

Quick Start Guide to Emotional Well-Being

Need help? You're not alone

Sara can't explain it, but she's been feeling unusually anxious lately. She's tired all the time, lonely, and sad. Is it stress from her job? Sara can't put her finger on it, but she knows something isn't right.

What Sara is feeling may be caused by a behavioral health condition. Contacting her primary care physician (PCP) is the best first step in getting the help she needs.



Mental and physical health go hand-in-hand

When you see your doctor, it's important to talk about anything that prevents you from living a vibrant and productive life. Although it may be difficult or uncomfortable to talk about how you feel, remind yourself that your doctor is there to help.

Reaching out for help may have positive effects on your overall physical health and mental well-being, like:

- Improving your emotional health
- Learning ways to identify and change unproductive behaviors, thought patterns, or emotions
- Developing life skills and mending relationships

Your PCP is your best, first resource for finding medical care of all kinds. PCPs can identify and treat some common behavioral health conditions before they become more serious. They can also help you manage psychological or social factors that could impact your overall health. And they're able to refer you quickly to a behavioral health specialist when needed.



1 IN 4

Americans experience a behavioral health condition each year



68%

of adults with a mental health disorder exhibit a medical condition



2-3X

Increased likelihood of developing depression if you are diagnosed with a chronic physical condition

Keep an eye out for early warning signs

Not sure if you or someone you know is living with a behavioral health condition? Some of the following feelings or behaviors can be early warning signs:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Withdrawing from people or avoiding your usual activities
- Having low or no energy or unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless, unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, or worried

- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others

Talk to your doctor about all of your symptoms. There may be a physical reason for them, or you may have a behavioral health condition that requires specialized care.

Also, if you have a chronic illness, like cancer, diabetes, hypertension, or others, you may be more likely to develop depression or anxiety.

Who should I see?

Begin with a visit to your PCP to discuss your symptoms and concerns openly. If your PCP determines that you could benefit from additional care, he or she may refer you to one of many different types of expert providers who can diagnose and treat behavioral health conditions.

Psychologists specialize in the science of behaviors, emotions, and thoughts and treat a range of issues, from relationship problems to mental illnesses, through counseling. A psychologist usually holds a doctoral degree and, in most U.S. states, can't prescribe medications.

Psychiatrists are medical doctors with psychiatric training. They can diagnose behavioral health conditions, prescribe and monitor medications, and provide counseling and therapy. Some have additional, specialized training in child or adolescent conditions or substance use disorders.

Psychoanalysts use interpretive theories and practices first developed by Sigmund Freud to help you explore repressed or unconscious impulses, anxieties, and internal conflicts. Techniques often include free association and dream interpretation.

Psychotherapist is a general term used to describe several groups of behavioral health professionals. These professionals provide psychotherapy, a type of "talking therapy" designed to improve your emotional health and general well-being. In addition to therapeutic conversations, group therapy, or expressive therapy, psychotherapy may involve cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which can help you learn how to change unproductive behaviors, thought patterns, or emotions.

Psychiatric nurses are registered nurses specializing in behavioral health care. They perform psychological therapy and administer psychiatric medication. They operate under the supervision of a medical doctor.

Mental health counselors provide counseling. Their titles may include the terms "licensed" or "professional." It's important to ask about a counselor's education, experience, and the types of services he or she provides. Counselors specialize in areas like job stress, addiction, marriage, and family.

Family and marriage counselors specialize in common problems that can come up in families and married couples. The length of the therapy is normally brief, and sessions focus on specific issues so as to reach quick resolutions.

Addiction counselors treat people with addictions. While this usually involves substance abuse or gambling problems, it can also include less common addictions such as sexual addictions or hoarding. Addiction counseling is often done in a group setting.

Social workers are public employees dedicated to helping people cope with and solve issues that may cause stress or anxiety in their lives. Social problems can include substance abuse, housing, unemployment, family disputes, and domestic or child abuse.

Religious counselors, also known as pastoral counselors, help people with crises of faith or problems with marriage, family, emotional, and other mental problems – but in a spiritual context.

The importance of keeping your appointment

Working with a therapist or counselor can lead to better ways of thinking and living. Keeping your appointments with the behavioral health specialists lets you work consistently toward positive change.

Your provider can help you develop life skills, improve relationships, and understand and cope with prior experiences, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Their guidance can improve your ability to reach your goals by helping you create a plan to promote and sustain your recovery.



6 in 10

adults with a
mental health condition
receive no treatment



What questions should I ask?

During your first visit, you want advice. But you also want to be sure that this person will be able to help you make the changes you need or want. So it's important to ask questions:

- **Is the person licensed? How many years of experience does the care provider have?**
- **What is their area of expertise? Have they treated others with your condition?**
- **What kinds of treatment does he or she offer? Is it proven to be effective for your kind of problem?**
- **What are the fees?**
- **What insurance does the provider accept?**

Did you feel comfortable with this provider?

After the appointment, consider the answer and time you spent with the provider. You should believe that the behavioral health provider is on your side. After all, you may be working with this person on very private issues.

You want a provider who:

- listens to you
- takes your concerns, perspective, and opinions into consideration
- works with you to improve your sense of well-being

If you don't feel this individual is a good fit, don't give up. Keep looking. Ask for recommendations from family and friends. Make another appointment.

With patience and persistence, you will find the provider who will best meet your needs.

Medication

Your behavioral health provider may recommend medication to help control the symptoms of your condition. Medications may take time to work. And medication alone is often not enough to correct the issue.

Be sure to ask about the risks, the realistic benefits of the medication, and expected length of treatment.

Be informed

It's important that you're educated about and engaged in your own behavioral health recovery.

- Play an active role in your own treatment – ask questions and keep asking until you get an answer that you understand.
- Be honest about how you're feeling. If you're taking medications, let your doctor know if it's working for you.
- Build connections with your medical and behavioral health providers, as well as family and friends. They are there to support you.

Take the first step.

If you or someone you love is battling behavioral health problems, like addiction, depression, or anxiety, contact your PCP. This is the first step to finding compassionate and competent care. So you can begin the journey to physical and emotional well-being.



Source for behavioral health statistics:
Quartet Health

About Quartet: Quartet is a pioneering technology company connecting physical and mental care to improve people's total health and quality of life.