



CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

Mental Health

*and wellness
month*

May 2025

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR
UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

LEARN

The resources included in this guide can help increase knowledge about mental health screening and treatment.



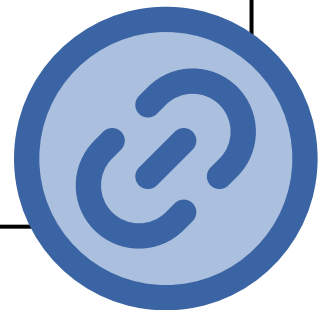
BUILD

The resources included in this guide are designed to help build the skills to monitor, improve, and maintain good mental health and wellness.



PREVENT

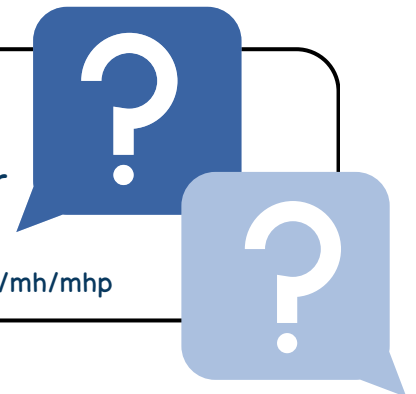
Using these resources to improve mental wellness can help to prevent mental health problems and crises from occurring in the future.



QUESTIONS

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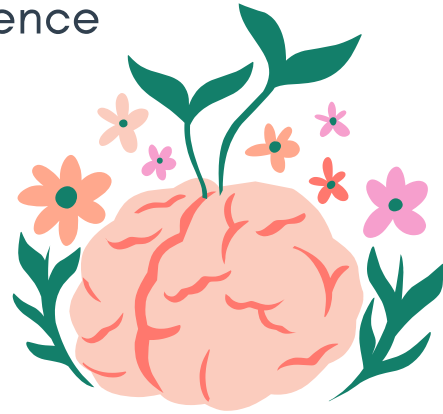
To access more mental health resources visit <https://dbhdid.ky.gov/mh/mhp>



WHAT IS MENTAL WELLNESS?

Being mentally well is more than just the absence of a diagnosed mental health condition.

It includes our overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being.



WHY DOES IT MATTER?



Our level of mental wellness impacts our ability to cope with stress, engage in meaningful activities, and build positive relationships.

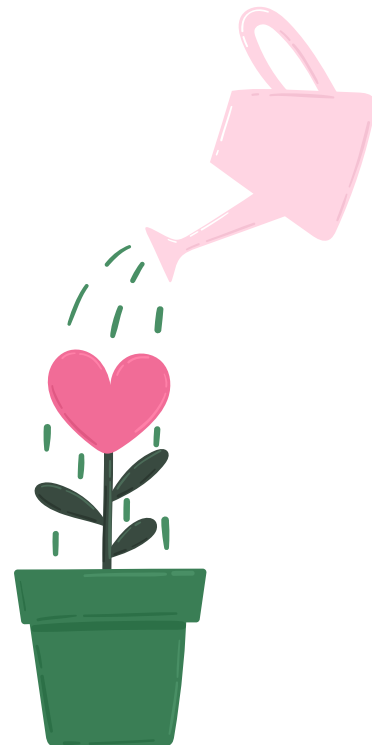
EVERYONE HAS THE CAPACITY TO BE MENTALLY WELL

Mental health exists on a continuum from “mentally well” to “mental health crisis” and contains a whole range of emotions.



Based on a variety of factors, including biology, genetics, and circumstances, we move along the continuum as we move through life.

ANYONE CAN EXPERIENCE MENTAL WELLNESS OR A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS.



10 BENEFITS OF MENTAL WELLNESS



Being mentally well can have many good impacts on your overall physical, social, and emotional well-being.

Focusing on your **MENTAL WELLNESS** can...

