

ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION: FIND THE PATH THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Anxiety and depression can make you feel like you're not your usual self. Your journey to feeling like yourself again will not look the same as anyone else's because anxiety and depression affects everyone differently.

Many options are available to help you manage anxiety and depression. Your GP might suggest one, or a combination of things, to try.

You know yourself best! If the first step you take doesn't feel like the right one, keep trying different things to find the path that works for you.



Any information that you share with your GP, psychologist or other health professional is **confidential**. The only time it can be shared is if there is a threat of harm to you or others.

Your GP can support you in choosing the next steps to take. Here are some questions you can ask:

1. What are my options?

Many lifestyle changes, supports and treatments can help. Talk to your GP about your options, including:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staying active | <input type="checkbox"/> Joining social activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting back on alcohol and other drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeing a mental health professional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making time to do things you enjoy | <input type="checkbox"/> Trying an online mental health program | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning how to deal with stress | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking a medicine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a close friend or family member | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating well | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting support for work or study | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> Practicing mindfulness and relaxation | | |

2. Why are these the best options for me?

Each option will have pros and cons. Ask your GP how these options will best meet your needs. Don't be afraid to talk to your GP about the things you want to try. This will help them work with you to create a care plan just for you.

3. When will I feel better?

Ask when you should start feeling better. If you are taking a medicine or waiting to see a mental health professional, feeling better may take time.

In the meantime, try some of the other things in the box above. Speak with someone you trust about the way you're feeling. You can connect with **e-headspace** for phone or online counselling. **Head to Health** can also help you find online mental health treatment programs.

4. What if I don't feel better?

There are always other options. If nothing's working or you're feeling worse, go back to your GP. Tell someone if you're having thoughts of harming yourself, or call one of the numbers below:

Lifeline 13 11 14 or text 0477 131 114
Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

For immediate assistance or in an emergency



5. How much does it cost?

Ask your GP about cost. If something is too expensive, ask about another option.

Notes:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Helpful links:







▶ [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au) ▶ [beyondblue.org.au](https://www.beyondblue.org.au) ▶ [reachout.com](https://www.reachout.com)

Seeing a mental health professional

There are lots of different types of mental health professionals, like counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists. Find out more at [ReachOut](#) and [Beyond Blue](#).

Finding the right person for you can take time. Your GP can suggest someone, or they can refer you to a person you have chosen. You may not connect with the first mental health professional you meet for a range of reasons. That's OK. If it's still not working after a few sessions, ask your GP, family and friends for recommendations. Websites like [psychology.org.au](#) can also help you to find someone who is a better fit.

Ask your GP about the mental health professional:

-  Why do you think their skills and experience will help me?
-  Will their cultural background, personality, or speciality be a good match for my needs?
-  How long will it take me to get an appointment?
-  How much do they charge? Are any of the costs covered by Medicare or private health insurance? Are there any free or low-cost options?
-  Where are they located?
-  Will their working hours fit in with my routine?

Ask the questions that are important to you, to help your GP find someone who suits your needs.



Taking medicine

Some people with anxiety or depression are prescribed a medicine, such as an antidepressant.

“ Ask your GP or psychiatrist: **Why is this medicine a good option for me?** ”

They can explain the benefits of taking an antidepressant, or other medicine that is prescribed for you.

All medicines have side effects, including those for anxiety and depression. Some side effects go away over time as your body gets used to the medicine.

“ Ask: **What are the possible side effects of the medicine? How can I reduce or manage these side effects?** ”

Some people notice changes to their:



Energy levels



Mood



Weight



Sexual response



Appetite or digestion

Tell your GP or psychiatrist about any side effects that concern you and discuss other options if needed.

Try to be open and honest with your GP. Let your GP know if you:

- ▶ think you might be pregnant
- ▶ use alcohol or other drugs regularly.

It helps them know which medicines will be safer for you or if any aspects of your lifestyle could affect how your medicine works.

Fill out the space below to help you remember what your GP tells you about your medicine:

.....
.....
.....

If you do not feel better, make an appointment with your GP. Do not stop taking the medicine without speaking to your doctor.

[nps.org.au](#)

Level 7/418A Elizabeth Street Surry Hills NSW 2010
PO Box 1147 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
☎ 02 8217 8700 📠 02 9211 7578 📧 info@nps.org.au

© 2022 NPS MedicineWise. Any queries concerning reproduction and rights should be sent to info@nps.org.au. Independent. Not-for-profit. Evidence-based. This program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. The information provided is not medical advice. Do not use it to treat or diagnose your own or another person's medical condition and never ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something herein. Medicines information changes, and may not be accurate when you access it. To the fullest extent permitted by law, NPS MedicineWise disclaims all liability (including without limitation for negligence) for any loss, damage, or injury resulting from reliance on, or use of this information. NPSMW2416