
Getting help for a mental illness

Summary

- If you are in danger, or you have seriously harmed yourself, call triple zero (000) for emergency services.
 - You can access mental health support services throughout Victoria, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you need help right now, call a helpline such as beyondblue or Lifeline, or visit a support website for free advice and counselling.
 - If you have self-harmed and need non-urgent medical attention, get treatment from your doctor or go to your local hospital's emergency department.
 - Call the Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800 for free counselling for children, teenagers and young people up to the age of 25.
 - Get help for mental illness in regional and rural Victoria through your local doctor, telephone helplines, support websites, psychologists and local mental health nurses.
-

Mental health support services are available throughout Victoria, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These services are aimed at providing you with treatment, information, tools and advice on how to deal with a range of mental health issues.

Emergency assistance

If you are in danger or you have seriously harmed yourself, call **triple zero (000)** for emergency services. If you are on a mobile phone, **112** is another emergency number that will connect you directly to emergency services.

Mental health helplines and online support

Talking things through with someone who understands your situation can help. There are a range of mental health helplines and online support that can help you with issues like:

- **schizophrenia**
- **obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)**
- **anxiety**
- **depression**
- **suicidal thoughts**
- **eating disorders**
- **psychosis**
- **personality disorders**
- **bullying**
- and more.

If you need immediate help, there are mental health helplines and websites that offer professional counselling crisis support and counselling – 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Helplines are a great resource if you are struggling with mental health issues. Sometimes, just by calling and talking things through, your situation can become easier to manage.

Find someone to talk to through one of the following helplines:

- **Lifeline** – call **13 11 14** for this 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 or for family or friends affected by suicide.
 - **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 for young people between the ages of five and 25.
- **Mensline Australia** – call **1300 78 99 78** for this free telephone support service for men with family and relationship issues.
- **beyondblue** – call **1300 22 4636** for support for issues relating to anxiety and depression help.
- **Poisons Information** – call **131 126** if you have overdosed, been poisoned or made a mistake with your medications.

Suicide

If you are having suicidal thoughts, it is important that you talk to someone straightaway. If you or someone you know has attempted suicide, call triple zero (000) for emergency services.

You can call Lifeline on **13 11 14** for free and anonymous support, and advice on where to find further help.

Self-harm

Self-harm is when a person deliberately injures themselves in an attempt to cope with strong feelings such as anger, despair or self-hatred. Someone who self-harms may inflict physical injuries in a variety of ways such as cutting, burning or biting themselves.

If you or someone you know has self-harmed and needs non-urgent medical attention, seek treatment from your doctor or go to your local hospital's emergency department.

Speak to your local doctor as a first step towards getting help for your self-harming behaviour and working out your treatment options. If you feel uncomfortable talking to your doctor, you can call one of the **mental health support telephone helplines**.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger of committing self-harm call **triple zero** (000) for emergency services. If you are on a mobile phone, 112 is another emergency number that will connect you directly to emergency services.

Help for children and teenagers

If you are a child or teenager going through a difficult time, it is a good idea to talk to your family and friends about what you are going through. If you feel embarrassed or shy, you may prefer to speak to someone you do not know. In this case, try talking to your school counsellor or local doctor. Your conversations with them are private and they will be able to refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist if needed.

Headspace offers free mental health support, information and advice to young people between the ages of 12 and 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, contact **Young Carers** on **1800 242 636** or visit their website for information and support.

For crisis support, telephone helplines and online counselling, and mental health information contact one of the support services listed below:

- **Kids Help Line** – call **1800 55 1800** for free counselling and advice for young people between the ages of five and 25.
- **Youthbeyondblue** – call **1300 22 4636** for free telephone counselling or visit their website for information, resources and support for young people with depression or anxiety.
- **Headspace** - call **1800 650 890** helps young people aged 12–25 years by providing early intervention mental health services.
- **ReachOut.com** – visit their website for information, tools and support for young people with mental health issues.

- **Somazone** – free health advice for young people, including mental health. Find out more information on the Children, young people and mental health page.

Getting mental health help in rural and regional Victoria

If you live in rural Victoria, you might face different challenges from people in metropolitan areas, including:

- a lack of health and support services
- isolation
- greater levels of youth unemployment.

As a general rule, the more remote your location, the more difficult it is for public and private health practitioners to service your area. This lack of local mental health services means that you may need to be proactive when dealing with your mental health and possibly travel to access specialist help for mental illness. However, there are still plenty of ways to receive support, including:

- telephone helplines
- mental health support websites
- your local doctor
- psychologists
- psychiatrists
- mental health nurses.

Your local doctor is often the best place to ask for help. They will be able to advise you on where to find more community support, and they can also refer you to a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist to help you with mental illness.

If you would prefer to speak to someone you do not know, the mental health helplines and support websites on this page can be a great option. Trained counsellors offer professional advice and support both over the phone and online.

Read more about the services available to rural Victorians on the [**Rural and regional mental health services**](#) page.

Mental health and aged care

There are a lot of challenges to face in old age and many people experience mental health issues as they get older. Dealing with grief and loss or living with a serious mental illness such as dementia can be very difficult. It is important to know where to find support and advice.

[**Dementia Australia**](#) provides information on dementia and alzheimers disease..

Migrants and mental health services

Victoria is Australia's most multicultural state, with almost 25 per cent of all residents born overseas. Victorians come from 230 countries, speak more than 200 languages and follow 120 different faiths. The Victorian mental health system provides significant resources and support services to cater for people from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

When using a public health service in Victoria, including mental health services, you have a right to be communicated with in a way that you can understand and is culturally appropriate.

Refugee mental health assistance

Many refugees arriving in Victoria have experienced or witnessed traumatic events. These events can lead to many mental health issues including sleep disorders, recurring memories, family breakdown, anger, fear, guilt and depression.

Foundation House is a not-for-profit organisation that provides mental health services to refugees who have experienced torture or other traumatic events. Call [**Foundation House**](#) on [**03 9388 0022**](#) to talk to someone who can help.

Translation services

Ask for an interpreter if you feel you need one. A professional interpreter, which the health service will provide at no cost to you, is usually more effective than a family member or friend, especially when sensitive issues are being discussed.

Interpreters are available in Victorian health services for more than 200 languages. See the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) page.

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

Better Health Channel - (need new cp)

Content on this website is provided for information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not in any way endorse or support such therapy, service, product or treatment and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional. The information and materials contained on this website are not intended to constitute a comprehensive guide concerning all aspects of the therapy, product or treatment described on the website. All users are urged to always seek advice from a registered health care professional for diagnosis and answers to their medical questions and to ascertain whether the particular therapy, service, product or treatment described on the website is suitable in their circumstances. The State of Victoria and the Department of Health & Human Services shall not bear any liability for reliance by any user on the materials contained on this website.

For the latest updates and more information, visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Copyright © 1999/2019 State of Victoria. Reproduced from the Better Health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) at no cost with permission of the Victorian Minister for Health. Unauthorised reproduction and other uses comprised in the copyright are prohibited without permission.