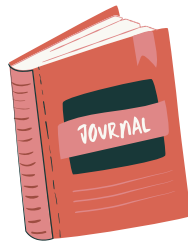
- 1 Reduce risk of physical health problems such as heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes**
- 2 Reduce risk of developing depression and anxiety**
- 3 Increase positive outlook and ability to enjoy life**
- 4 Increase ability to cope with stressful or difficult life events**
- 5 Increase creativity and openness to new experiences**
- 6 Improve relationships with the people in your life**
- 7 Increase productivity to allow you to reach your potential**
- 8 Enable you to make meaningful contributions to your family, community, and society**
- 9 Increase ability to think clearly and make healthy decisions**
- 10 Improve mood, self-esteem, and confidence**



REMEMBER: EVERYONE HAS THE CAPACITY TO BE MENTALLY WELL,
regardless of whether or not you have a mental health condition

TIPS TO IMPROVE MENTAL WELLNESS

Keep a
gratitude
journal



Get good
sleep

MENTAL health MATTERS



Stay active



Eat
healthy
meals



Reach out
to family
and friends
for support

WHEN SHOULD I SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP TO SUPPORT MY MENTAL HEALTH?

If you are experiencing severe or distressing symptoms lasting 2 weeks or more, such as:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in appetite or unplanned weight changes
- Difficulty getting out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Inability to complete usual tasks and activities
- Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness

Mental Health America of Kentucky

Access screening, resources,
programs, and more
<https://mhaky.org/>

If you are in immediate distress
or are thinking about hurting
yourself, 988 can help



Call-Text-Chat 988

988
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LIFELINE

LEARN MORE

- <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-mental-health/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Ask yourself these questions every day to keep tabs on your mental health.

If you notice you are struggling in a certain area and do not know how to address it, a mental health provider may be able to help.

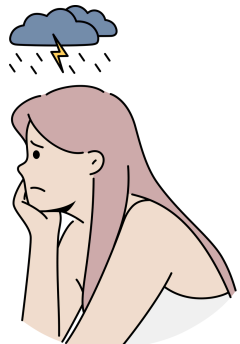


HOW AM I FEELING TODAY?

Take notice of your mood and how your body feels.

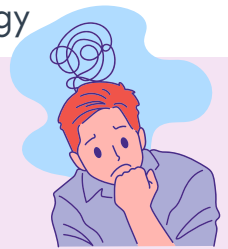
Physical signs of mental health issues might include:

Headaches | Body Pains | Skin Rashes | Stomachaches
Muscle Tension | Frequent Urination | Appetite Changes
Weight Changes | Changes in Energy



WHAT HAS BEEN WORRYING ME?

Identifying your stressors can help you address them.



AM I TAKING CARE OF MY BODY?

- ☒ Eating healthy, regular meals
- ☒ Drinking plenty of water
- ☒ Maintaining personal hygiene
- ☒ Moving my body
- ☒ Getting enough sleep
- ☒ Going outside



WHAT AM I DOING TO BRING MYSELF JOY?

- ☒ Creative hobbies (cooking, art, music)
- ☒ Reading books for fun
- ☒ Watching a show I enjoy
- ☒ Spending time with my pets
- ☒ Keeping a gratitude journal



WHO IS IN MY CORNER?

- ☒ Someone who gives good advice when I ask for it
- ☒ Someone who is respectful and trustworthy
- ☒ Someone who listens to me
- ☒ Someone who has my best interests at heart

If you are feeling overwhelmed or having thoughts of suicide, reach out for help right away. Call-Text-Chat 988

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Visit <https://www.psychologytoday.com>
to learn more about mental health treatment or to find a
provider near you

THE KEYS TO MENTAL WELLNESS

LIFE SKILLS



RESILIENCE

SELF-CARE



SOCIAL CONNECTION

scan the QR code →



WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Everyone feels sad or down sometimes, especially during difficult or stressful times. For many people, these feelings usually pass.

