

Seeking help for our mental health is just as important and normal for our wellbeing as seeking help from a dentist or a doctor, but only 1 in 5 people experiencing mental health concerns seek formal support.

The truth is, we all need a little help sometimes, and help IS available! Understanding the ways we can access help for ourselves and encourage the people we care for to access help builds motivated and healthy communities.



Help seeking

For help reach out to:

KIDS HELP LINE 1800 55 1800

www.kidshelpline.com.au
A free and private counselling service specialising in young people aged 5-25 years.

LIFELINE 13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au
Provides access to crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health services.

CARERS ACT 1800 422 737

A range of supports and services designed to nurture, connect and empower carers through practical support.

PARENTLINE 02 6287 3833

Provides telephone counselling by trained volunteers for parents and carers in the ACT

QLIFE 13 11 14

www.qlife.org.au
LGBTIQ+ support service

What is help seeking?

Help seeking is the action of finding support in order to overcome a concern, problem or issue. In today's society, great value is placed on our independence as individuals, and we are often complimented when we can do things on our own and "stand on our own two feet". In some instances, this view can impact our confidence to seek help for experiences and issues out of our of control. When negative views are given to help-seeking behaviour, it can prevent us from reaching out. This is often the case when it comes to seeking help for mental illness.

Not all help-seeking behaviours hold negative views and judgement from others. Few people would judge your decision to seek help from a dentist for a sore tooth, an accountant at tax time, or a lawyer in the face of a legal hurdle. We as a community understand that we aren't all and can't all be experts in these respective fields, and accept that specialists in these areas are well worth consulting. So why do we attach negative views to seeking help for our mental health?

ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH 1800 629 354 or 02 6205 1065 health.act.gov.au

Provides immediate help, 24hrs a day, 7 days a week, if you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis in the ACT.

ACT MULTICULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK 0403 497 959

Promotes mental health and well-being for people of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in the ACT.

mieact

mental health & well-being
education & training providers

www.mieact.org.au

Why is help-seeking important?

Seeking help for our experience of mental illness or situations outside of our control is a positive step that enhances our health, wellbeing and happiness, and increases our chances of recovery. It can also positively impact our partners, children, colleagues and wider support networks. Our mental health has a direct impact on our ability to have positive relationships with others and positive social connection increases our mental wellbeing. Seeking help is vitally important for everyone and for our wider society. Seeking help reduces the impact of illness on our community and empowers people to contribute to a more positive society.

How to overcome the barriers to help seeking

There are many reasons people don't seek help, whether it be fear to open up or concerns of what others may think, sometime we might not even think there is anything to seek help for. We can overcome these 'barriers to help seeking' and its important to reflect on the positive outcomes of seeking help.

- **Fear of Stigma:** This is the negative attitudes and beliefs surrounding mental illness and it impacts our confidence to disclose concerns or access support. Choose the advice of people who have your best interests at heart. Try to remember you are not alone, 1 in every 5 Australians has suffered a mental disorder at some time in their life.
- **Feeling that you don't understand or don't have all the information:** A lack of understanding about mental illness can make it difficult to have open conversations about mental health and access support. Luckily there is a lot of great information available like Access Mental Health on 02 6205 1065.
- **Concerns regarding privacy/confidentiality;** Studies show that people have concerns seeking help for fear of their personal information being shared. Lifeline is a great service, free and open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. You can remain anonymous and seek support, information and help, call 13 11 14.
- **Concerns regarding access to support:** Reports suggest that particularly people from diverse backgrounds aren't confident that current mental health resources are accessible. There are free supports available such as ACT Multicultural Mental Health Network. Older Australians report having difficulty accessing help due to increased isolation, difficulties with technology, or reduced physical capacity. There is free assistance to overcome these concerns try reaching out to the Redcross 02 6234 7600.
- **Language or cultural barriers:** Sometimes we know to describe our experience in our own language but are not confident to find the words to express our concerns in English. Language can be a large barrier to help-seeking. Reach out to Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.
- **Feeling that mental illness is a 'normal' part of an 'age profile':** No matter your age, an increase of mental health concerns or illness is not considered 'normal'. Your feelings and experiences matter and its important to seek help rather than accepting it is just a part of life.

Who else can you turn to for help?

- **Talk to a trusted friend/adult.** If you don't feel ready to open up to someone you don't know try talking to a trusted friend. There are also places to meet new people and discuss your feelings. You could try support groups. S.H.O.U.T. (Self-Help Organisations Together) provides members with a range of services and facilities to develop and support self-help groups in the ACT region. Email admin@shout.org.au
- **Build your own mental health knowledge base:** The more we know, the more likely we are to seek help. A good place to start is beyondblue.org.au
- **Talk to your GP.** Your doctor is a good place to start. You can also contact Health Direct for free and they can assist you over the phone. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call 1800 022 222. Care staff can be great advocates and connect you to the support you need.