

How to Help a Loved One

A Digital Resource



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Quick Resource Guide

Find contact information for crisis text, chat, and hotlines

DISCLAIMER:

The following guidelines and resources are not a replacement for professional help to manage mental health conditions. If a loved one is in crisis, they should call a licensed mental health professional if they are working with one, or seek out crisis resources. If they are in danger, you should contact crisis resources.

Section I:

My loved one was just diagnosed. What do I do now?

Educate yourself on the condition, and encourage others within your loved one's support system to do the same.

When it comes to brain health conditions, there's a lot of information out there, and it can feel overwhelming. At the same time, understanding the mechanisms behind what your family member or friend is facing, as well as the options for how to move towards recovery can bring some peace of mind to everyone involved.

TIP  **Check your sources.**

- The [National Institute of Mental Health](#) is a good place to start to learn the basics of brain health challenges like symptoms and established treatments. You can also learn more about participating in [clinical trials](#).
- One Mind has hosted Brain Waves interviews with experts on a vast range of brain health challenges from schizophrenia and serious depression to trauma recovery and grief. You can find all past episodes and other educational video content in our [Brain Health Library](#).
- Research from peer-reviewed journals can also help you learn about recent progress made in understanding and treating the brain health condition of interest to you. [Google Scholar](#) provides access to many publications.

Section I:

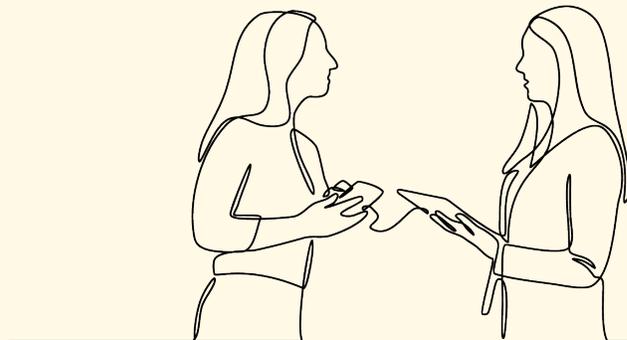
My loved one was just diagnosed. What do I do now?

Encourage seeking help so your loved one can work with a professional to develop a treatment and recovery plan.

Although having brain health conditions can feel like a lonely and isolating experience, countless individuals have faced these challenges, and there are more options for research-based treatment than ever before.

A mental health professional can help advise you on a treatment plan with strategies that will be most appropriate for your loved one's specific situation. For example, they can take into account other conditions that may need to be treated in order to improve overall health.

[Flip to Section 2 to find tips on finding the right support.](#)



Section I:

My loved one was just diagnosed. What do I do now?

Encourage lifestyle changes that are good for mental health.

While every individual's experience of brain health conditions can be different, there are some tried and true lifestyle shifts that can put your loved one in the best position to live a healthy and productive life. These include:

- A consistent routine
- Plenty of sleep
- Hydration
- Physical activity
- A healthy diet (low in sugar and filled with foods with anti-inflammatory effects like vegetables, salmon, and berries)
- Time outdoors



Section I:

*My loved one was just diagnosed.
What do I do now?*

Don't forget to take care of yourself.

Supporting another individual in managing their condition(s) is usually a marathon, not a sprint. Make time to show yourself love and compassion, even in small ways.

[Flip to Section 4 to find our tips for caregivers.](#)



Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

The earlier that someone in need is connected with treatment, the better their outcomes are likely to be. There are more options for mental health support out there than ever before, so let's run through some of the resources that may be available to you.

Mental Health Care Providers

There are many different types of mental health care providers, and licensing requirements for each role varies by state.

Masters Level

- Masters degree in counseling field
- License requirements vary by state
- Typically takes 2 years to complete

Common Licenses

- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
- Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC)
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCC)
 - Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)
 - Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)

Doctorate Level

PhD

- Studies focus more on research than clinical work
 - Takes 5-7 years to complete

PsyD

- Studies focus more on clinical work than research
 - Takes 4-6 years to complete, including one internship year

Here are the most common licenses you're likely to encounter when looking for a psychologist. None of these providers are able to prescribe medication.

Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Provider

Area(s) of provider expertise

- Many providers have a specialized focus like mood disorders, post-traumatic stress, or LGBT-related issues.

Whether medication, counseling, or both are needed

- A psychiatrist (M.D. or D.O.) can prescribe medication. Depending on the state, so can some psychiatric-mental health nurses and physician assistants. Psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, and licensed professional counselors cannot.
- Sometimes it can make sense to work with two different professionals to meet your loved one's needs.

Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Provider

Your loved one's health insurance coverage

- Check with your insurance company, Medicare, or Medicaid to find out which services are covered and what your benefit limits are.
- If you have insurance, start by calling your provider or accessing their website to find a list of providers who will be in-network for you.
 - Insurance companies will usually list whether a provider is accepting new patients.
- If you have the information of a recommended practitioner, you can also ask them if they accept your insurance, and if not, what the out-of-pocket costs would be. Some providers may give discounts for payments in cash.

Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Provider

The provider's gender, racial or sexual identity, and languages spoken

- Ask your loved one whether they would feel more comfortable with a provider of a specific gender or sexual orientation.
- Finding a culturally competent provider that may better understand aspects of your loved one's background and speak their first language is an important component of treatment.
- Strong 365 lists community-specific provider directories [here](#).

Watch our *Brain Waves* episode on [Racial Disparities in Mental Health Care](#).



Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Teletherapy

Availability and insurance coverage of remote therapy has become more widely available since COVID-19.

- Your loved one's insurance provider can provide information on their plan's coverage and pricing of teletherapy.
- You can also find a provider and schedule an appointment through a wide range of platforms through [GoodRX Telehealth Marketplace](#). Appointments start at \$65 and do not require insurance.

TIP  **Finding the right relationship may take more than one try.**

- Just because a therapist or psychiatrist fits the bill on paper doesn't mean that the relationship will be a good fit once you connect for a session. If your loved ones don't feel comfortable with the first provider or two, don't give up on the process.

TIP  **Ask as many questions as you want to up front.**

- You may want to know more about a provider's treatment approach, fees, typical hours, or first available appointment.

Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Local Support

- SAMHSA offers a [National Treatment Locator](#) on their website.
- The [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) has local chapters all over the country that can help connect you with resources in your area, including peer support groups for those with brain health conditions as well as caregivers.
 - Their helpline (1-800-950-6264) offers free advice 24/7. You can also text NAMI to 741741 or use their website to find your local NAMI.
- The Family Caregiver Alliance offers a [Family Care Navigator](#) to help caregivers find services near their loved one.

Options That Don't Require Insurance

- Local student health centers or community-based centers may provide free or low-cost services.
- University hospitals may offer programs where interns and residents provide mental health care at a reduced cost.
- The non-profit organization [Open Path Psychotherapy Collective](#) matches those who cannot afford therapy with affordable mental health services.

Section 2:

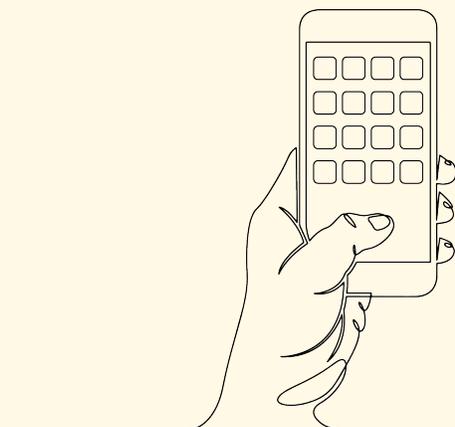
How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Digital Apps

There are a wide range of apps that can provide support for someone looking to manage or improve their mental health. Apps are not a suitable replacement for a professional mental health care provider, but they can help you learn more about mental health, support overall wellness, and supplement a treatment plan.

