



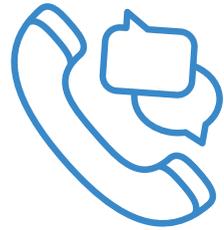
let's talk

seeing a GP about  
your mental health



Talking to a General Practitioner (GP) is a good place to start when you're looking for help and advice regarding your mental health. They're trained to assist with both mental and physical health problems and can tell you where you can find further help and support if needed.

*If you're worried about your mental health, here's what you can do...*



## Book it in

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Contact a GP practice to make an appointment.

If you do not have a regular doctor that you're happy with, you can ask at the local practice for a GP who is experienced in mental health, contact your local RAMHP Coordinator or visit **[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)** for information on GPs in your local area.

It can be hard if you're in a small town and there aren't many doctors, but it's important to remember that they are bound by confidentiality and cannot share your information without your consent, except in the very rare circumstance that your life, or the lives of others, are at risk.

Appointments will usually take 10-15 minutes, but it can be helpful to ask for a longer appointment if it's the first time you've spoken about your mental health with this doctor.

*When is your first appointment?*



GP:

Time:

Day:

Address:

Date:

Phone:

# Prepare

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Think about what you might like to talk about. It can be helpful to write a few things down and take them along to your appointment. You could try writing about:

- Changes in your feelings, thoughts or body. Think about your sleep, appetite, mood, social interests, motivation and anything else that may have changed.
- How these changes are impacting on your life; are they affecting your social life, work or personal life, and for how long?
- Any stressful events or things you've been worried about.
- Your medical history; what have you seen doctors about in the past? Are you taking any medications, supplements or using natural therapies?

What would you like to tell your doctor?

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Think about what you might want to ask.  
Maybe you're wondering:

- What type of mental health problem might I have?
- What are my treatment options?
- What can I do to help myself?
- Are there information sheets or websites I can look at?



# What questions would you like to ask?

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Think about whether you'd like to take a family member or friend along with you for support. They might help you to feel more comfortable, remember questions you want to ask or things you'd like to tell the doctor.

## Show up

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Talking about your mental health for the first time can be tough, but it helps to be honest with your doctor so that they can consider all the information and make the best decision regarding your health and treatment options.



Your doctor might give you a likely diagnosis and a plan for treatment and follow-up, but it may take a few appointments to gather all the information and provide the best recommendations. They might suggest seeing a psychologist or other mental health professional, prescribe medication or suggest other things that you can do to improve your wellbeing, like getting some exercise.

If the GP suggests seeing a psychologist or other mental health professional, they can prepare a Mental Health Treatment Plan, which will mean you can access up to ten government funded sessions per year. Some professionals do charge an additional fee so there may be a gap payment required. If you're concerned about this it can be helpful to ask your GP to recommend someone.

## Show up

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You should be a part of all of these decisions, so ask questions and get a second opinion if you don't feel comfortable. Your doctor is there to help you to manage your mental health and get better.

What did you and your doctor discuss?

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## Reflect and take action

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Think about what you and your doctor discussed. Make sure to take action on what you discussed; fill your script, join the walking group or make that appointment with the mental health professional.

Book another appointment with your GP in the next few weeks so that you can talk about how you're going, ask more questions or make changes to your treatment plan. You may need to look at other options if you don't feel like the treatment is working, for example if you are experiencing side effects from your medication.

When's your next appointment?

GP:

Time:

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Day:

Address:

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Date:

Phone:

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Have you thought of any questions or things you want to mention to your doctor at your next appointment?

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Remember, GPs see patients about mental health concerns all the time, these concerns are common and treatable. If you don't feel comfortable and supported, then ask questions, go back and discuss what is worrying you or get a second opinion. The earlier we notice a problem and find help, the better chance we have of a quick recovery, and we reduce our risk of mental health problems in the future.

*If you're concerned about yourself or someone else's mental health you can call the NSW Mental Health Line 1800 011 511 for advice. If you or someone else is in immediate danger call 000 go to your nearest hospital emergency department.*

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