Taking Charge of Your Mental Health

FIND THE RIGHT SPECIALIST

- Ask your doctor or nurse to help you find a specialist and make your first appointment
- There may be a long wait for your first visit, so speak up if you need to see someone right away
- If the first mental health specialist you see isn't a good fit, keep looking for one who works for you



DON'T FORGET!

- Surround yourself with family and friends
- Talk to a counselor, social worker, nurse or trusted adult
- Continue doing what you love: reading, sports, writing, nature walks, creating art

MAKE YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT COUNT



Be ready to talk about your health history and what you're experiencing

You may be asked to fill out a questionnaire describing your mental health experience

Be clear about what you want and need to get better

Ask the mental health specialist to explain treatment options so you understand the plan and what you need to do

NAVIGATING YOUR INSURANCE

- Involve someone with experience to help you
- Call your insurance company to ask what mental health benefits are covered
- To find a provider, visit your insurer's website or call the number on your insurance card

ASK QUESTIONS



- If I have thoughts that scare me what should I do?
- How often should we meet? What can I do between appointments if I need help?
- Do I have to take medication? What does it help with? What are the side effects?
- How long will it take for me to feel better, a few days, weeks or months?



STAY INVOLVED

- Keep a wellness log and monitor your progress
- Ask for changes if your treatment plan is not working for you
- Stick with it; most therapies and medications take time to work
- Your treatment plan may change, so be an active partner in this process

LIVE WELL

- Remember that you have control over living well
- Find a routine that works for you that includes a healthy diet, exercise and regular sleep patterns
- Stay close to your support network. Engage family, friends, teammates and your faith community. Think about joining an online community
- Be realistic and mindful of your needs and know your limits



GETTING THROUGH IT

- Try staying away from drugs and alcohol. This is not always easy, so find strategies that work. Using drugs or alcohol to feel better is harmful to you.
- If you use alcohol or drugs, be honest and tell your therapist or doctor because it affects your care plan.
- Stay positive. Surround yourself with positive messages, people and activities. This will help you to feel better.

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NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness