

Newly diagnosed with HIV?

Finding out about your HIV diagnosis can be overwhelming.

Remember:



Also, keep this in mind: **You WILL be OK!** There are many different types of support available for you. And HIV medicines are very safe and effective. People living with HIV who take their medicine can live long, fulfilling lives.

Peer support is available for people who are newly diagnosed. Specially trained peers can help you decide what to focus on now, and what you can take care of later. Peers are great support, as they likely experienced emotions like yours when they were first diagnosed. In addition to Peer support, there are larger networks of support groups for people living with HIV.

For more information



New York State Office of Mental Health
omh.ny.gov

Mental Health & HIV
hiv.gov/hiv-basics/staying-in-hiv-care/other-related-health-issues/mental-health

CORE Peer Navigator Project
rightsandrecovery.org/peer-navigator

Emotional Wellness Toolkit
nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit

How to help others
omh.ny.gov/omhweb/resources/publications/just_checking_in.pdf

A collection of mindfulness exercises
therapistaid.com/worksheets/mindfulness-exercises

Thinking about suicide? Know someone who is?

Free, confidential emotional support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Text, chat, or call 988.

You will be connected to a trained crisis counselor at the New York State 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. They can help anyone who is thinking about suicide, struggling with substance use, experiencing a mental health crisis, or having any kind of emotional distress. You can also contact 988 if you are worried about someone who may need crisis support.

Are you living with a chronic illness?
Are you and your partner struggling to make your relationship work?
Are you trying to understand your gender identity?

When was the last time you checked in WITH YOU?

Checking in with yourself will help you stay healthy – and it will help you be there for others.

Emotional wellness is key!



Are you in an intimate partner violence situation?
Are you struggling with isolation?
Do you know someone who is unable to come out to their family?
Are you maintaining healthy relationships?
Do you know someone who is lonely?

What is emotional wellness?

Our emotional wellness affects how we think, feel, and act. It includes our emotional, social, and psychological health. Emotional wellness helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. It is important at every stage of life, from childhood through adulthood.

Your physical health, genetics, diet, sleep, and age can all play a part in your emotional well-being. Psychological factors can also play a role. Factors include your beliefs, mental health diagnoses, perception, and addictions. Changes of seasons can also be challenging for some people. Living with a chronic illness, such as HIV, can also affect someone's emotional wellness.

Why is emotional wellness important?

Our emotional wellness is important because it strongly affects our daily lives. It's just as important as our physical health! Our emotional health affects how things feel to us and our ability to do what we need and want to do. This includes going to work/school, taking daily medicine, and managing our relationships with ourselves and others.

Let's remember, It's OK to not feel OK

Many changes may occur that show you that it might be time to check in with yourself. Maybe you've lost interest in things that you usually enjoy. Perhaps you're spending more time sleeping than you normally do. Or, maybe the opposite is true--you're losing sleep. Maybe you just feel 'off.'

Self-care

Everyone has different ways of managing and coping...and that is OK! There's no reason to feel shame. Different things make us happy, anxious, angry, or calm. Find self-care that works for you. Make time to practice your self-care activities. Sometimes talking through a situation with a friend, a partner, or a family member is all it takes to feel better. Or taking a walk or meditating may help. Try different things or activities to find what works best for you.

Go at your own pace. Adding too many self-care activities at one time can be overwhelming. It can even lead to burnout. If the first step feels too hard, try to break it up into smaller steps. Then take it step by step. Change takes time.

If self-care is not enough, know that professionals can help. And seeking professional help is nothing to be embarrassed about. That's why these types of professions exist.

Who is the right person to help me?

Talk to a therapist or a counselor.

Therapists can guide you to see how your feelings, thoughts, choices, and actions affect each other. They can teach you lessons about emotions, thoughts, coping skills, facing fears, and more.

A **psychologist** is another professional who can help. They may use talk therapy to help you learn to better cope with life, relationship issues, and other challenges to your emotional wellness. They may also do an assessment through interviews, tests, and observation.

A **psychiatrist** is a medical doctor who specializes in emotional wellness. They also address substance use disorders. Psychiatrists are qualified to assess both the mental and physical aspects of psychological problems.

How can I support someone who might be struggling with their emotional wellness?

You can be part of a supportive network. A network of friends, family, peers, and health care providers is important. Isolation can make things more difficult for anyone. Having support along the way can help them find their way through a hard time with more ease.

Emotional wellness & living with HIV

Challenges like these, and the stress associated with living with a chronic illness or condition, such as HIV, can affect a person's emotional health and well-being. People living with HIV have a higher chance of developing mood, anxiety, and cognitive disorders. For example, depression is one of the most common mental health conditions faced by people with HIV.

HIV, and infections that people with HIV often have at the same time, can also affect the brain and the rest of the nervous system. This may change how a person thinks and behaves. Also, some medicines used to treat HIV can have side effects that affect emotional well-being.