

Waiting well

We want to provide you or the person you care for with help and support as soon as we can. Unfortunately, it can sometimes take a while for an appointment with a mental health professional or for a transfer to another service. Even though this can be a frustrating time, there are things you can do to help while waiting for mental health services. Try any of these and find what helps. Don't worry if it doesn't work for you, try something else.

Try our IAPT service (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies). This is free and you can refer yourself, as long as you're over 16 and registered with a Derbyshire/Derby GP. Telephone: 0300 123 0542 or contact **Talking Mental Health Derbyshire** on www.derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk/services/talking-mental-health-derbyshire-home/

1. Keep in touch with your health services

- Keep **your GP** in the loop, they are still responsible for your care. They may be aware of other available services. Contact them if you need help, or are feeling bad.
- Let your mental health service provider (or your GP) know if you or the person you care for is **getting worse**.
- If you've been prescribed **medication**, it may take up to 4 weeks to work – ask about this. Don't come off it without talking about it first with the person who prescribed it.

2. Talk to someone

Mental health problems can affect the way you think, feel and behave. If you have problems with your mental health, you might feel sad, worried, confused, angry, frightened, hopeless, isolated. Having a mate in your corner can make all the difference. It could be the difference between missing out on the things you care about; to getting the support you need to get better. It's hard sometimes to explain how you feel, so

- **start small**: text, phone, leave a note
- try **doing something together**: go for a walk or picnic, go shopping, have a coffee
- **talk side to side** rather than face to face: it might be easier
- be **open and honest** as long as you feel safe

3. Keep a journal or diary

No-one can remember well things that happen every day, and recording things like feelings, thoughts, moods, worries, events, and behaviours can help you to understand them. This is something that you can take to your appointment to show your mental health professional. Think about what you want to ask at your appointment, and make a note of the things that are most important to you.

4. Plan to keep well

It is possible for someone to regain a meaningful life, despite mental illness. This includes:

- Finding and maintaining **hope**
- Re-establishment of a **positive identity**
- Building a **meaningful life**
- Taking responsibility and **control**

You can work on a keeping well plan of your own to identify things that trigger problems, and things you can do to manage these. Try **My Recovery Plan** on <http://www.corecarestandards.co.uk/recovery-centre/planning-to-keep-well/> This may help you to: discover your own simple, safe **Wellness Tools**: Develop a **list of things** to do every day to stay as well as possible : Identify upsetting events, **early warning signs** and signs that things have gotten much worse and, using Wellness Tools, develop action plans for responding at these times

5. Live well

Looking after your mind and body can help a lot. Think about:

- **Sleep:** Get enough sleep if you can. Practice good sleep hygiene by making your bedroom a calm haven that helps you to sleep well. Don't drink caffeine or exercise just before going to bed. Keep electronic devices like TV's, games, phones etc out of the bedroom. If you have problems sleeping, you can try the self help booklet on: <https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/leaflets/Sleeping%20Problems%20A4%202016%20FINAL.pdf>
- **Eating well:** don't skip breakfast, try the eat well plate on: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx
- **Relaxation:** try yoga, relaxation tapes, mindfulness etc. Have a look on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItUvMvDWkZM&list=PLjqlD5DO3gsIEJUEJAuhmTuN9k5paim7Y&index=4
- **Exercise:** Keep active, as this can help your mood. Go for a walk, go swimming, cycling, dancing or something else that makes you feel good.
- **Vitamins:** Taking a general vitamin supplement might help to improve your wellbeing. Beware of taking anything like St John's Wort, which can have poor reactions with prescribed medications.
- **Connect:** with the people around you.
- **Keep Learning:** Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course.
- **Take Notice:** Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual.
- **Give:** Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time.
- **Avoid non-prescribed drugs and alcohol:** these don't help, and can cause other problems
- **Read a mood-boosting book** 'How to be a Woman' by Caitlin Moran, 'Making History' by Stephen Fry, 'The Eyre Affair' by Jasper Fforde, 'Losing it' by Helen Lederer, 'The Buddha of Suburbia' by Hanif Kureishi, 'The Extra Ordinary life of Frank Derrick Age 81' by J B Morrison, 'Mort' by Terry Pratchett, 'Rules for dating a Romantic Hero' Quick Reads by Harriet Evans, 'Stressed Unstressed Classic Poems to ease the mind' Anthology

Small changes can make a difference to how you feel. You can find out more on the Recovery and Wellbeing site on: www.corecarestandards.co.uk/recovery-centre/5-ways-to-wellbeing/

6. Find other support

There may be services that can help, and give you some support. Check out all sorts of support services. Many organizations have information about mental health in general and about groups.

- Try our **Recovery and Wellbeing Centre** to find out ways of improving your wellbeing on: www.corecarestandards.co.uk/recovery-centre/
- Try looking on the **Infolink** resource directory on www.derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk/about-us/publications/infolink/
- Think about any contacts you have with **Faith support** services. Talk to your local faith leader to see if there is any help they can offer.
- **Peer support services** are often quite close, and have people who are in the same position as you who will understand, such as the mental health carers forums
- **Community activities** are a great way to keep involved and active. Try volunteering in a charity shop, or join in a community activity such as a choir or walking group.
- **Self help booklets** are free to print on: <https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/> and can be used to help with issues you are troubled by, such as sleep, alcohol, anger, obsessions, stress, and depression and low mood a guide for partners

