
How to reach out to a friend for help

When you're in the midst of depression and anxiety, it can be hard to take that first step and reach out for help. You may worry that you won't be taken seriously, or that you will be judged; perhaps you feel like you're imposing. But your friends want to help. If you have depression, anxiety or a similar mental health experience or situational stressor, these tips might help you start the conversation.

Start anywhere

You don't have to immediately dive into the most challenging or worrisome aspects of your feelings and experiences. You likely won't cover everything you may wish to disclose in a first conversation. By opening up and relaying any aspect of your story, you've begun healing by forming a support network. You may want to start with, "Hey—can I talk to you? I haven't been feeling well lately, and I'm worried."

Talk to someone less close to home

You might not be ready to disclose your feelings to someone as close to you as your partner, best friend, parent or sibling. Sometimes starting with someone a little less close to home—literally and figuratively—like a friend, cousin or colleague, even a trusted coach, teacher or faith leader, can be an easier first step. You may want to start with, "I really trust you. Can I talk to you about how I've been feeling lately?"



Write your feelings down

It may feel easier to start sharing if you write down your feelings first. You may choose to do so as a letter to yourself or a letter to the person you wish to share with. It might be a list of symptoms or anything else that would help you to describe your condition. You may give this letter to someone, or read it to the person you wish to share with. You may want to start with, "I'd like to read you this letter I wrote about my feelings and worries. Can I read it to you uninterrupted and then talk about it with you?"

Express your feelings in other ways

If it feels difficult to find words, in writing or aloud, consider using images—those you paint or draw, or others' art that reflects your mood. You could use this art as a talking point when reaching out for help. You may want to start with, "I have a hard time describing my feelings, but I've drawn what they feel like. Can I show you?"