

Tell us what you think!



HELP SEEKING

TIPS FOR SEEKING HELP FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND PROFESSIONALS

Check out the evidence!

WHAT IS HELP-SEEKING?

When we think about reaching out for support, the first thing that may come to mind is getting support from a mental health professional, but help-seeking **goes beyond this!** It includes reaching out to others (trusted friends, family, online communities, etc.) for **support** when encountering challenging circumstances.



It can happen in many different ways, all of which can support you in **stress management, coping, and building mental health resilience.**

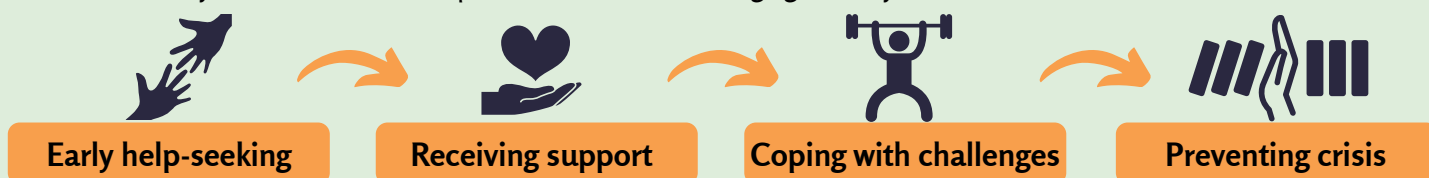


Remember you don't need to be in psychological distress to seek help!

We may feel that asking for help is admitting something is wrong and that others will be judgmental. However, the reality is, help-seeking should be celebrated. It takes so much strength to ask for help and do what is best for you.

Most people think you only seek help in moments of crisis. In fact, **it's best to do it preventatively!**

Talk to friends, family, or a mental health professional before things get really bad.



WHERE CAN I LOOK FOR HELP?

Reaching out for help can be tough but knowing where to seek support is a great first step.

Help-seeking can be both informal and formal, examples of this are outlined below:



Informal Support

- Talk to supportive friends and family. Share your feelings with them and let them know what's been going on with you.
- Connect with peers who went through a similar experience and get to know their story/journey.
- Turn to a member or leader from your faith or cultural group that you feel like you can trust.
- Reach out to community mental health organizations or helplines in your area.

Casual Support Resources

- Websites
- Online communities
- Books where you can learn about well-being



Formal Support

- Seeking help from a professional is common among university students.²
- Learn the different types of professional support available to you and what would be more useful for your situation and goals.

Not sure who to reach out to?



View [The Canadian Mental Health Association's help seeking webpage](#) for some detailed descriptions of the following mental health support workers:

- Peer support groups
- Counsellors
- Psychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Other mental health professionals (e.g., a nurse, or occupational therapist)



HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION WITH FRIENDS/FAMILY MEMBERS



1
Plan what you are going to say.



2
Have realistic expectations for how others might respond.



3
Be open to engaging with different people. Different people might be helpful for different kinds of problems.



4
Get an idea of what they think about mental health before bringing up the subject.



Bring up something mental health related that is happening in the media and see how they respond.



Start opening up a little to a friend or family member and wait for their reaction.

BUT



If they lack understanding of your situation, acknowledge that their views are simply different and have nothing to do with you as an individual. Try with another person.

OR

TIPS TO HELP DISCUSS YOUR DIFFICULTIES WITH FRIENDS/FAMILY MEMBERS



Be clear about how you're feeling.

Click below for tips on how to communicate clearly and effectively.

[View the Effective Communication resource](#)



Consider writing them a letter or email to give them time to reflect before providing you with a response.



Where possible, share credible information about what you're struggling with.

E.g., view [Harvard Health's](#) page about mental health, or download [Stanford Medicine's](#) mental health report.



Be prepared to accept that they may not be able to support you.

In that case, try seeking support elsewhere like through online communities!

When you feel friends/family members are unsupportive

Although they want to help you, there may be reasons behind their feelings that don't have anything to do with you. **Keep in mind this may not be personal to you!**

For example, many people don't have a good understanding of student mental health issues or may hold harmful misconceptions about mental health. This limits how well they can support you despite their genuine care and good intentions for you!

There are a lot of online support programs you can reach out to:

Wellness Together Canada offers mental health support through [chat](#), [phone](#) or a [mobile app](#).

[Crisis Services Canada](#) offers a suicide prevention service.

[Keep.meSAFE](#) is a mobile app that offers a support program for students.

[McGill Student Wellness Hub](#) offers support services for students.

FEEDBACK & CONTACT INFORMATION

EDUCATION
FOR
MENTAL
HEALTH
RESILIENCE

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