TIP ~~~~~> **Not all digital health apps are made equally.**

- One Mind PsyberGuide rates apps and digital health resources based on their credibility, transparency, and user experience.
- Check out the Resources & Services section of our website for a selection of apps that have been curated based on the types of challenges and mental health conditions that they seek to address, courtesy of One Mind PsyberGuide.



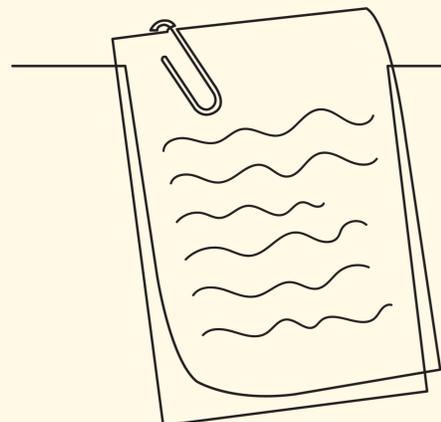
Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

- Many workplaces offer free EAPs to support employee wellness. A Human Resources representative at your loved one's organization will be able to provide them a full list of resources, which may include some options that support mental health.
- Your employer may also offer resources to support caregivers.

Is your organization interested in supporting employee mental health? One Mind At Work is a global coalition of organizations committed to developing and implementing a gold standard for workplace mental health. [Learn more.](#)



Section 2:

How can I help my loved one find the right support?

Support for Youth

- Work with your loved one's school to open a dialogue with teachers, administrators, and support staff and learn about available resources. If the young person is experiencing symptoms that are impacted by classroom situations, it may be prudent to work with both school personnel and mental health providers to outline an Individual Education Program (IEP).
- If a young person in your life is experiencing symptoms of psychosis, [Strong 365](#) can help connect them to specialized care across the U.S. Strong 365 also offers 24/7 peer support online for adolescents and young adults experiencing psychosis.
- One Mind's ASPIRe initiative supports youth with Serious Psychiatric Illness (SPI), aiming to provide gold-standard, individualized care that has been shown to dramatically improve outcomes. Learn more about ASPIRe and Coordinated Specialty Care [here](#).

Watch our Brain Waves episode on Youth Mental Health & Recovery

TIP  **Put together an action plan.**

Now that you know your options, this [helpful guide](#) from our friends at [Strong 365](#) can help you determine your next steps.

Section 3:

What if my loved one doesn't want treatment?

Treatment is far more likely to be successful if your loved one is a willing and active participant in it. If they are resistant to seeking help, we recommend Dr. Xavier Amador's evidence-based **LEAP Approach**:

Listen

- Practice active listening with your only goal being to understand your loved one's feelings, experiences, and goals.
- Validate and repeat back what they are expressing to confirm that you're hearing them out, even if you don't agree with them. They are the expert on their own experience.

Empathize

- Practice "radical compassion" by putting yourself in their shoes and relating to them as much as you can.
- Acknowledge that what they are experiencing may be frightening, that they may want to prove that they aren't sick. This acknowledgement can lead to having a deeper conversation with less conflict, which could in turn lead to a conversation about getting help.

Section 3:

What if my loved one doesn't want treatment?

Agree

- Find places where you and your loved one can agree, such as the problems and symptoms as they perceive them. You may also agree on goals that could be challenging but achievable.
- Review the advantages and disadvantages of treatment. Afterwards, reflect on the benefits. Resist the urge to give advice.
- If need be, agree to disagree on some topics.

Partner

- Move towards the goals that you both agree on. Frame a treatment plan as an opportunity to reach those goals.
- Outline how you can both work together to achieve what you have discussed.

TIP  **Especially if you are a parent, seek an additional person to serve as a trusted confidante for your child.**

- Having conversations with a trusted non-parental resource can help break down barriers around treatment.

Section 3:

What if my loved one doesn't want treatment?

What if they refuse to go to the hospital during a crisis?

Outcomes are usually best for a loved one's mental health when they voluntarily seek treatment. In crisis situations, there are a range of possible options that may be more appealing if the person in crisis will not go to a hospital.

