



We often associate the term “mental health” with “mental illness.” But mental health, much like physical health, exists along a spectrum. We all have days where our physical health isn't at its best, maybe due to an injury or a virus, and others when we feel physically great. Likewise, we have days when our

health at many points in our lives. Sometimes this is in response to a challenging or traumatic event (e.g., a sexual assault, divorce, death of a loved one). Other times it can be due to a psychological disorder (e.g., an anxiety disorder, depression, or an eating disorder). At other times it may be that we're not feeling okay, maybe we're feeling down, upset or nervous about



Asking for help can be really challenging and frightening at times. Socially, we're taught that we should be able to manage things ourselves and that asking for help is a sign of weakness or something shameful. That's what we call a social construct (an idea that's been fabricated), not a truth.

That misunderstanding can be stronger depending on our cultural, familial, and generational background. [1 in 5](#) experience a mental health condition in a given year, and almost half the population has experienced a mental health condition in their lifetime ([Health Direct](#))

While we can seek help at any time, it's especially important to seek professional help when we feel our mood is not in our control or that our mood or behavioural changes have become more than a temporary thing. According to the Black Dog Institute and Beyond Blue, other key signs that may indicate a mental health condition include but are not limited to:

- A sense of hopelessness
- Thoughts about harming yourself or others
- Lack of motivation to complete tasks or activities that used to bring you pleasure
- Persistent panicked or anxious behaviours
- Fluctuating mood
- Changes to eating patterns
- Self-harm
- An overwhelming sense of loneliness
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Changes in sleep patterns

Trustworthy information and reliable support can positively change our life when we are experiencing mental health challenges. We don't need to know exactly what is wrong, as only a trained health professional can diagnose a psychological disorder.

When possible, avoid waiting until a problem has hit "crisis" stage. Early intervention can make a big difference. Just as we wouldn't put up with a dislocated shoulder, we shouldn't tolerate long periods of feeling anxious or depressed. It is important to proactively seek out appropriate help so that we can make changes and ensure that our mental health improves.



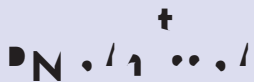
Professional help for mental health concerns can come in many forms. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the different types of professionals that may





Given high rates of mental ill-health and psychological disorders in Australia and around the world, it is very likely that someone in our life at some stage will be struggling with their mental health. It can be hard to know what to do when supporting someone with a mental health issue, the best thing is to start with a conversation. The below resources provide some guidance on how to assist someone in need.

- [Mental Health First Aid Training – UNSW](#)
- [Talking to Someone You are Worried About – Beyond Blue](#)
- [Helping Someone Else – Black Dog Institute](#)



Fact Sheets, General Resources, and Guides

- [A Guide to What Works for Anxiety – Beyond Blue](#)
- [A Guide to What Works for Depression – Beyond Blue](#)
- [Mental Health Fact Sheet – Beyond Blue](#)
- [Resource Library – Beyond Blue](#)
- [Fact Sheets – Black Dog Institute](#)
- [Head to Health – Australian Government](#)
- [Under the Radar – Mental Health of Australian University Students – Orygen](#)
- [Lifeline](#) • [UNSW Psychology and eMentor](#) • [UNSW Mind Smart Guides](#) • [UNSW Student Support I Need Help With](#) • [Youth Mental Health Fact Sheets –](#)

