
Counselling, online and phone support for mental illness

Summary

- If you are in an emergency call triple zero (000) for emergency services.
 - You can access many free mental health helplines, support websites, online counselling, web forums, interactive toolkits, one-on-one counselling and group therapy sessions.
 - Find mental health support and resources for children and teenagers.
 - Get help and advice through one of Victoria's many parenting helplines and websites.
 - Access veterans' and defence personnel support through telephone and online services.
 - Talk to a mental health counsellor to help you develop new habits and coping strategies.
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Sometimes it can be hard to know who to talk to if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. If you do not have family and friends living nearby or a strong local support network it can be hard to get through difficult times on your own. Whether you are in a crisis or you just feel down and need to talk to someone, it is important to know that help is available at all hours of the day and night.

There are many free mental health hotlines and mental health online support services across Victoria, which provide crisis support, information, resources, counselling and therapy to people of all ages.

Services include:

- telephone helplines
- mental health support websites
- online counselling and web forums
- interactive and downloadable toolkits
- one-on-one counselling
- group therapy sessions.

Mental health crisis helplines

If you are in an emergency, in danger or you or someone close to you has seriously harmed themselves, call triple zero (000) for emergency services.

If you are not in an emergency situation, but you need immediate help, call one of the following helplines that offer crisis support and counselling over the phone:

- **Lifeline** – call 13 11 14 for this free, 24-hour Australia-wide crisis support and suicide prevention service.
- **Suicide Call Back Service** – call 1300 659 467 for this free service for people having suicidal thoughts, family or friends affected by suicide and healthcare professionals treating suicidal people.
- **SuicideLine** – call 1300 651 251 for free and anonymous support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week across Victoria.

Mental health helplines and online support

Talking to someone who will understand your situation is usually the best place to start. Whether you are dealing with depression or anxiety, grief or relationship breakdown, there are many specialised mental health helplines and online resources to help you get through difficult times.

Get help today by talking to one of the following support services:

- **SANE Australia Helpline** – call 1800 18 7263 for information about mental illness, treatments and support for you and your carer.

- **Mensline Australia** – call 1300 78 99 78 for telephone support, information and referrals for men dealing with relationship issues, or visit their website.
- **Beyondblue** - call 1300 22 4636 for telephone support, information and resources for people dealing with depression or anxiety, or visit their website.
- **Carers Australia** – call 1800 242 636 to find out about short-term counselling and support services for carers and their families in Victoria.
- **MindSpot Clinic** – call 1800 61 44 34 for a free assessment and treatment service for Australian adults with anxiety or depression.
- **Support after Suicide** – visit their website for resources, information, counselling and group support for people dealing with suicide.
- **Black Dog Institute** – visit their website for information on symptoms, treatment and prevention of bipolar disorder and depression.
- **Mindhealthconnect** – access mental health care services, resources and online programs.
- **Poisons Information** – call 131 126 for advice about poisonings, bites and medicine overdoses.
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** – Call 1800 200 526 to talk to experienced family violence counsellors, 24 hours a day.
- **Relationships Australia** – call 1300 364 277 or visit the website for relationship support for individuals and families.
- **Direct Line** - call 1800 888 236 for Confidential alcohol and drug counselling and referral.
- **At ease** - an online suite of self help mental health tools by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Help for children and teenagers

It is not unusual for children or teenagers to experience bouts of depression and anxiety, while others may have problems with bullying, peer pressure or drugs and alcohol. If you need to speak to someone who can help you with advice and information, there are services and counsellors available. All your conversations will be private and confidential so you can be open and honest with them.

Headspace, which is run by the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, offers support, information and advice to young people between the ages of 12 to 25. Visit the [Headspace](#) website to find a centre near you.

If you are living with, or caring for a family member with a mental illness, call [Young Carers](#) on 1800 242 636 or visit the website for information and support.

