

How to Take Care of Your Mental Health with HIV



Living with HIV can affect your mental health in different ways. But keep in mind that there's support available to help you manage stress and get mental health treatment if you need it.

Find ways to cope with stress

It's totally normal for people with serious diseases like HIV to feel stressed, scared, or overwhelmed. You may be worried about your health — or about how other people may treat you. Whatever you're feeling, remember that **you're not alone**.

To help you manage stress, you can:

- Join a support group — ask your doctor about groups in your area
- Talk to family and friends about how you're feeling
- Do mindfulness meditation, breathing exercises, or other relaxation techniques
- Get regular physical activity

Know the signs of depression

One of the most common mental health problems that people with HIV may have is depression. Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad or anxious often or all the time
- Not wanting to do things you used to find fun
- Feeling easily frustrated, restless, worthless, or helpless
- Having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Eating more or less than usual — or not feeling hungry
- Having trouble concentrating, remembering things, or making decisions
- Thinking about suicide or hurting yourself



Get mental health treatment if you need it

People with HIV are more likely to have other mental health problems, too — like anxiety disorders. **Tell your doctor if you think you might have depression or another mental health problem.**

When you talk with your doctor, be honest about how you're feeling. Your doctor may refer you to a mental health provider — like a therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist — who can give you the care you need.

If you don't have a doctor or you need help finding mental health treatment:

- Go to findtreatment.samhsa.gov and enter your address, city, or ZIP code
- Call the National Helpline at **800-662-HELP** (800-662-4357)

HIV medicine and mental health

Some HIV medicines can cause symptoms of depression or anxiety. They can also cause sleep problems. Talk with your doctor about how your HIV medicine could affect your mental health — and what you can do about it.



To learn more about HIV, visit:
nmlm.gov/guides/HIV-AIDS-Online-Resources