

# WHEN SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS HURTING



## How to provide support for those struggling with their mental health

When a close friend or family member is facing a mental health challenge, it's not always easy to know the right things to say or do. Here are some positive steps you can take to support someone who's struggling.



### 1. Be there.

You don't have to have all the answers. But you can sit, listen, and simply be present when they need to talk. Hold their hand. Hug them. Ask gentle questions and respond with encouraging statements.

### 2. Offer to help them find support.

Finding the right therapist can be difficult — which means it's doubly hard for someone who is struggling. Offer to do the legwork. If they say yes, make the calls, book the appointments, and drive them to their visits.

### 3. Get them out of their head.

Mental health challenges can make us ruminate on our bad feelings and rob us of the motivation to plan activities we enjoy. Support your loved one by getting them out of the house — and their own head — with low-stress activities like going for a bike ride, seeing a movie, or taking a walk in nature.

### 4. Remember: They are not their diagnosis.

People who struggle with their mental health will often lash out at those they care about most. Remind yourself this is their condition talking, not them. However, maintain your boundaries. Mental health challenges are an explanation — not an excuse — for mean or cruel behavior.

### 5. Prioritize taking care of yourself.

Many long-term caregivers end up experiencing burnout or even developing depression themselves. Take steps to keep yourself healthy: Take breaks when you need them, ask for help from supportive friends and family, and find your own therapist to confide in regularly.

#### If someone you care about confides in you...

##### SAY THIS:

"I am here for you."  
"How can I help?"  
"What is the best way I can support you?"  
"I love you."  
"Your feelings are valid."  
"That sounds hard. I'm sorry you're going through this."  
"I may not understand how you're feeling, but you're not alone."

##### NOT THIS:

"Think positive!"  
"Snap out of it."  
"I know exactly how you feel."  
"It could be worse."  
"It's just in your head."  
"Why can't you get it together?"  
"It's your fault."

## Your State of Iowa benefits can help.

If your loved one is struggling with a mental health concern and they are covered under your State of Iowa health plan from Wellmark® Blue Cross® and Blue Shield®, rest assured they have broad access to the care they need. They can visit [Wellmark.com/Finder](https://www.wellmark.com/Finder) to search for in-network mental health providers or use [Doctor On Demand®](#) to schedule a virtual visit.