If the feelings are not going away, you may be experiencing **DEPRESSION**, a mood disorder that can cause severe symptoms that affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working.



Clinical depression or major depressive disorder is one of the most common mental health conditions.

You may be experiencing depression if you notice these symptoms occurring daily or nearly daily and lasting most of the day for two weeks or more:

- Feeling very sad, empty or hopeless
 - *Children and adolescents may be irritable rather than sad*
- Loss of interest in things and activities that used to bring joy
- Increase or decrease in appetite, which may result in weight gain or weight loss
- Slowed speech, decreased movement and impaired cognitive function
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Low energy or fatigue
- Feeling worthless or excessively guilty
- Trouble concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

If you are feeling overwhelmed or having thoughts of suicide, reach out for help right away. Call-Text-Chat 988



Not everyone may experience ALL of these symptoms at once. It is a good idea to talk to your doctor or a mental health provider if you notice any of these symptoms.

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Visit [MHAscreening.org](https://www.MHAscreening.org) to take a mental health test

Learn More: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression>

DEPRESSION CHECK-IN

Ask yourself these questions periodically to keep tabs on your mental health.



Have I stopped doing things I enjoy?



Have I been feeling down?



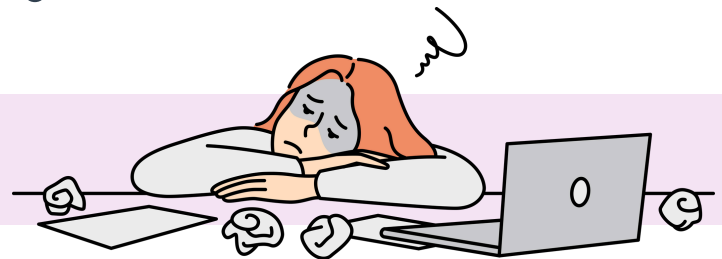
Am I having trouble concentrating?

Has my appetite changed?



Am I having trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much?

Have I noticed a change in my energy levels?



If you answer yes to these questions, you might consider taking a mental health test or talking to your doctor about what you are experiencing.

If you are having thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself, reach out for help right away.
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can help.



Call-Text-Chat 988

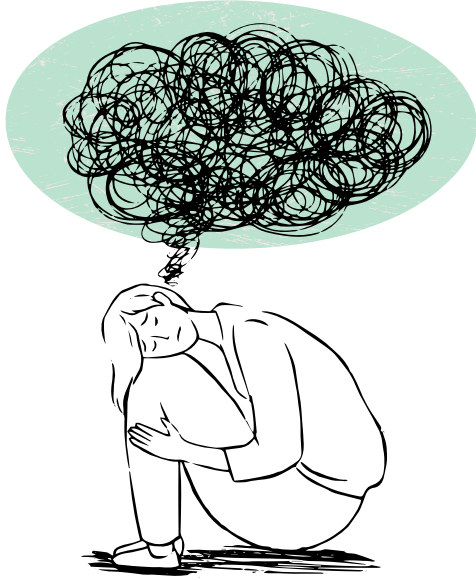


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Visit <https://www.psychologytoday.com>
to learn more about mental health treatment
or to find a provider near you

WHAT IS SUICIDAL IDEATION?



SUICIDAL IDEATION refers to any thoughts about taking your own life.

Experiencing **PASSIVE SUICIDAL IDEATION** means that you wish were dead or that you could die, but you have not made a plan to die by suicide.

Experiencing **ACTIVE SUICIDAL IDEATION** means that you have the intent to die by suicide and have a plan to do so.

WHO EXPERIENCES SUICIDAL IDEATION?

Suicidal ideation can be a symptom of other mental health conditions such as depression or bipolar disorder. However, **anyone can experience suicidal thoughts**, including those with no diagnosed mental health conditions.



WHAT CAUSES SOMEONE TO THINK ABOUT SUICIDE?

