

Asking for Help...How to Tips

Talking with a doctor is the most direct route to find out what is wrong and remedy the problem. But, for many, discussing a mental illness can be almost as scary as the problem itself.

Connecting with your physician.....

Challenge Stigma: sharing may be uncomfortable but you are discussing a legitimate medical concern to get yourself the help you need.

Do a little homework: learn about the common symptoms of mental illnesses and the treatment approaches for each. Organize and anticipate questions that might arise.

Top priority, not an afterthought: your time with the doctor is limited. Express your mental health concerns and symptoms up front, allow enough time for discussion, screening and planning.

State your concerns plainly: use clear statements like “I have these symptoms” to begin the conversation. The more direct and specific you can be, the easier it will be for your doctor to respond effectively.



Take ownership: a follow-up visit should be scheduled within one to two weeks. The doctor can confirm medication is taken correctly, assess for any improvement in symptoms or for any side effects. The best outcomes result when patients play an active role in their treatment.

Be a persistent advocate for yourself.

Be patient. Finding solutions can take time.

Resources and Supports

Visit your physician for support or for referral to a psychiatrist or mental health counsellor.

Crisis Assessment and Support Team

(CAST) provides 24/7 mental health crisis support for people aged 16 and older
1-866-487-CAST (2278)

Child and Youth Crisis Service

Haldimand-Norfolk REACH
24/7 service for children, youth and their families with a mental health crisis.
1-866-327-3224

For general information visit the Mental Health & Wellness Collection at the Norfolk County Public Library, Simcoe branch or visit www.ncpl.ca for books, videos and DVDs on mental illness/health, addiction and recovery.

Reviewed and recommended web sites:

www.anxietycanada.ca

www.camh.net

www.cmha.ca

www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca

www.nedic.ca

www.mooddisorderscanada.ca

www.problemgambling.ca

www.ptsdassociation.com

www.schizophrenia.on.ca

www.suicideprevention.ca



Pamphlet provided with support from:



Wellness & Recovery Centre 1-877-909-4357 x2

Asking for HELP

with mental illness symptoms



Asking for help is a sign of **STRENGTH**, not weakness ...

Reach Out . . . Get Help



Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk

**Achieve Mental Health
Wellness & Recovery Centre**

Dedicated to the enhancement of our community through the provision of addiction and mental health services that promote and support wellness.

Physical and Mental Health

When faced with a physical health challenge most of us would not hesitate to go to the doctor to have it checked out. We would describe what we were experiencing, find out what the problem is and what to do about it. When we recognize that something is amiss with our body we are prepared to ask for help and treatment. Unfortunately, the majority do not take the same approach or attitude when faced with a mental health challenge. While recognizing that something is wrong and may be getting worse, many still fail to ask for help.



Why do we treat mental health and physical health so differently?

Inaction is 'explained' as...

- it will go away on its own,
- it is not that serious,
- it is all in 'my head',
- I just need to work harder at dealing with it,
- it is just my personality /age / hormones,
- it is just stress



Or maybe, there is suspicion of a mental illness and fear of what family or friends may think or say prevents individuals from asking for help.



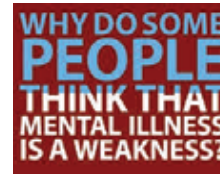
Early treatment is key to recovery. Timely intervention and treatment can prevent problems from getting worse.

Myths and Facts



In a Canadian mental health survey, only a third of people having feelings and symptoms of a mental illness went to a professional for help. Therefore the majority who had symptoms of a mental illness did **NOT** ask for help.

There are a number of mental health myths (and stigmas) that stop people from seeking the help they need:



Myth: I just need to snap out of it, I can deal with this on my own.

Fact: Mental illnesses are real illnesses, they are more than just the ups and downs of life and like other illnesses they need to be treated. Part of taking care of yourself means getting professional help when life is affected by your symptoms.

Myth: It is not serious enough to require help.

Fact: Untreated mental illnesses are among the most disabling of all health problems in terms of lost potential and productivity, according to the World Health Organization. Suicide is often linked to untreated mental illness, so mental illness must always be taken very seriously.

Myth: Why bother going for help, nothing works.

Fact: There are well-researched and effective therapies available for the treatment of mental illness. This includes counseling, medications, light therapy and other options. Of people with depression, 80% can be successfully treated.

Wondering If You Need Help?

You might be experiencing a mental illness and be in need of help if:

1. you are having ongoing changes in how you feel, think or act,
2. you are behaving in a manner that is unlike yourself, unexplained or out of character,
3. the behaviours are causing you distress or
4. people you care about are noticing changes

Red flags could include:



- Lack of enjoyment in activities that previously provided pleasure
- Feeling angry or sad for little or no reason
- Having strange thoughts or hearing voices that you cannot get rid of or control
- Significant change in eating or sleeping patterns
- Feel unexplained fear, worry or terror about things others seem to cope with
- Difficulty performing or absence from work or school
- Fearful or wary about everyone around you
- Drinking heavily or using drugs, alcohol or gambling to cope
- Avoiding other people
- Thinking about or wanting to end your life

Reach Out . . . Get Help