

# Managing Mental Health in Long COVID

People who have Long COVID may experience symptoms of **depression, anxiety, or both**. Mood and anxiety symptoms can be interconnected with physical symptoms. For example, fatigue can lead to decreased mood or anxiety can worsen dizziness. This does not mean your symptoms are “all in your head” – your symptoms are very real. It does mean that our bodies and minds are connected, and **it’s important to take care of both physical health and mental health!**

Talk with your medical provider if you feel like you are having worsening mood or anxiety. Your provider can help you get connected with:

- **Medications** - prescribed and managed by a psychiatrist (MD) or other doctor, nurse practitioner (NP) or physician assistant (PA).
- **Talk therapy/counseling** – A mental health provider may be called a therapist, psychotherapist, or counselor. Many types of professionals provide “talk therapy”, including but not limited to:
  - Psychologist (PhD, PsyD)
  - Clinical social worker (MSW, LCSW)
  - Mental health counselor (LCMHC)
  - Marriage and family therapist (LMFT)
  - Pastoral counselor or chaplain (MDiv)
- **Finding a combination** of medication and talk therapy often works well.

## Options for finding a therapist:

- Go to [mentalhealthmatch.com](https://www.mentalhealthmatch.com) , [therapyden.com](https://www.therapyden.com) , [inclusivetherapists.com](https://www.inclusivetherapists.com), or [www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists) and enter your preferred criteria.
- Contact your insurance provider for a list of in-network therapists.
- If you are on a managed Medicaid plan, check your insurance card for the behavioral health phone number. They can provide you with a list of in-network therapists.
- If you are on traditional Medicaid or uninsured, you can contact your local LME/MCO and ask for a referral to a therapist. Visit this website [www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/lmemco-directory](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/lmemco-directory) to find your local LME/MCO.

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**Online therapy with video visits** can be a great option, especially if fatigue or pain are limiting your ability to leave home. Online therapy also means that you can work with a therapist who is a further distance from your town/location. You do, however, need to see a therapist who is licensed in the same state where you are located.

**Crisis Hotlines:** There are also 24/7 hotlines available if you need to speak with someone for support after hours. These include:

- **Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** call **988** from any phone, or chat at **988lifeline.org**
- **Hopeline:** open 24/7 by calling **919-231-4525**, texting available Mon-Fri 10a-10p
- **Crisis Text Line:** open 24/7 by **texting HOME to 741741**

**\*\*If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call 911 or proceed to your nearest emergency room.\*\***

**Mood Boosters:** Even if you are not experiencing depression or anxiety, you may have times when you feel down or worried while you're recovering from Long COVID. That is understandable! Recovery can be a very challenging time. Try to incorporate some "mood boosters" into your day to support recovery of your mind and feelings. Mood boosters can include:

- Call a friend, family member, or loved one. Video calls can be even better because smiling helps improve your mood.
- Journaling.
- Meditation, prayer, or other spiritual practice.
- Spend time outside in nature.
- Limit time on social media or limit your consumption of news.
- Watch funny shows or movies, listen to funny podcasts – laughter is medicine!

**What boosts your mood? Make a list for yourself!**