There are many different factors that contribute to suicide. Most often, these kinds of thoughts come when you are feeling:

- Hopeless or helpless
- Out of control of yourself or your life
- That you or your life lacks meaning or purpose

Sometimes there are situations in life that can lead to these feelings, including:

- Having relationship problems, including problems with your family, your friends, or your significant other
- Experiencing a traumatic event or crisis
- Using drugs and alcohol
- Feeling pressure at work or school
- Having financial difficulties
- Having a physical health problem, especially a chronic or terminal one
- Having a mental health condition, especially when symptoms are uncontrolled
- Experiencing trauma or abuse (currently or in the past)



Call-Text-Chat 988

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can help.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/suicidal-ideation-380609>

warning signs of **SUICIDE**

There are not always noticeable signs when someone is thinking about suicide, but you should be aware of these potential warning signs in conversations, behaviors, and moods:



TALK

When you hear someone talk about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

BEHAVIOR

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods of suicide
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye



- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue



www.afsp.org

MOOD

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation or Shame
- Agitation or Anger
- Relief or Sudden Improvement

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. THERE IS HELP AVAILABLE.



Call-Text-Chat 988

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Taking Action for Suicidal Thoughts

THOUGHTS/BEHAVIORS

ACTIONS TO TAKE

SUICIDE ATTEMPT

attempt to kill self, either initiating a made plan or impulsively

If you are in immediate physical danger, contact 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

ACTIVELY SUICIDAL (PLAN AND INTENT)

has a specific plan (how, when, where) and intends to carry it out.

Talk to a medical or mental health professional or call 988.

They will help you determine if you need to be hospitalized or if you can continue to work your safety plan at home.

SUICIDAL INTENT (NO PLAN)

intends to kill self, but no specific plan:
"I think I am going to kill myself but not sure when"

Talk to a medical or mental health professional.

Contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Line if you cannot reach your provider.

Implement your safety plan.

PASSIVE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS (METHOD, NO PLAN/INTENT)

having an idea of how to do it but no specific plan or intent to act

Talk to a medical or mental health professional.

Continue talking to your friends and family about your thoughts.

Make a safety plan.

PASSIVE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS (NO INTENT OR PLAN)

thinking about killing self, but no details and no intention to act:
"I should just kill myself."

THOUGHTS OF DEATH

thinking about own death or dying but not specifically about suicide:
"I wish I wouldn't wake up"
"I wish I were dead"

Talk to friends and family about your thoughts.

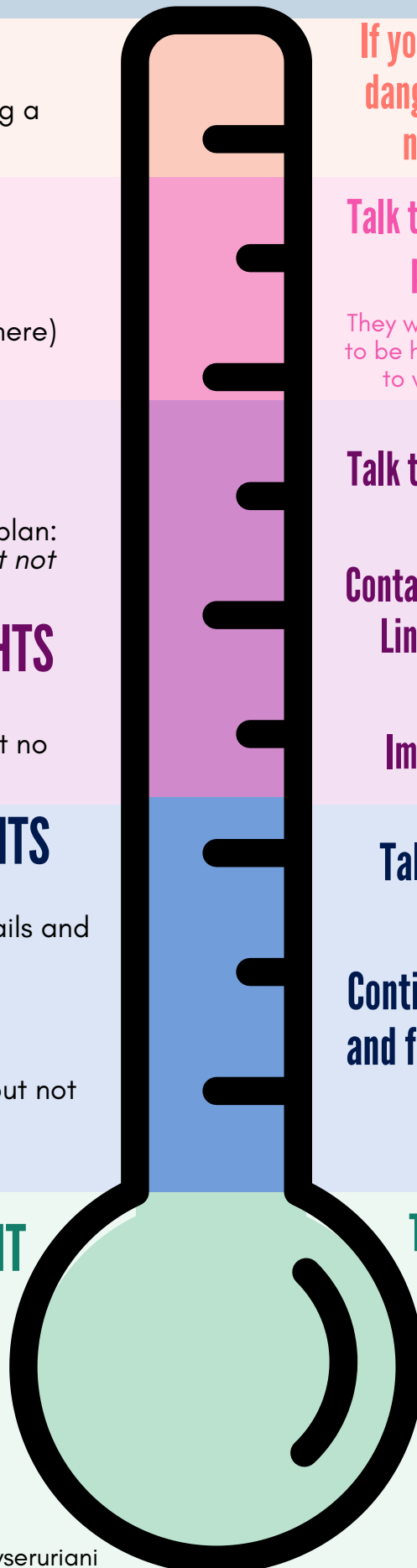
Consider making a safety plan to prevent a crisis.

