

Mental health checkups: why they matter



In recent years, the need for better, more accessible mental health care has become a topic of discussion in families, communities and government organizations. There's always been a focus on keeping our bodies healthy. Now we're recognizing our mental health is just as important.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, millions of people in the U.S. are affected by mental illness each year.¹ This shows the need to raise awareness, reduce stigma and advocate for those struggling with mental health.

Physical health check-ups

We all know our annual physical exam is important. Those checkups can help catch health conditions and diseases early. And finding out sooner gives healthcare providers the best chance of starting the right treatment. It's no different with your mental health.

Mental health check-ups

Mental health symptoms may not be as noticeable as the flu, but checking in with your provider can help identify concerns. Talk to a mental health professional or your healthcare provider about any changes in your feelings, mood or behaviors. Let them know how you manage stress and anxiety.

A professional may ask questions or give you a screening to better understand your concerns. They can help you learn new ways to manage sadness, worry or other overwhelming feelings. Taking action early to treat your symptoms can reduce the chances of things getting worse.

¹[Mental health by the numbers](#). Available at: [Nami.org](https://www.nami.org). Accessed February 2026.

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When it feels like too much

If you're struggling with depression, anxiety, fear, low self-worth, lack of interest in things you used to enjoy or other concerns, ask your healthcare provider for a mental health check-up. They may call this a "screening" or an "assessment." You can also ask for a referral to a specialist. You and your healthcare provider can discuss options for treatment including:

- Counseling
- Education
- Lifestyle changes
- Medication
- Coping strategies

Mental health is an important part of your overall health. Take time to manage your physical *and* mental health. It's all connected.

Support and treatments are available. And early intervention can go a long way toward helping you feel better.