



Talking to
your GP about
mental health



Find the
words

For most of us, our local GP practice is the first place we'll go when we're unwell. It's there to help us with our mental health as well as our physical health. The two are often closely connected – if you're physically unwell it can affect your mental health, and vice versa.

In fact, our research shows that 40 per cent of GP appointments involve mental health.



You might want to speak to your GP or practice nurse if you're:

- > worrying more than usual
- > finding it hard to enjoy life
- > not sleeping or find that your mental state is affecting your physical health in any way
- > having thoughts and feelings that are difficult to cope with, and that are having an impact on your day-to-day life.

It's not always easy having that first conversation about your deepest feelings with your GP, someone you may hardly know.

However, **it's always OK to ask for help**, even if you're not sure you are experiencing a specific mental health problem.

What should I say to my GP?

It can be hard to talk about your mental health – especially when you're not feeling well.

- > Be honest and open.
 - > Focus on how you feel, not on whether or not you meet a diagnosis.
 - > Try to explain how you've been feeling over the past few months or weeks, and anything that has changed.
- > Use words that feel natural to you – you don't have to say specific things to get help.
 - > Try not to worry that your problem is too small or unimportant – everyone deserves help and your GP or practice nurse is there to support you.

Talking to your GP or practice nurse about your mental health at an early stage can help you to stay well. They can:



- > offer you support and treatments
- > make a diagnosis
- > refer you to a specialist service.

Writing things down

Writing down responses to these questions and discussing them with your GP might help you express how you're feeling.

How have you been feeling lately?

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Has anything happened or changed in your life recently?

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Are you eating normally?

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How are you sleeping?

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If there's anything else you want to mention – or you just need a bit more room – write it down on another piece of paper.



How can I prepare?

Appointments with a GP or practice nurse are often very short, so **being prepared** can help you get the most out of it.

- > **Write down** what you want to say in advance, and take your notes in with you.
- > Give yourself **enough time** to get to your appointment, so that you don't feel rushed.
- > Think about **taking someone with you** to support you, like a close friend or family member.
- > **Highlight or print out** any information you've found that helps you explain how you're feeling.
- > If you have a few things to talk about, you can **ask for a longer appointment** (you'll need to do this when you're booking it in).

For more information about getting support from your GP practice, visit mind.org.uk/findthewords

Contact us

Mind Infoline: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm)

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