



# Mental illness: first steps to get help

Almost 1 in 4 people will have some experience of mental illness in their life.

But mental illness is treatable and there are lots of ways to get help.

If you're worried about yourself or a loved one, start here.

## If it's urgent

If you think someone could hurt themselves or others, get urgent help.

## Call emergency services

Dial triple zero (000) in Australia or triple one (111) in New Zealand.

## Call Lifeline

Dial 13 11 14 in Australia or 0800 543 354 in New Zealand.

## Go to a hospital emergency department

At the emergency department, you will be seen first by an emergency doctor. Then, if needed, you will talk to a psychiatrist or other mental health professional.

➤ Australian hospital emergency departments

[nhsd.com.au](http://nhsd.com.au)

➤ New Zealand hospital emergency departments

[healthpoint.co.nz/public/emergency](http://healthpoint.co.nz/public/emergency)

## Find a mental health crisis team

Mental health crisis teams (sometimes called crisis and assessment teams or CAT teams) provide urgent treatment and support for people in mental health crisis. Treatment is often in your home.

In Australia, call your closest major hospital or local council to access the mental health crisis team in your area.

In New Zealand, find a local crisis team on this list.

➤ Crisis Assessment Teams

[health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz)

## If it's not urgent

Do you feel that something isn't right? Are you:

- feeling anxious
- feeling sad or depressed
- feeling very irritable
- 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.

You could just be having a bad week. But if the symptoms are severe, or if they go on for a long time you should seek help.

If you are:

- hurting yourself on purpose
- behaving in a very different or unusual way
- seeing or hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations).

These are more serious symptoms. You should get help right away.

## Start talking

Talking about what's bothering you is a good way to start dealing with a mental health issue.

Find a trusted family or whānau member, friend or health professional who will take time to listen to you.

## See your GP (family doctor)

Seeing a GP is a good first step if you're worried. A GP can help you work out what's happening and how to deal with it.

It can be difficult to bring up mental health issues at an appointment, but remember you're not alone. In fact, depression is one of the most common illnesses GPs treat.

If needed, a GP can refer you on for further treatment by a psychiatrist or psychologist.

➤ Mental health professionals: who's who?

[yourhealthinmind.org/who](http://yourhealthinmind.org/who)

## Try counselling services

Speak to a counsellor – over the telephone, online or in person. There are free 24-hour services available. You will speak to someone who understands what you're going through.

Australia	
Lifeline	13 11 14
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 65 94 67
Men's Line	1300 78 99 78
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
 eHeadspace	<b>eheadspace.org.au</b>

New Zealand	
Lifeline NZ	0800 543 354
Depression Helpline	0800 111 757
Suicide Crisis Helpline	0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)
Alcohol Drug Helpline	0800 787 797

## Go online for services and supports

There are a range of websites that provide information, advice and links to support groups if you are experiencing a mental health issue.

 Head to Health Australia

**headtohealth.gov.au**

 healthNZ

**health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/mental-health-services**

 More mental health support services

**yourhealthinmind.org/support**

## Remember

-  Get help. Mental illness is treatable.
-  There are many ways to get help.
-  If you are unsure, start by finding someone you trust to talk to.

This fact sheet is also available online at [yourhealthinmind.org](http://yourhealthinmind.org)

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### About us

Psychiatrists are doctors who specialise in mental health.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists:

- trains and supports psychiatrists
- advocates for better mental health for our communities
- sets standards in psychiatry.



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This is a general guide only, and does not replace individual medical advice. Please speak to your doctor for advice about your situation. The RANZCP is not liable for any consequences arising from relying on this information. Subject matter experts, people with lived experience of mental illness and carers all contributed to this fact sheet.