

Why Should I Seek Help?

- **Early treatment is better.** Symptoms may get worse. Dealing with them now might help stop them from getting worse in the future. Finding out more about what treatments work, where to look for help, and what kinds of questions to ask can make it easier to get help and lead to better outcomes.
- **Symptoms can change family life.** Symptoms can get in the way of your family life. You may find that you pull away from loved ones, are not able to get along with people, or that you are angry or even violent. Getting help can help improve your family life.
- **Symptoms can be related to other health problems.** Symptoms can worsen physical health problems, such as heart disease, intestinal problems, headaches, and other physical complaints. By getting help you could also improve your physical health.
- **Symptoms can include hopelessness and helplessness.** Getting help is key to overcoming these feelings. Struggling with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic distress disorder, bipolar disorder, and other forms of mental illness can leave a person feeling powerless and vulnerable. It's important to remind yourself that you have strengths and coping skills that can get you through tough times.

Helping a loved one

- **Be patient and understanding.** Getting better takes time, even when a person is committed to treatment. Be patient with the pace of recovery and offer a sympathetic ear. A person may need to talk about what's going on. This is part of the healing process, so avoid the temptation to tell your loved one to stop rehashing, especially the past, and move on.
- **Don't pressure your loved one into talking.** However, at times it can be very difficult for people to talk about what's going on. For some, it can even make things worse. Never try to force your loved one to open up. Let the person know, however, that you're there when and if he or she wants to talk.
- **Try to anticipate and prepare for triggers.** Common triggers include anniversary dates; people or places associated with trauma; and certain sights, sounds, or smells. If you are aware of what triggers may cause an upsetting reaction, you'll be in a better position to offer the support and help your loved one may need to recover.
- **Don't take the symptoms personally.** Common symptoms can include emotional numbness, anger, and withdrawal. If your loved one seems distant, irritable, or closed off, remember that this may not have anything to do with you or your relationship.
- **Always know that there are other resources available.** Resources are available for you and your loved one. Contact your doctor, or other health care professional, and seek additional resources. You can also contact us here at the Health Department, Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse, at 815/941-3140.