RANDOM/INTRUSIVE THOUGHT

with no history of chronic suicidality, passing thought/curiosity:
"What if I just jumped"
when waiting for a train.

NO THOUGHTS

Design adapted from @alyseruriani
<https://www.alyseruriani.com/>



Make a **CODE RED** Safety Plan

A safety plan is designed to be a safety net when you are in crisis or having your worst day. It is important to plan ahead and be prepared by making a safety plan before you are in crisis or having your worst day. Keep your plan easily accessible so that if/when the day comes, you will have a plan to keep yourself safe and connected to help.

Instructions: Take time to fill in each block of your safety plan. Draw, write or stick pictures from a magazine inside each block of your safety plan. This is **YOUR** plan and unique to you. Your plan may change and that's okay, you can update it any time you want to!

Note: If you have made your contact, done your delay decisions, relax and distract and you are still needing help please call, text or chat 988 where someone is there to help 24/7.

CODE RED

CONTACT

Who is a trusted adult I can reach out to, to help me?
i.e: teacher, coach, youth pastor, mentor

DELAY DECISIONS

What are my reasons for living? What are the things that will help delay me from making any decisions that could harm myself?
i.e: goals, dreams, pets, people in my life

Always call 911 if you are in immediate danger of harming yourself.

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988
dial 2 for Spanish speakers
dial 3 for LGBTQIA+ specific support

Crisis Text Line: text "KY" to 741-741

Kentucky School STOP tip line (to report bullying, violence, or other school issues, anonymously if desired): 866-393-6659

What helps me calm down? What will slow my breathing and relax my body?
i.e: yoga, walking, nap, bath, music.....

RELAX

What can keep my mind off things upsetting me? What can I do in 30 seconds, 3 minutes, 30 minutes, or longer that will help?
i.e.: watch a silly video, listen to a song, organize, play outside, read a book, play with a pet

DISTRACT

WHAT IS ANXIETY?



STRESS VS. ANXIETY

Anxiety and stress often feel similar and can cause symptoms such as:

- Excessive worry
- Uneasiness
- Tension
- Headaches or body pain
- High blood pressure
- Loss of sleep

However, there are some key differences between stress and anxiety:

STRESS

- Generally a response to an external cause such as a big test or presentation or arguing with friends
- Stressors can be one-time or short-term or happen repeatedly over time.
- Typically goes away once the situation is resolved.
- Can be positive (inspiring you to meet a deadline) or negative (causing you to lose sleep).

ANXIETY

- Your body's internal reaction to stress.
- Typically involves persistent feelings of apprehension or dread that don't go away and interfere with your daily life.
- Feelings continue even if there is no immediate stressor.

Everyone experiences stress, and sometimes that can feel overwhelming.

You may be at risk for an anxiety disorder if it feels like you can't manage the stress and if the symptoms of your stress:

- Interfere with your everyday life.
- Cause you to avoid doing things.
- Seem to be always present.



If you are struggling to cope, or the symptoms of your stress or anxiety won't go away, it may be time to talk to a professional.

Resources such as Psychology Today and FindHelpNowKY.org can help connect you to treatment.

