

Accessing mental health support

The CPRS acknowledges that mental health support may be an important and expected part of your journey with your child. This may be at the very start when your child has received their diagnosis of a colorectal condition and you are adjusting to a new normal as a family, during medical treatment interventions or in school years when managing social situations.

The RCH believes that mental health is everybody's business, and we know that children with chronic health conditions are often at an increased risk of experiencing emotional and behavioural challenges. Parents may also experience elevated anxiety and depressive symptoms. Getting help early can be often associated with more better treatment outcomes.

Accessing support for your child or yourself as a parent or carer, is important. Expert support can empower you and your child to make changes to how you feel and cope.

You may not have considered the need for mental health support before, and therefore, not know much about it. This handout briefly explains how to access mental health support in your community and other types of help that are available to you.

Seeing your doctor (GP)

The first step to accessing mental health support is to visit your doctor.

Your doctor will ask some personal questions to understand your situation and create a mental health care plan (MHCP) which will act as a referral to a mental health professional, such as a psychologist. When you book, let the reception know that you would like to discuss a mental health care plan with the doctor. That way, the doctor will know in advance and set a longer appointment time.

Mental health care plan

This will allow you to access a mental health professional, such as a psychologist. You can claim up to 10 sessions each calendar year. You will initially receive 6 sessions, and then following a review with the GP, a further 4 sessions will be provided.

An additional 10 sessions are available for people experiencing enduring mental health impacts from COVID-19 pandemic, until December 2022.

Cost

Psychologists will set their own fees, so Medicare will only cover some of the cost. Ask how much you'll pay and what you'll get back to us when you enquire about an appointment. Some psychologists may bulk bill for concession holders.

Finding a psychologist

Your GP may suggest a psychologist in your local area, or who they think is most suitable to your situation. You may also recommend that they refer you or your child to a particular psychologist. To find a psychologist, there are several websites you can use:

<https://psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist>

<https://psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist/connect-psychologist>

<https://acpa.org.au/find-a-clinical-psychologist/>

Free mental health supports

Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria (ARCVic)

<https://www.arcvic.org.au>

Eating disorders Victoria

<https://www.eatingdisorders.org.au>

The Brave Program (targeted at 8-17 year olds)

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/brave-anxiety-online-treatment-program/>

Headspace (12-25 years olds)

<https://headspace.org.au>

Head to Health

<https://headtohealthvic.org.au/head-to-help/>

Helpful phone service supports

Lifeline Australia – 13 11 14

A crisis support service offering short term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe. More info can be found at: www.lifeline.org.au

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800

A free and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years. More info can be found at: www.kidshelpline.com.au

MindSpot Clinic - 1800 61 44 34

Phone and online service for people with stress, worry, anxiety, low mood or depression.

Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636

Mental health information and support for all Victorians. More info can be found at: www.beyondblue.org.au

eheadspace – 1800 650 893

Online and webchat support and counselling for 12-25 year olds, their family and friends. More info can be found at: www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace

1800 RESPECT – 1800 737 732

Support for people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing sexual assault, domestic or family violence. More info can be found at: www.1800respect.org.au

Mens' Line - 1300 789 978

Butterfly Foundation's National Helpline - 1800 33 4673

Counselling and treatment referral for people with eating disorders, and body image and related issues

PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia) - 1300 726 306