

# Seeking Out Mental Health Support

If you have identified the need to seek professional help to support your overall mental health, you are not alone. According to the CDC, in 2021, 70 million Americans sought professional mental health support. Much like physical health, there are many tactics you may use to support your mental health. Additionally, there are times when professional help is needed to support physical or mental health.

***If you are in crisis, thinking about suicide, or are concerned about someone who might be, [call or text 988](#) to talk with someone at the National Suicide Hotline. You can also call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.***

## Four Steps to accessing professional mental health support

### Step 1: Ask yourself the following questions

- Would it help to have a professional guide me through a change, loss, or challenging time?
- Are there things I want to say that need to be kept confidential?
- Am I out of ideas and need to add some different “tools to my toolbox”?

*If you answered yes to any of these, continue to step 2.*

### Step 2: Find a professional and make an appointment

- Talk to your primary care provider, who will provide support or refer you to a mental health provider.
- Research network providers:
  - Use the [find a doctor tool](#) and search *behavioral health*.
  - Call the Customer Care number on the back of your insurance card and ask for assistance locating mental health providers.
- Your employer’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may offer free short-term counseling. If your employer offers an EAP, the information is likely included with other benefit information, or you can ask your HR department or supervisor.

### Mental Health Professionals Guide

#### **Counselor/Therapist/Social Worker:**

Trained to help manage or recover from conditions like stress, anxiety, depression, grief, or thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) can diagnose.

**Psychologist:** Similar to counselors, therapists, and social workers, can diagnose and improve functioning. More emphasis is on assessment, research and the medical model of care.

**Psychiatrist:** Able to diagnose and prescribe medication to support mental health.

**AODA Counselor:** Provides therapy and treatment regarding alcohol/drug abuse and dependency.

### Step 3: Prepare/Your appointment

- Consider what you are hoping to get out of your time with the provider, and think about what goals you have.
- Be prepared for an initial assessment. The therapist may have some standardized questions to better understand your history and needs.
- Create a list of questions you might have, and feel free to take notes during the appointment.
- Remember that these appointments are confidential\* and being open and honest with the provider will best help support your needs.

*\*Providers have a duty to report information during sessions if they believe there is a risk to a person (i.e., a patient reports a plan to harm someone).*

### Step 4: After the appointment

- Your provider will likely provide suggestions for future appointment frequency. It may be best to schedule some of the follow-ups at the appointment if that is possible.
- Your provider may provide handouts or suggestions. Determine a plan to follow up on your agreed-upon tactics between appointments. How can you prioritize your plan to keep your health front and center?
- If able, engage family and friends with your plan.
- Remember, any change is hard and takes active work. Try not to be discouraged if it is a slower process than what you were expecting.

**Explore more** [Real Goals and Supplemental Resources](#)

For help translating or understanding this, please call (800) 635-9233. (TTY dial 711)