



BREAK THE CYCLE

CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS



Cycle Against Suicide

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INTRODUCTION

In Europe, Ireland has one of the highest incidences of mental illness, ranking third out of thirty-six countries reviewed in the yearly *Health at a Glance* report. In 2016, about 18.5 percentage of the Irish population was reported to suffer from some form of mental health issue such as schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, or drug or alcohol abuse. The incidence of depression was also much higher than the European average for both men and women. According to the OECD, Ireland spends over €8.2 billion on mental health problems per annum.

All this goes to underscore the importance of carers in our society.

Caring for Someone with a Mental Illness

People suffering from mental illness need love, support and care from their family, friends and community. However, the role of a carer is a taxing one at the best of times. It requires commitment as well as physical, emotional, and mental fortitude to constantly care for those who cannot care for themselves. For those caring for people with a mental illness – whether that is family or in a professional capacity – the task can be more daunting than when caring for someone with a physical illness. This is because of the rather complicated nature of mental illnesses.

As a carer, your efforts to see that the patient gets the best possible quality of life or to see them recover as much as possible, can also take a toll on your own mental health.

It is therefore important that carers have access to information that can help them provide the best possible care, while also protecting and promoting their own physical and mental health. This toolkit is designed to be such a source of information. Its purpose is to give carers a hands-on, easily accessible guide to the resources that are available to help them cope with the challenging job of caring for someone with a mental illness. It details strategies they need to put in place to help them manage the process of caring for a person suffering from a mental illness as well as how to care for their own mental health.

It is one of the many ways in which [Cycle Against Suicide](#) works to break down the barriers around mental illnesses and mental health issues generally. While the toolkit attempts to bring together a list of resources that you will find useful, it is by no means an exhaustive resource. And while it references best practice as advocated by experts in the field of mental health, the toolkit is not prescriptive. Rather it recognises that there is no one-size-fits all solution that helps carers cope in their role. So in addition to the suggestions made in this toolkit, we encourage you to explore other healthy ways of coping and thriving in the service to those in your care.

This toolkit is not intended to replace a conversation – if you are feeling overwhelmed, or if you can't find a tool or resource that resonates with you, you might want to consider talking with someone directly. You can contact [The Samaritans](#) 24hrs a day, 365 days a year, or find an alternative at [Mental Health Ireland](#). Also note that this toolkit is neither a legal guideline nor does it offer legal advice. Please consult relevant legal resources for details of your responsibilities as a carer.

Who is a Carer?

The Health Service Executive (HSE) defines a carer as someone who is providing an ongoing significant level of care to a person who is in need of care in the home due to illness or disability or frailty. According to [Comfort Keepers](#), 8% of all adults in Ireland (about 350,000 people) are unpaid carers caring for a family member. That's a significant number of people, which means you are not alone.

Carers could be parents, siblings, children, partners or other relationships as well as professional care givers hired to do a job. Whether paid or unpaid, the support or care you provide enables the persons you are caring for to remain at home for as long as it's safe and practical.

One of the most challenging aspects of being a carer is the time commitment and the absence of a time-frame. It goes on for as long as you are needed. For some people, that could be a short period of time, while for others, it is a longer period. Often, care is required 24 hours a day.

What are some of the services a carer may render?

The support a carer provides to a person with mental illness may include:

- Assisting them to seek medical care for a mental health issue.
- Talking to health care professionals on their behalf if they are unable to provide information themselves.
- Providing medical care.
- Ensuring the person is safe and healthy.
- Budgeting and managing their finances.
- Preparing meals for them.
- Offering emotional support.
- Helping them cope with their mental illness.
- Offering personal care like bathing, getting dressed and hygiene tasks.
- Advocating for them.
- Helping them to live and get along with other members of the family.

- Helping other family members to understand the needs of the person you are caring for.
- Prioritizing their well-being and happiness, etc.

What skills do I need to be a carer to someone with a mental illness?