7. Get informed

Understanding all that you can about mental health issues and available services can help you to better understand things. It can help you to know what questions you want to ask. There are many excellent websites as well as informative books and videos. Be cautious though and look only at reputable sites and avoid chat lines. Try:

- **NHS Choices** for health advice on: www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

- **Medication:** Find out about medication on our **Choice and Medication** website on: www.choiceandmedication.org/derbyshcft/
- **Moodzone:** an anonymous online peer support community www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/
- **Big White Wall:** for on-line peer support on: www.bigwhitewall.com/v2/Home.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f
- **NICE** guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence give you the standards that services should be trying to reach. See www.nice.org.uk/ for guidance.
- **Biographies** of people who have been through problems, such as 'Coming back to me' by Marcus Trescothick, 'Absolutely Foxed' by Graeme Fowler, 'Reasons to stay alive' by Matt Haig
- **Reading well books on prescription** help you self-manage conditions such as depression and anxiety. Your local library can find these for you. See: <http://reading-well.org.uk/>

8. Ways to cope with stress

Stress is what we feel when we are under pressure. It's not an illness, it's our body's reaction to feeling under threat; the 'fight or flight' response. A certain amount of pressure can be quite helpful and motivating, however sustained stress can be really bad for our health. Alcohol doesn't help with this. Identify the sources of your stress, and try the free self-help booklet on:

<https://web.nrw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/leaflets/Stress%20A4%202016%20FINAL.pdf>, 'The relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook' by Martha Davies, or 'Manage your Stress' by T.Looker and O.Gregson. You can think about: Relaxation; Controlled breathing; Exercise; Hobbies; Self-care.

9. Carers need to look after themselves too

Carers need to look after themselves. If you get ill, you can't support your friend or loved one. Caring can be a beautiful experience, and it can also be stressful and a burden. You have a right to help in your own right. You can also self-refer to **Talking Mental Health Derbyshire** (see contact at the top of the leaflet) to help you. It's always hard to find time for yourself when you are busy looking after someone else and even harder when they are supporting someone who's ill, however to be able to be there for them you do need to take care of yourself.

- **Avoid isolating yourself.** You may tend to withdraw from others, but to stay well we need to stay connected. Ring a family member or good friend who will be understanding and empathetic.
- **Ask family and friends for help and support.** It's much easier to cope if you have support from others. Friends and family might be able to give you a break by helping with care, errands or household tasks. Or they could just be there for you; listening when you need to talk. Often people want to be supportive but they just don't know how.
- **Get professional help.** Speak with your GP, or see a mental health professional if you are having your own troubles with mood, anxiety, depression, or having difficulty coping. You can try ringing Talking Mental Health Derbyshire on: 0300 123 0542
- **Connect with self-help and peer support groups.** Support groups can help you learn about other community resources, as well as offering practical advice and support that professionals cannot provide. Ask for a copy of the Who Cares? Newsletter for carers on 01246-515974.
- **Talk about information sharing and confidentiality.** You can sign an Advance Statement that gives permission for things to be shared by health professionals. Ask for our booklet 'Sharing Information with family and carers' which has an agreement in it, on 01246-515974.
- **Know how to ask for help.** If you are worried about the health of the person you care for, you can ring and ask for help. Use our **SBARD card** 'How to get help: families and carers' to record the Situation, Background, Assessment, Review, and Decision that is reached, and who you've been talking to

10. Know what to do in an emergency

If things get difficult enough that you need some extra help in an emergency, keep a list of numbers you can ring. You could try:

- Your **GP**: If there is an emergency, GP's can refer for a crisis assessment
- The service you've been **referred to**
- **999** emergency and ask for police or ambulance
- **A&E Mental Health Liaison** can help if you go to local Accident and Emergency services.
- **NHS 111** if it's not urgent enough to ring 999
- **101** for a non-emergency police response
- The **Samaritans** on 116 123 (free, open 24 hours)
- **Campaign against living miserably (CALM)** for men on 0800 58 58 58 (5pm - midnight)
- **Papyrus** for people under 35 on 0800 068 41 41 (10am – 10pm)
- **Social care** - support to make people feel safe until the next working day. Telephone:
 - Derby City Careline - During office hours ring 01332 786968. For out of hours support, please call 01332 786968. The service operates from 5pm to 9am Monday to Friday and 24 hours a day on weekends and bank holidays.
 - Call Derbyshire - Call 01629 533190. The call centre is open between 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 9.30am to 4pm Saturdays to provide you with a speedy and direct response.
- If you're worried about a child or adult **experiencing or at risk of abuse**, you can ring the Police on 999 or 111, or contact:
 - Derbyshire County Council on 01629 533190. If it's out-of-hours and you need to speak to someone urgently call 01629 532600
 - Derby City Council on 01332 642855. If it's out of hours and you need to speak to someone urgently call 01332 786968

If you or the person you care for feels like hurting themselves, then

- try not to think about the future – just focus on getting through today
- stay away from drugs and alcohol
- get yourself to a safe place, like a friend's house
- be around other people
- do something you usually enjoy, such as spending time with a pet

If you are worried about someone, have what might feel like a difficult conversation, by:

- asking **open-ended questions** such as "How do you feel about...?" Don't worry about having the answers. Just listening to what someone has to say and taking it seriously can be more helpful.
- focus on the **persons feelings** instead of trying to solve the problem - it can be of more help and shows you care.
- **respect what they tell you**. Sometimes it's easy to want to try and fix a person's problems, or give them advice. Let them make their own decisions.

Other sources of support: