to your moods and feelings** and be on the lookout for a return to persistent thoughts of self-harm. Practise self-observation and recognize when you need support and where you can find it.
- **Remove firearms or other means of lethal injury** from your home, so the means to end your life are not readily at hand.



There are a variety of resources available to yourself and loved ones at [optumwellbeing.com](https://www.optumwellbeing.com)

Our Critical Support Center offers emotional support resources and information when you need it most. Find a variety of topic areas including mental health, traumatic events, natural disasters, grief and loss, supporting adolescents in crisis, and more.



### Critical support when you need it

Visit [optumwellbeing.com](https://optumwellbeing.com) for additional critical support resources and information.



### Call for support at

Your Optum benefit offers support from specially trained, mental health specialists to help anyone who is overwhelmed, depressed, or searching for answers.



**This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.** This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Consult with your clinician for specific health care needs, treatment or medication. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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