Being a carer to someone with a mental illness means you will be providing a variety of support to them. Certain skills may help you to cope better and where possible, you should work to improve those skills for both your sake and that of the person receiving care. These include:

- Good listening skills.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to easily establish a relationship.
- Ability to understand and encourage someone.
- Sensitivity and ability to work well with a variety of people such as GPs and other professionals.
- Having a non-judgmental attitude.
- Ability to adhere to existing rules and procedures.
- Patience and understanding.
- Ability to advocate on someone's behalf.
- Ability to accept someone's health condition and tolerate its outcomes.

What Are My Obligations to Someone I Am Caring For?

Caring for someone can mean a lot of things. Giving and being patient are normal things we do in relationships, but as a carer you may discover that under the law, there is more required of you than patience. For example, you have a duty not to physically or emotionally abuse the person in your care. Beyond that, you may find there are other obligations, such as those related to decision making. Generally speaking, the person in your care has the right to make decisions about his or her life, unless they do not have the mental capacity to make decisions. In such a case, you must be guided by relevant laws, including the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act of 2015. This law provides a framework for people whose capacity to make legally-binding agreements are impaired or likely to be impaired in future due to their illness. Such people can be assisted to make decisions about their welfare, property and affairs.

As a carer, you also have some rights too. For example, if you are on a low income and you're caring for a person with mental illness, you may be entitled to a Carer's Allowance. To be entitled to a Carer's Allowance you must satisfy means test and meet a few other criteria. According to the HSE, other benefits are available through the Department of Social protection, and these may include:

- Care Sharing
- Carer's Benefit
- Carer Support Grant (formerly the Respite Care Grant)
- Domiciliary Care Allowance
- Homemakers Scheme (Pension Entitlements Accrual)
- Mobility Allowance

Retired and older people may additionally be entitled to:

- Pensions
- Homemakers Scheme (Pension Entitlements Accrual)
- Household Benefits
- Free Travel

Cycle Against Suicide recommends that carers should get in touch with, and even where possible, become members of organisations that represent or help carers. Such organisations are usually in a position to help you access necessary benefits.

See further:

- Citizens Information Board: [Assisted Decision-Making \(Capacity\) Act 2015](#)
- Family Carers Ireland: [Rights and Entitlements for Family Carers.](#)
- Health Service Executive: [Carers' Support](#)

Strategies for Caring for Those Suffering from Mental Illness

1. Listen

Perhaps the single most important support you can offer to someone struggling with a mental illness is to simply listen. Give them the chance to talk about how they are feeling and listen without judging. For many people suffering with mental illness, it can be a challenge to tell others about what they are

going through for several reasons. It could be because of the stigma attached to mental illness. Others fear rejection. Others simply don't know how to talk about it; in fact, they may not have articulated their condition even to themselves and really do not know how to talk about it. If you let them know that you are there for them and are ready to listen when they want to talk, that can be first step to healing.

Of course, you may also struggle with what to say. You may feel ill-equipped or awkward. Know that you don't need any special training to show someone you care about them. Just being willing to listen without judgement is a big step in itself.

As is often said, communication is more than just words. It encompasses body language and other unspoken elements. With that in mind, when listening ensure that your body language does not negate your efforts to help them heal by speaking out. Remember the following:

- **As you listen, remember to stay calm.** Your reaction will trigger other reactions in them, and if your reaction is to panic and get upset, they may panic too. Furthermore, it may make them less willing to talk further. A calm reaction will help your loved one feel calmer too.
- **Don't jump to conclusions.** Sometimes (especially in these days of internet diagnosis) it is easy to feel like you know what they are about to say, what the problem is or what the solution is because you've read something like that on the internet. But that could be counterproductive as you could be making assumptions based on your own knowledge rather than the reality of what they are feeling. So stay away from making assumptions.
- **Don't push.** It is possible that in the first instance, your loved one may not give as much details as you want. **Be patient.** Don't push for more than they are willing to share and if you feel the need to probe deeper, be sensitive. Let them set the pace for seeking support themselves.
- **Offer reassurance by your words and your actions.** Reassure them that they are not alone, that you will be there for them and ensure that your actions match your words. Don't cut off contact or exclude them from family or other social gatherings or suddenly change the way you relate to them or talk to them.

