

# Diabetes and emotional health

## Support available for people living with diabetes

Living with diabetes can be tough. It can feel relentless. Lots of people struggle from time to time.

Diabetes UK has a number of resources to which you can signpost people with diabetes for help getting through the tough days or finding answers to those tricky questions.



### Diabetes UK Helpline

Call or email our specially trained counsellors to get advice and support from Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm.

**0345 123 2399** or email **helpline@diabetes.org.uk**



### Diabetes UK Support Forum

Log on 24/7 to find help, tips and a friendly welcome from other people living with diabetes.

**www.diabetes.org.uk/forum**



### Diabetes UK Local Groups

Join a local group and meet other people who understand what you're going through because they've been through it too.

**www.diabetes.org.uk/local-group-portal**



### Learning Zone

Join our free online Learning Zone and get to grips with your diabetes when it suits you.

**www.diabetes.org.uk/learningzone**

We have provided new webpages and content on our Learning Zone to provide lots of information about how diabetes can affect emotional wellbeing, and what can help:

**www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/emotions**

# Support for Healthcare Professionals

We know that talking to people with diabetes about their emotional health isn't easy. Our 'Diabetes and emotional health' guide for front line staff offers strategies and tools to help recognise and have conversations about emotional problems, as well as providing appropriate support.

We can help you:

- practically support emotional health
- use consultation time productively
- know when and where to refer.

We've got chapters with the latest information on depression, barriers to insulin use, diabetes distress, fear of hypoglycaemia, eating with diabetes, anxiety and adjusting to diagnosis.

Don't forget that a simple question like 'how are you feeling today?' can make a massive difference to people living with diabetes by allowing them to open up about their emotions.

Go to  
[www.diabetes.org.uk/emotional-health-professionals-guide](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/emotional-health-professionals-guide)



## Information Prescriptions

Download our information prescription, 'My emotions and diabetes'. It provides easy to read information and individual action planning, helping people understand the impact living with diabetes can have on their emotions and how to take steps to improve their emotional health:

[www.diabetes.org.uk/IP-Prof](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/IP-Prof)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIABETES UK**  
HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

### My emotions and diabetes Information Prescription

Living with diabetes has its ups and downs and it can affect how you feel. It's common to sometimes feel scared, stressed, angry or low. Understanding how diabetes affects your mood means you can take steps to improve your emotional wellbeing. This may also help you manage your diabetes well.

#### How am I feeling?

When you have diabetes it's normal to feel:

- insecure, angry or overwhelmed about having diabetes
- stressed with constantly managing your diabetes
- burnt out – feeling 'done' with diabetes
- worried about your blood sugar levels.

There are certain times in your life with diabetes when you may be more likely to experience these feelings. For example:

- at diagnosis
- during a significant life event, such as bereavement, losing a job or getting divorced
- if you experience a complication related to your diabetes.



#### What signs should I look out for?

Everyone feels upset or stressed from time to time. But look out for the following signs:

- feeling frustrated about the demands of managing diabetes
- feeling as though diabetes is controlling your life
- avoiding parts of your diabetes routine
- being in denial about having diabetes
- feeling alone and isolated.

If you notice one or more of these things is happening frequently and it is bothering you or causing you distress, it could be a sign that you are finding it hard to cope with your diabetes.

#### Small steps to feeling better

Find someone you feel comfortable talking to and don't try to mask how you feel.

Get support from other people living with diabetes through the Diabetes UK forum, by joining a local Diabetes UK support group or by calling the Diabetes UK confidential helpline.

Think about the things you enjoy doing and plan a definite time to do them.

Be kind to yourself – focus on the good things in your life and don't beat yourself up about the things that aren't so good.

Take time out to rest and relaxation.

If you feel able to, take steps to eat a balanced diet and increase your activity levels.

Set yourself simple, achievable goals and reward yourself when you accomplish them.

#### What if I need more support?

Sometimes people with diabetes can develop mental health issues such as diabetes distress, diabetes burnout, depression or anxiety. That's why it's so important you recognise the signs and can access the right kind of support when you need it most. If you need more support, talking therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, counselling or psychotherapy can all help. Speak to your healthcare team if you think talking therapies may be useful. They may suggest medication to help improve your mood or reduce anxiety. Your healthcare team should keep in regular contact with you to make sure you are starting to feel better.

#### My next steps

The two most important actions I am going to focus on are:

(Discuss and agree with your doctor or nurse. Think about what, where, when and how?)

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For information or support, call Diabetes UK Helpline: 0345 123 2399 or 0141 212 8710 (Scotland only) Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm or go to [www.diabetes.org.uk/info-emotion](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/info-emotion)

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