

Take a moment ... to keep trying to heal

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. So does the journey from depression and anxiety to health and wholeness.

You have the power to take that first step. And the next. And the next. And each step you take moves you closer to your goal and further from the pain you've been experiencing.

Everyone's healing journey looks different, but here are some things that can help you heal.

Cultivate self-compassion

Often, we are our own worst critics. This is especially true when conditions like depression and anxiety cloud our thinking. Learn to be kind to yourself and to shut out the negative voices in your head. Multiple studies have linked self-compassion with better well-being and improved mental health.⁴¹

Tip: When negative thoughts crowd in, ask yourself if you would think the same thing about a friend or loved one who was in your situation.



Maintain social connections

Human beings are social creatures, yet depression and anxiety can push us to self-isolate. As bad as you may feel, find ways to spend meaningful time with people who value and respect you. Doing so can increase your self-esteem, alleviate your symptoms and may even help you live longer.⁴²

Tip: Make connections in person, not through social media. Although connecting online may seem less threatening, it can actually make you more lonely and depressed.⁴³

41 <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/02/190206200344.htm>

42 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/feeling-it/202003/social-connection-boosts-health-even-when-youre-isolated>

43 <https://vantagepointrecovery.com/making-connections-in-depression/>



Plan ahead

Take control of your recovery by setting both long-term goals (find a job you enjoy, get a new apartment) and short-term goals (get out of bed on time, make an appointment with a counsellor). Make plans to reach those goals, track your progress and reward yourself as you move forward.

Tip: Share your goals with a friend who can help hold you accountable.⁴⁴



Seek treatment

If you broke your leg, you would see a doctor. So why would you try to cure depression and anxiety on your own? Remember that these are real, treatable conditions. Take steps today to find a counsellor, support group or other resource that can help you heal.

Tip: Using an employee assistance program at work can be an easy, nonthreatening way to explore treatment options.



Cultivate resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges and setbacks. Studies have shown a direct correlation between resilience and mental health. You can cultivate resilience by learning from experience, taking care of yourself, being proactive and finding ways to remain hopeful.^{45,46}

Tip: While you're brushing your teeth, make a mental list of things you are grateful for.

There are no quick fixes for depression and anxiety, but there are proven techniques that millions of people use every day to treat these conditions and improve their mental health. You can take steps today to join their number.

In our hectic lives, we often neglect our mental health. That's why it's so important to take a moment to think about this important aspect of overall health. At our Mental health resources hub, you can find the information to prevent and manage mental health conditions.

Also, Aetna International members can access the Health Hub—register if you haven't already—to quickly find self-care tools, professional services, member offers, and to submit and track claims and more. Within the Health Hub, you can learn more about the Wysa app, which offers instant access to AI-driven mental well-being support. The app is free for members to download and includes a free one-on-one session with a human coach. For more information about your health care benefits, contact your plan sponsor or one of Aetna International's expert sales consultants for group business or individuals and families.

Take a moment...Discover. Breathe. Heal.

Mental health support resources: <https://www.aetnainternational.com/en/about-us/explore/workplace-mental-health-support-resource.html>

Health Hub: <https://www.aetnainternational.com/members/login.do>

44 <https://www.depressioncenter.org/toolkit/i-want-stay-mentally-healthy/goal-setting>
45 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0191886914006710>

46 <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/resilience-training/in-depth/resilience/art-20046311>