For crisis support, telephone and web counselling, and mental health information contact one of the following support services:

- **Lifeline** – call 13 11 14 for this free, 24-hour Australia-wide crisis support and suicide prevention service.
- **Suicide Call Back Service** – call 1300 659 467 for this free service for people having suicidal thoughts, family or friends affected by suicide, and healthcare professionals treating suicidal people.
- **SuicideLine** – call 1300 651 251 for free and anonymous support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week across Victoria.
- **Kids Help Line** – call 1800 55 1800 for free counselling and advice for young people between the ages of five and 25.
- **Youth Beyond Blue** – call 1300 22 4636 for free telephone counselling or visit their website for information, resources and support for young people with depression or anxiety.
- **ReachOut** – visit their website for information, tools and support for young people with mental health issues.

Help for parents

As your children get older and move from one stage of life to the next, it can sometimes be hard to know what a mental health problem is and what is just a normal stage of development. If you are worried that your child may be struggling with a mental illness, it is important that you talk to a healthcare professional about your concerns. Your local doctor can talk to you about your situation and point you in the direction of further support if you need it.

Contact one of the many mental health helplines, websites and specialist clinics to get information and advice. Health support services include:

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- **Parentline** – call 13 22 89 for this telephone counselling service for Victorian parents and carers of children up to 18 years of age. The service is available from 8 am to 12 am, 7 days a week.
- **Maternal and Child Health Advisory Line** – call 13 22 29 for this free 24-hour telephone service for Victorian families with children from birth to school age.
- **Raising Children Network** – is an online parenting resource with advice about rearing children of all ages.
- Specialist services – speak to experts in child psychology and get advice on mental health issues affecting your child:
 - **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Department of Human Services**
 - **Royal Children's Hospital Community Information team (formerly Safety Centre)**
 - **Association for Children with a Disability** call (03) 9818 2000 (or 1800 654 013 for rural callers)
 - **Australian Psychological Society, APS Psychologist Referral Service**

Mental health help for veterans and defence force personnel and their families

Due to the nature of defence work and the extra pressure that it might put on families and friends, there are specific issues that are more prevalent amongst veterans and defence force personnel as well as their families. Veterans, defence force personnel and their families can access mental health support through the following telephone and online services:

- **Australian Defence Force (ADF) All Hours Support Line** – call 1800 628 036 for a 24-hour support line for all ADF members and their families.
- **Veterans and Veterans' Families Counselling Service (VVCS)** – call 1800 011 046 for this Australia-wide counselling and support service available 24 hours a day to veterans and their families.
- **The Defence Family Helpline** – call 1800 624 608 to find information and support in your local community, 24 hours a day.
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** – Call 1800 200 526 to talk to experienced family violence counsellors, 24 hours a day.

Help for people supporting family members with a mental illness

Looking after a family member with a mental health issue can be a stressful, tiring and isolating experience so it is important that you ask for help. By looking after yourself and getting support you will be more able to cope with stress.

Call the mental health helpline below or make use of the many useful resources available online:

- **Young Carers** – call 1800 242 636 for useful tips on taking care of yourself and the person you are responsible for.
- **itsallright** – information and advice for young people with friends or parents affected by mental illness.
- **Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI)** – advice, support and information for children of parents with a mental illness.

Mental health counselling and therapy

Seeing a mental health counsellor, psychologist or psychotherapist can be a positive way of dealing with times of stress or sadness. A counsellor can help you to clarify your issues and help you to develop new habits and coping strategies.

Anyone who is struggling with a mental health issue or life concern can seek counselling. Common personal issues include depression, relationship breakdown, grief and anxiety.

If you think you would benefit from talking to a professional mental health advisor, you can:

- ask your doctor for a recommendation or referral to a psychiatrist or psychologist
- contact your local community health centre
- look for a service in the National Register of Psychotherapists and Counsellors provided by the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia.

You can claim counselling fees through Medicare if you were referred to the counsellor by your doctor. You may be

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eligible for a partial rebate on your private health insurance, depending on your policy. Contact your health insurance company for more information.

Find a psychologist, psychotherapist or counsellor in your area using the **Good Therapy directory**.

Where to get help

- Your GP (doctor)
- Lifeline, call 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline, call 1800 55 1800
- Mental Health Foundation of Australia (Victoria), call (03) 9826 1422
- Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) – Register of psychotherapists and counsellors, call (03) 9486 3077

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