



How to offer emotional support when it's needed most

Mental vs. behavioral health: What's the difference?

While mental health covers how you feel, behavioral health also covers how you process these feelings. From anger to anxiety, coping with grief to handling stress—the way you deal with challenges matters, too. And our resources may be able to help.

Simple and effective ways to be there for those you love

Be open

Starting mental health conversations with honesty and empathy may encourage your loved one to open up. Express concern in a nonjudgmental way, and let them know you're there to offer support, however they need it.

It's important to remember that the path to recovery may take time. Be patient and continue reaching out with offers to listen and help.

Be well

Being a caregiver can be stressful or emotionally draining. If your well-being is compromised, you may have less to offer those around you. Remember to take time for your own mental health and self care, too.

Be ready

Be ready to help your loved one find support from a professional. Provide reassurance that their condition may be treatable, and help them figure out next steps.

UnitedHealthcare has resources for you and your covered family members—whether you want to understand more about mental health or are looking for specific ways to get through challenges.

Discover our self-help digital tools, licensed therapists (in person or virtual) and more, all in one place at myuhc.com/mh-recommendations.

Recognizing possible signs and symptoms

Whether an out-of-character comment or unexpected mood swing, it's important to understand the possible signs and symptoms of behavioral health challenges. Recognizing these signs may help your loved one take the first step toward better health.

Substance use disorder

Substance use disorder may involve excessive and compulsive use of alcohol, drugs or medications. Some common signs of concern may include:¹

- Changes in appearance, including a lack of hygiene
- Mood swings or unexplained personality changes
- Ignoring responsibilities
- Risk of financial loss or physical danger
- Sudden changes in friends
- Feelings of shame or regret

Behavioral health conditions

Behavioral health is about more than just mental health—it may include many of the ways your mental state might play out in real life, from addiction issues to anger management, coping with grief to possibly dealing with stress and other challenges. Some signs may be easier to spot than others, including:

- Eating or sleeping too much or not enough
- Losing interest in people and activities
- Feeling hopeless, irritable or angry
- Drinking too much alcohol or using drugs
- Aches and pains
- Thoughts of harming oneself or others

A complete evaluation conducted by a qualified substance use disorder or mental health provider can be important, as many different conditions may display similar signs or symptoms.

Hope and healing may be a phone call away

To connect with specialists trained in addressing substance use disorders, call the Substance Use Helpline at 1-855-780-5955. It's confidential and available 24/7.

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988.

Learn more

Visit myuhc.com/mh-recommendations or call the number on your health plan ID card for more information

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¹ Drug addiction (substance use disorder). Mayo Clinic. Published October 2017. Accessed June 2022. www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/drug-addiction/symptoms-causes/syc-20365112.

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This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 if you are in the United States or the local emergency services phone number if you are outside the United States, or go to the nearest accident and emergency department. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and all its components, in particular services to family members below the age of 16, may not be available in all locations and are subject to change without prior notice. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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