2. Help them get a Diagnosis

The vast majority of people with mental illnesses [do not seek medical help](#). Research by the Institute of Psychiatry (IoP) at King's College London, shows that stigma associated with mental illness is one of the top reasons people choose to forgo care. Stigma thus has the toxic effect of preventing people from going to the doctor for weeks months and even years. Yet it is important to get a definitive diagnosis from a trained healthcare professional, as this is the first step to effective treatment.

While it may be tempting to try to diagnose a condition yourself, based on what your loved one tells you, that should never take the place of professional diagnosis. Even your loved one's self-diagnosis is not an adequate replacement for professional diagnosis. A mental health diagnosis will usually be made by a psychiatrist with input from other healthcare professionals who will take a medical history and discuss symptoms. As a carer, you may also need to give input about the symptoms you have observed. Once a diagnosis is made, a treatment plan can be put in place. If you, as a carer to a minor, or your loved one who is at the age of majority, disagree with the diagnosis, you can seek a second opinion.

3. Learn about the Illness

Once you have obtained a diagnosis, you should learn as much as you can about the illness, including any medication and its side effects. Getting as much information as you can will help you understand the illness and you will be better able to care for your loved one. There are various sources of information available, including from your healthcare professional, carers support groups, or the HSE. Be careful of the information you find online. While there is plenty of useful information on the internet, not everything should be taken at face value. Besides, remember that mental illness can affect different people in different ways, so reading about how it affected someone on the internet is not necessarily an indication that the same will be true for your loved one. Other great sources of information include your local library or books you can buy from your local bookstores.

4. Respect their Privacy

Confidentiality is a big concept in the healthcare profession. Doctors, nurses and other professionals need to respect the privacy of patients and as such they keep information confidential. You may therefore find that these healthcare professionals are reluctant or unwilling to share information with you.

You may find this frustrating. However, you must realise that this is a legal obligation on the part of these professionals and not a result of malice. You can avoid this problem by obtaining consent of the person you are caring for to discuss their care needs and be given information. Such consent should be in writing and any changes to this consent should be clearly noted. This is of course only where the person you are caring for is an adult and able to make their own decisions. If you are caring for your child who is a minor, then healthcare professionals would provide you with the information, as their parent or legal guardian.

5. Set Boundaries

Mental illness can affect people in profound ways, including altering their behaviour such that they do things they wouldn't normally do. This can quickly become a source of friction. When you're caring for someone with a mental illness, it is important to establish personal boundaries. You need to have a conversation with them about behaviours that are unacceptable or dangerous and about what you are prepared to do and are not prepared to do. Make sure your conversation covers a range of scenarios and behaviours.

In setting boundaries, make sure you cover at least the following areas:

Aggressive Behaviour and Abuse:

Make it very clear you will not stand for aggressive behaviour or any other form of abuse, whether physical, verbal or emotional. Let them know that there is no room for violence and if you suspect that you are at risk of some kind of abuse, let other family members or friends know and ask for help. Also, do not hesitate to call An Garda/police if an abusive situation arises. If you do not live with the person you are caring for, but you experience some form of abuse or get assaulted when you visit or go to take care of them, then you should keep your distance and let them know you will no longer be able to care for them until they get the help that they need.

Sometimes the person with mental illness may be a danger to themselves rather than to you. They may be suicidal or prone to injuring themselves. In this case, consider getting an urgent assessment for the person you care for from a community mental health team or your local hospital. If the person is in imminent danger, call emergency services and have them taken to the hospital. You shouldn't try to diffuse the situation all by yourself.

Sometimes the unacceptable behaviour may be emotional – if your loved one tries to influence you by manipulating your emotions or resorting to emotional blackmail, you have the right to refuse to play along. Let them know this is not acceptable either.

Giving in to emotional manipulation or submitting to aggressive behaviour will only make the problem worse, so make sure you deal with things as they arise. Speak with the healthcare professionals supporting your loved one's treatment **about non-confrontational strategies you can use to set and enforce boundaries.**

Adhering to Treatment

Another ground rule you need to set is that the person you are caring for must adhere to their treatment schedule. Failure to stick to the treatment plan will not only prevent them from healing or being able to cope with life, it could set them back even further. Explain why it is important they follow their healthcare professionals' advice and insist that they do so. This would include attending all appointments, taking their medications as prescribed and any other aspects of the treatment plan that has been designed for them.