24-Hour Crisis Hotlines

Crisis hotlines can help refer you to appropriate services in your area based on your loved one's conditions and needs.

[Flip to our Quick Resource Guide to find contact information for crisis text, chat, and hotlines.](#)

Mobile Crisis Units

Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Teams provide immediate emergency mental health evaluations and services. Where they are available, they can be an alternative to calling 911 or having to visit the emergency room. Some units may also inform police.

- Find out if your state has [mobile crisis unit services](#).

Section 3:

What if my loved one doesn't want treatment?

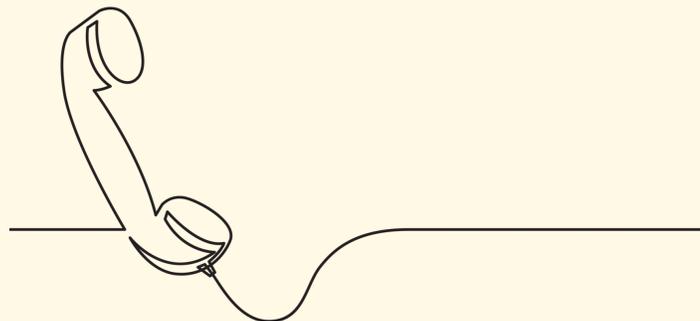
Walk-In Crisis Services

Some clinics may offer immediate psychiatric care as an alternative to hospitalization, although in some cases, hospitalization may still be necessary.

- Go to an inpatient mental health hospital first rather than an ER if possible, since emergency rooms are not usually well-equipped to deal with psychiatric emergencies.

911 / Police

- Remember that most police officers are not trained in mental health, and seeing them can be frightening for someone already in crisis. It's best to utilize one or more of the previous options rather than call 911 if you can.



Section 4:

Being a caregiver is challenging. Do you have any tips?

One Mind founders Shari and Garen Staglin know firsthand how complicated and demanding caregiving can be. Based on Garen's experience supporting Brandon through his recovery from psychosis and a diagnosis of schizophrenia, he put together these tips to help other caregivers.

1. Show unconditional love.

Sometimes the best thing we can do for someone is to continue to show up for them, and simply listen or be present, even when they are unable to show their love in return.

2. A trusting partnership between caregiver and patient is essential.

Treatment plans are most successful when the patient and caregiver are partners in following through on the agreed-upon goals and strategies.

3. Be patient.

There is no overnight cure, and what works for one person may not work for another.

4. Don't accept guilt, or blame others. Nobody did anything wrong!

Section 4:

Being a caregiver is challenging. Do you have any tips?

5. Take care of yourself.

- Seek support from other caregivers.
- Accept offers of help from your friends and family.
- Seek professional help when you need it.

6. A happy and productive life is possible.

If your loved one isn't happy with their provider or treatment, you can help them advocate for new and better options.

7. Provide structure.

- Brain health conditions can introduce instability and unpredictability into daily life. Consistency and routine can create external stability that may improve quality of life and your loved one's ability to manage health-related challenges.
- Incorporating the recommendations from a treatment plan into a daily routine is also a great strategy to make them second nature.

8. Encourage social involvement for your loved one.

9. Have hope! Research is promising and cures are possible.

Section 5:

I'm not responsible for caring for my friend. How can I still help them?

Educate yourself so you can better understand what your friend may be going through. Consider which questions or topics might trigger negative emotions for them.

Just listen.

- Give them the space to share without judging them or trying to fix them.

Offer to be a partner in their lifestyle changes.

Go on a walk, for example, or cook a healthy meal together.

- You can't and shouldn't try to control your friend, but you can make it easier for them to stick with their recovery plan and stay connected to their social circle and community.

Check in on them every now and then.

- It can be reassuring just to let them know that you're thinking of them.
- You can also ask meaningful questions that gauge their wellbeing and offer a chance to vent if they need.

Section 5:

I'm not responsible for caring for my friend. How can I still help them?

Let them know that if they are experiencing thoughts around suicide or self-harm, they can be honest with you about it.