WHAT IS BIPOLAR DISORDER?

Bipolar disorder, formerly called manic depression, is a mental health condition that causes extreme mood swings. These include **emotional highs (mania or hypomania)** and **lows (depression)**.

During periods of depression, you may feel sad or hopeless or lose interest in activities you used to enjoy.



When your mood shifts to mania or hypomania, you may feel unusually excited or happy, full of energy, or unusually irritable.

Episodes of mood swings from depression to mania may occur rarely or multiple times a year, each lasting several days. Between episodes, some people have long periods of emotional stability.

Although bipolar disorder is a lifelong condition, you can manage your mood swings and other symptoms by following a treatment plan.

If your manic or depressive symptoms become severely distressing, reach out to your medical or mental health provider right away.

If you are unable to reach your provider, the 988 Crisis and Suicide Lifeline is available to help 24/7.

HOW CAN TRAUMA & ABUSE IMPACT MENTAL HEALTH?

Trauma is a response that can occur after any event that is highly distressing. Situations that often result in trauma include abuse, war, an accident or natural disaster, the sudden or violent death of a loved one, or a serious medical problem.



Abuse – whether physical, emotional, verbal or sexual – is a specific type of traumatic event. Abuse can happen during childhood or as an adult, and can have long-term impacts on your wellbeing.

Those who have experienced trauma or abuse are at a higher risk of developing mental health conditions such as anxiety disorders, depression, PTSD, borderline personality disorder, or substance use disorder.

The long-term impacts of trauma and abuse can include:

- Severe anxiety, stress, or fear
- Depression
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Eating disorders
- Self-injury
- Suicide



TRAUMA AND ABUSE ARE NEVER YOUR FAULT

You can get help to heal the physical, mental, and emotional scars of trauma and abuse.

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, 988 can help



WHAT IS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)?



People experience a wide range of emotions and reactions following a severely distressing or traumatic event. Most people recover over time, but those who continue to be significantly impacted by the event may be diagnosed with **post-traumatic stress disorder** or **PTSD**.

Not everyone who lives through a traumatic event develops PTSD. Circumstances that may increase the likelihood of developing PTSD include:

- Exposure to previous traumatic experiences, particularly during childhood
- Getting hurt or seeing people hurt or killed
- Feeling horror, helplessness, or extreme fear
- Having little or no social support after the event
- Dealing with extra stress after the event, such as loss of a loved one, pain and injury, or loss of a job or home
- Having a personal or family history of mental illness or substance use

There are also factors that can help to reduce the likelihood of developing PTSD after experiencing trauma, including:


- Seeking out support from friends, family, or support groups
- Learning to feel okay with one's actions in response to a traumatic event
- Having a coping strategy for getting through and learning from the traumatic event
- Being prepared and able to respond to upsetting events as they occur, despite feeling fear


If you are struggling in the aftermath of a traumatic event, reach out to a mental health provider for support. They can help you find the best treatment plan for your symptoms and needs.

WHAT DO I DO IF I AM CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING ABUSE?

If you are experiencing domestic violence (also referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV), dating abuse, or relationship abuse), the most important consideration is safety.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. You may also reach out to your mental health or healthcare, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline for assistance with making a safety plan.

 **Call**
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)
TTY 1.800.787.3224

 **Chat**
Chat live

 **Text**
Text "START" to
88788

**NATIONAL
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
HOTLINE**

RESOURCES FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT

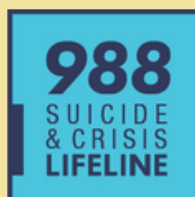
National Sexual Assault Hotline
Phone Number: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Safe Helpline (for members of the military)
Phone Number: 1-877-995-5247

If you are in immediate distress
or are thinking about hurting
yourself, 988 can help



Call-Text-Chat 988





FINDING HELP FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Resources for starting mental health treatment

SCAN THE QR CODE

to download the full Finding
Help for Mental Health Toolkit



Finding Mental Health Care

EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS

If you have been experiencing distressing symptoms for a period of two weeks or more, it may be time to seek professional help.

