

# Look after yourself

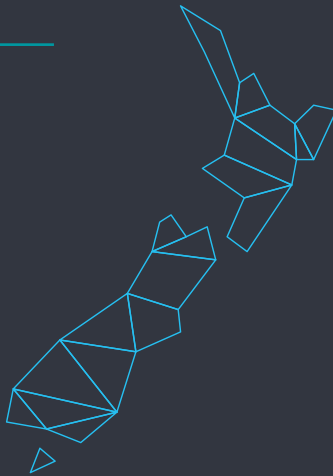
Supporting someone with a mental illness can be hard work because it is often ongoing and time consuming.

Make sure you find ways to look after your own mental wellbeing. This can include:

- talking with someone about your worries and concerns
- joining a support group for carers
- taking regular time out for yourself
- making sure you eat well, are physically active every day and get enough sleep.

## 1 in 5

New Zealanders experiences a **mental illness in any one year**



**MEDIBOARD**  
Health Information for New Zealanders



## If you need to talk



If you need advice about your own mental health or to find the best way to support a friend or family/whānau member struggling with their mental health, there are many services available to help:

- **Free call** or text 1737 anytime to talk with a trained counsellor.
- **Lifeline** 0800 543 354.
- **Healthline** 0800 611 116.
- **Depression Helpline** 0800 111 757 or free text 4202.
- **Youthline** 0800 376 633.
- **Samaritans** 0800 726 666.

## Your health and your whānau's health is important

Information supplied by Health Navigator website, [healthnavigator.org.nz](http://healthnavigator.org.nz). Health Navigator is a not-for-profit resource for the public and health professionals wanting trusted New Zealand health information. You can find out more about mental health on the website.

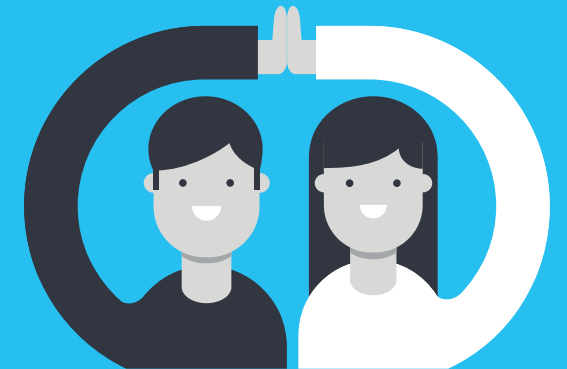
Visit our site  
[healthnavigator.org.nz](http://healthnavigator.org.nz)

Health Navigator  
NEW ZEALAND



**STAY CONNECTED**  
MENTAL HEALTH

## Helping someone who is mentally unwell?



Information about how to help someone with a mental illness:

[hn.org.nz/connected](http://hn.org.nz/connected)

Health Navigator  
NEW ZEALAND

# Here's what you can do to help others



## Learn about their condition

Understand more about your friend or family/whānau member's condition – what symptoms to look out for, what can trigger them and what the different treatment options are.

The causes of mental illness are complex and are not the fault of the person with the condition. Just like physical illness, mental illness needs to be treated. This is why the person can't just "snap out of it".

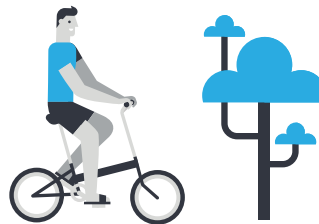
If someone was diagnosed with a heart problem, they would get it treated and they would get support to recover. Mental health conditions are the same. The person needs to have treatment and be supported to recover.

## Keep them connected

Staying connected with people is important for everyone's mental wellbeing. If your friend or family member is finding it too overwhelming to meet up with other friends, organise a catch-up for just the two of you. If there's a community class or activity they usually enjoy but can't face going to, go with them. You might even find a new activity you enjoy for yourself!

## Encourage them to stay active

Being physically active has been found to reduce symptoms and improve the quality of life for people with a range of mental health conditions. Help them to be active by suggesting a walk, swim or bike ride together.



## Listen to them

Don't be afraid if you don't know what to say. It's better to admit you don't know than avoid the person for fear of saying the wrong thing.

Usually, your friend or family/whānau member just needs someone to listen to them and not judge them or give advice. Keep what they tell you in confidence, unless you're worried for their safety.

## Have realistic expectations



By understanding your friend or family member's condition it can help you know what you can expect of them, and what they can manage to do for themselves.

If you live with someone with a mental illness, expectations could be about getting up at the same time each morning, showering every day and helping with household chores. Expectations can change on a day to day basis depending on how they are coping.

## Offer practical help

Your friend or family/whānau member might not be able to tell you what they need.

Practical help such as providing a meal, walking their dog or dropping their kids off at school can be a big help.