- If you see concerning changes in behavior (e.g. social withdrawal, substance use, extreme mood changes) or they disclose that they are having suicidal thoughts, encourage them to call their doctor or therapist, and seek out crisis resources.
- You can offer to stand by while they contact support resources, and also remind them that these feelings are temporary and can change with support.
- If your loved one is in immediate danger, call a 24/7 crisis support hotline.

[Continue on to our Quick Resource Guide below to find contact information for crisis text, chat, and hotlines.](#)

Try to remain calm and offer compassion if they react with anger when you try to help.

- Coping with brain health conditions is anything but easy, and these challenges can sometimes prevent individuals from accepting that they need help.

Quick Resource Guide

Digital health resources

DIGITAL HEALTH RESOURCES

[One Mind PsyberGuide](#) - Evidence-based ratings of apps and digital health tools to support mental health

FREE 24/7 CRISIS SUPPORT RESOURCES

Crisis Text Line

- Text “HELLO” to 741-741

National Suicide Prevention Chat

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- En español: 1-888-628-9454

YOUTH SUPPORT

Teen Line

- Peer Support Hotline open from 6 PM - 10 PM PST
- 800-TLC-TEEN

Strong 365 Peer Support Chat

- For youth experiencing psychosis
- Free, 24/7
- Code: STRONG

Quick Resource Guide

Digital health resources

LGBTQ+ SUPPORT

The Trevor Project

- Chat, Text, and Talk support available

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Find emergency numbers, suicide hotlines, and online chats organized by country through Suicide Stop.

Find One Mind online through our website or social media.



Lived Experience Profile

Gayle Ayres

Gayle Ayres is a caregiver for her daughter Anna, who was diagnosed with a severe brain illness while in high school. At the beginning of Anna's freshman year, Anna revealed to Gayle that she thought that there was something wrong with her brain. In response, Gayle and her husband, Wes, promptly arranged for Anna to begin working with a cognitive behavioral therapist as well as a child psychiatrist. A short year later, Anna was hospitalized and diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder. The Ayres enrolled Anna into the Adolescent Brain Behavior Research Clinic (ABBRC) program at the Staglin Family Music Festival Center for the Assessment and Prevention of Prodromal States (CAPPS), a clinical research center at the Semel Institute of Neuroscience and Behavior at UCLA.

Anna is currently studying art at her local community college where she recently participated in the 2019 Spring Exhibit submitting three of her own paintings. To support her physical and mental health, Anna also works with a physical trainer at a local fitness center and she continues to be very social and appreciates her friendships. Gayle remains as the main caregiver for Anna, while Anna's father and sister are also very involved. For Anna's recovery, the Ayres knows how important 'family' is and that it is an integral part of Anna's healing.

[Read more about Gayle and Anna's story.](#)



Music, art and poetry have been especially important to Anna as she recovers. She also loves to sew clothing for herself and others.



Lived Experience Profile

Chantel Garrett

The struggles that those with brain health challenges face is personal for Chantel Garrett. As a young adult, she watched as her brother, a newly minted Marine, began acting strangely and pulling away from his family and friends, leading to the first of many hospital stays. He was ultimately diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Chantel learned firsthand how challenging it can be to secure the kind of treatment that millions of teens and young adults with mental health conditions need and deserve. Even when her brother was discharged from an inpatient unit, his heavy doses of medication left him feeling numb, and he was given no plan for follow-up care or hope that he could work towards

graduating from college, holding a job, or regaining friendships. It took years for Chantel's family to find access compassionate, holistic care for their loved one, and for Chantel to learn how to be the best ally possible.

Chantel was inspired to found Strong 365, a program offering a fast track of support for families seeking a lifeline for teens and young adults, to ensure more young people get the right kind of care and support when it matters most.

[Read more](#) about Chantel's story and Strong 365.



My dream in founding Strong 365 was to make it easier for families like mine, whose experience learning to support a loved one through a mental health challenge felt like wandering through a maze of wrong turns and dead ends. But it doesn't have to be like that.