SET GOALS

What do you hope to achieve?
Some ideas:

- managing symptoms
- improving self-esteem
- improving relationships

REMEMBER

You have the right to see a provider who makes you feel **safe and comfortable**.

OUTPATIENT CARE

Start your mental health treatment journey with a mental health provider in a non-residential setting such as in an office or virtually.

There are many different types of mental health providers. If you are not sure where to start, try talking to your primary care provider

RESEARCH

Find the best treatment for you.
These resources can help:

- [FindHelpNowKY.org](https://www.findhelpnowky.org)
- [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com)

What if my symptoms become overwhelming or severe?

REACH OUT

If you notice these serious symptoms, reach out to your medical or mental health provider right away:

- thoughts of harming yourself or others
- experiencing things that are not real such as hearing voices
- experiencing distressing thoughts that could lead you to unsafe behaviors or risky decisions
- feeling too unwell to eat, bathe, or sleep properly
- experiencing difficulty managing symptoms at home

REMEMBER

You can also call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for support.

If you or someone else is in immediate physical danger, call 911.

PLAN OF CARE

After an assessment, your provider will recommend a plan of care.

Hospitalization is the **last resort** if your symptoms cannot be managed at home or in an outpatient setting.



seeking help for GENERAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



Working with a mental health professional is deeply personal and often difficult. It is important to feel safe and comfortable in your therapy space, which includes liking and trusting your therapist.

WHERE DO I START?

Identify problems and goals.

- What do you need help with?
- Are you considering medication?
- How will you know when you have met your goals?

Assess your financial situation

- Will you be using insurance?
- Is self-pay an option?
- Some providers will offer assistance for those experiencing financial difficulty.
- In Kentucky, Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) provide a range of accessible, direct or indirect mental health services

Mental Health Screening

can help you determine your needs and goals.

Access screening, resources, programs, and more
screening.mhanational.org/

Questions to ensure your therapist is culturally responsive:

- Are you familiar or willing to become familiar with my community's beliefs, values and attitudes toward mental health?
- Do you have experience treating people from my cultural background?
- Have you had cultural competence training?
- Are you or members of your staff bilingual?
- How would you include aspects of my cultural identity, such as age, faith, gender identity or sexual orientation, in my care?

To begin searching for a mental health provider, visit

findhelpnow.org/ky
OR psychologytoday.com

WHAT IF MY PROVIDER IS NOT A GOOD FIT?

It is okay to request a new provider, even within the same practice.

You do not owe anyone an explanation for your decision, not even to the provider themselves.



If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, 988 can help

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RESOURCES

- <https://namica.org/blog/how-to-find-a-culturally-competent-therapist/>
- <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/07/02/1185661348/start-therapy-find-therapist-how-to>

seeking help for **SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS**



Sometimes mental health issues may require more support than an outpatient mental health professional like a therapist is able to provide. In these cases, you may need seek admission to a mental health hospital.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN IT IS TIME TO CHECK-IN TO A MENTAL HEALTH HOSPITAL?

You may want to consider seeking admission to a mental health hospital if you are experiencing severely distressing symptoms related to:

- Mania
- Psychosis
- Depression
- PTSD
- Intense suicidal thoughts or active suicidal plan



Or if you are experiencing severely distressing symptoms related to:

- hearing voices, especially those encouraging violence.
- needing assistance with stopping the use of drugs or alcohol.
- experiencing thoughts that take you away from reality.
- feeling too unwell to eat, bathe, or sleep properly.



If you notice these symptoms or are considering mental health hospitalization, **reach out to your medical or mental health provider right away.** They will assess your symptoms and help you determine the best next steps.



If you cannot reach your medical or mental health provider, the 988 Crisis and Suicide Lifeline is available to help 24/7.