Maintaining Healthy Habits

One area you may battle with relates to those things that are not exactly on the treatment plan but are good habits that would be helpful. For example, while the doctor may not have put them on a specific diet, it is important that they eat healthily. To avoid a constant argument about what to eat or not, have a discussion about healthy eating and agree that junk food and other unhelpful things should be left out. This is easier for your loved one to stick to if they see you modelling a healthy eating style, so watch what you eat too.

The same goes for exercise. Regular exercise releases feel-good hormones and improves emotional and physical wellbeing. This can be highly beneficial in dealing with mental illness. Agree on a regular exercise schedule and again, model good behaviour by exercising too. Let them get plenty of sunshine and rest and channel their energy into constructive behaviours, like using their creative skills.

See further:

- Psychological Medicine: [What is the impact of mental health-related stigma on help-seeking? A systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies](#)
- Cycle Against Suicide: [Ask for Help](#)
- Mind: [How to Cope When Supporting Someone Else](#)
- Health Direct: [Caring for Someone with a Mental Disorder](#)

- Rethink Mental Illness: [Supporting Someone With a Mental Illness](#)
- Health Service Executive (HSE): [Carers' Support](#)

Dealing with Your Own Emotions

Whether you became a carer by default or by choice, and whether it happened gradually or abruptly due to a sudden crisis, you cannot avoid the emotional impact of being a care giver to someone with a mental illness.

The person you're caring for may not admit that he or she needs your support or care, and they may even try to push you away by saying hurtful things to you. Such reactions can make things really hard for you. At other times, the fear of being judged or condemned or feelings of inadequacy as a carer could also make things hard. All these, and more, give rise to negative emotions sooner or later.

Some of those emotions hit you right away, while others are delayed, arising only after some time has elapsed. Regardless of when the emotions come, it is important to keep this one thing in mind: *you are important too!*

- Not only is it okay to experience different emotions, both good and bad, it is valid and important.
- Failing to acknowledge and deal with your emotions as a carer is never a good option. Like a toddler who wants your whole attention, your emotions will not go away just because you refuse to acknowledge them.
- Not dealing with your feelings can result in loss of appetite, difficulties in coping with the person you are caring for, insufficient sleep and even physical ailments for you.
- When you acknowledge your emotions, you will discover proper ways of expressing them and getting rid of negative ones. This will help you cope better with the individual receiving care from you.

Some of the more common, usually hard-to-admit feelings that carers experience are listed below, along with suggestions on how to cope with them. If you identify with any of these emotions, please seek help. Some resources are included to get you started, but you should explore others that may be locally available to you.

Ambivalence

This means having both negative and positive feelings towards something or someone. It is the feeling of wanting to continue with what you are doing and the feeling of wanting to quit. On good days, you can view caring for a person with mental illness as a gift to you and the patient, while on bad days, you will have feelings where you wish you didn't have to be there caring for the person.

How to cope: *There is nothing wrong with you for feeling like this. You don't need to try to stop yourself from having both sets of feelings, and neither the good nor the bad feelings will last forever. The truth is, how we feel from moment to moment is often dictated by circumstances. When you are tired, you are more prone to have negative feelings, whereas when you are well rested or have received some good news, you may feel more optimistic.*

Anger

Realise that anger and frustration are normal feelings that come up when one is constantly around someone who needs assistance on a daily basis yet is rejecting any offer of help. Caring for someone with mental health issue, in particular, can be worse, as the person in question can be combative and irrational. At times like this, it is often not possible to be in complete control of your emotions.

How to cope: *Find ways to properly expressing yourself, especially before a situation that makes you angry arises. That way you will be prepared when it does. One of the best ways to cope is by learning to give yourself a "time out," to walk away and calm down. Also, ensure you find supportive people who you can talk to about what transpired. Unburdening yourself helps with healing. And very importantly, forgive yourself.*

Anxiety

Anxiety is your body's natural response to stress. When things get out of control and you don't know how to bring them back under control, you may experience feelings of fear, apprehension or nervousness about what is to come. Anxiety can express itself in various forms, such as the urge to cry, the impulse to run away, heart palpitations, breaking into a sweat or having a short fuse with the person you're caring for or others around you.