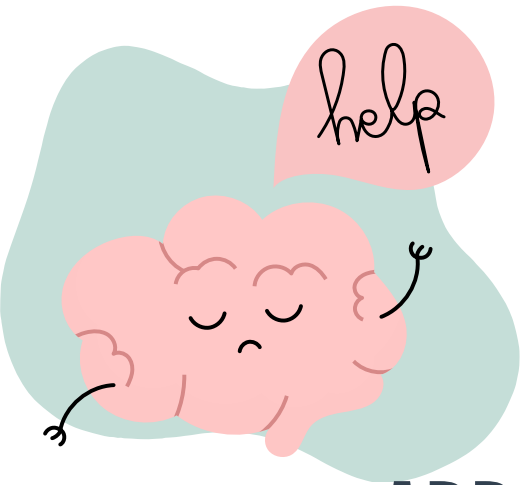


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LEARN MORE: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-happens-when-you-are-hospitalized-for-depression-1067262>

finding an inpatient or residential **MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT FACILITY**



For help in determining if inpatient or residential treatment is right for you, talk with your doctor, psychiatrist or therapist. They will assess your need for this level of service and support you as you decide which facility is right for you.

You can also contact your local National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) Affiliate, and/or speak with members of support groups you may be attending for facility recommendations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

FIND HELP NOW KENTUCKY

Provides a comprehensive listing of services in Kentucky. Search by zip code, types of treatment, ages served, and other criteria. The link also provides Kentucky-based phone numbers and hotlines if you prefer to speak to a live person.



SAMHSA TREATMENT LOCATOR

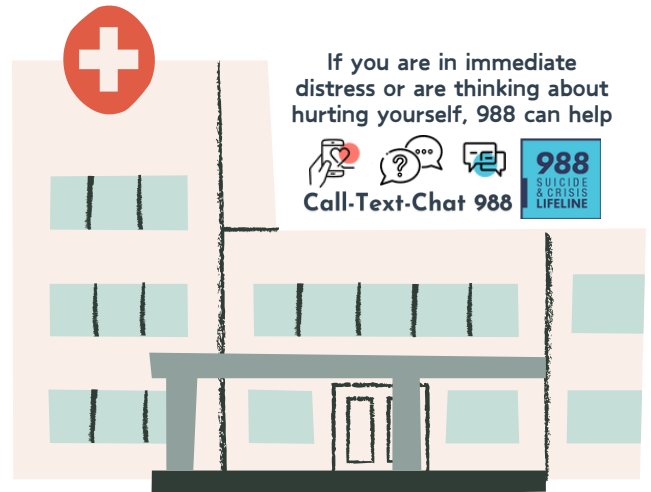
Provides referrals of different treatment facilities in the country. SAMHSA can narrow search by insurance, cost of treatment and type of treatment. Their website also includes programs like assertive community treatment and residential treatment. SAMHSA is a good for low-cost/sliding scale mental health care, substance abuse and dual diagnosis facilities. You can reach SAMHSA at (800) 662-4357.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

Offers a "Find a Treatment Center" locator function to search for treatment facilities. Once you have identified a provider, contact your insurance company to verify coverage.

FINDTREATMENT.GOV

Offers a "Find a Treatment Facility Near You" locator function. Search by city or zip code; filter results by type of treatment, payment options, ages served, languages spoken, special programs (e.g. veterans, LGBT, services for deaf and hard of hearing), and more. Once you have identified a provider, contact your insurance company to verify coverage.



AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT ASSOCIATION

Offers a "Find a Residential Mental Health Facility" locator function; searchable by program type and location. Please note that the listed facilities may be of high cost.

it's **OK** *to*
ASK for HELP

TEAM KENTUCKY[®]

CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

Scan the QR Code for more
Mental Health Promotion resources



<https://dbhdid.ky.gov/mh/mhp>