How to cope: *Pay attention to how you're feeling and once you recognise that you're anxious, pause. Your body is warning you that something is wrong. Start by taking deep breaths to regain your*

composure. Next, try to get to the root of your anxiety by figuring out what's bothering you. This will require setting time aside to explore your thoughts and feelings. Journaling is a great way to do this. Also, praying, meditating, and doing things that will take your thoughts away from the source of anxiety are great ways to cope.

Boredom

One of the challenges associated with caring for someone who has a mental illness is the effect it has on your social life. You may find yourself stuck at home or in a particular place taking care of your loved one and being unable to socialise. This can lead to boredom. Even when the opportunity arises to engage in one social activity or the other, you may find that that you have lost both interest and the energy to do it.

How to cope: *Giving yourself a break from care-giving can be a big help. This lets you have some time for yourself and in the process, your resilience and patience will increase. Even simple things like reading a book, going for a walk, playing a game, going out for a movie can help.*

Respite care is available through the HSE and may involve providing alternative family or institutional care for your loved one so you can take a short break, a holiday or a rest. It can be short-term respite such as for an evening, or a much longer one for up to two weeks, during which the person you are caring for will be admitted to a HSE nursing home for a period of up to two weeks. Respite care can be organised through your public health nurse or family doctor (GP).

Sadness and Depression

As a carer supporting someone with a mental illness, you are likely to experience some form of depression. Sometimes this manifests as feeling helpless or hopeless, being unable to sleep, or finding it hard to get up and face the day. In some cases, you will have the urge to burst into tears.

How to cope: *Depression should be taken seriously and not ignored. Fortunately, it is treatable. Seeking professional help from your physician or a counsellor who understands care-giving is a good measure for dealing with depression while caring for a person with mental illness. Regular physical exercise also helps.*

Disgust and Embarrassment

Feelings of disgust can arise if your duties involve taking care of intimate personal hygiene for the person you are taking care of. This may include helping them to go to the toilet, cleaning and bathing, or watching him or her eat sloppily. Similarly, rude, abusive language or comments from the person you are caring for can make you feel embarrassed, especially when you are in public, causing you to be anxious about what other people will say.

How to cope: *it is important to know that the person you're caring for is not in control of their actions and they do not purposely do things just to annoy you. Rather than worrying about what people will say or think, you would be surprised that people are a lot more understanding than you expect.*

Fear

It is normal to fear what the future holds and what risks might threaten the person you are caring for. Often, such fear will arise when you are not with the person, or the fear may arise whenever you think of what will happen if you can't cope any longer.

How to cope: *It is of great importance to have emergency plans. So, it definitely will make sense to have a spare care-giver in mind in case some kind of emergency should happen to you. When fear grips you, it is also advisable to talk to someone who understands your situation and can provide a good perspective.*

Frustration

You may feel like you are not doing anything right or that things are not going as planned no matter how hard you try. Frustration may set in once you realise how much of your time is being taken up by care giving. It may feel as if the mental illness has dominated your life and your own life does not matter. This could cause you to lose your temper more frequently and even cause you to struggle with your own mental health.

How to cope: *Acknowledging how frustrating it can be to care for someone with a mental illness is the first step to take. Find and join a support group where you can learn from other carers and you can mutually support each other. Exercise, sleep, and go on breaks so that you can have time for yourself and stand a chance to replenishing your lost energy.*

Grief

If the patient's mental health shows no signs of improvement or declines, feelings of grief may set in. Also, thoughts of the relationship you previously enjoyed with the patient prior to the onset of mental illness could lead to grief. Grief, however, is one of the mind's way of dealing with the challenges of life. Refusing to grieve over the stresses and emotional pains you experience daily as the patient's carer could be detrimental, as bottled-in grief could become something more complicated.

How to cope: *Creating a ritual can sometimes be helpful. Rituals could include writing on a piece of paper, all the things your loved one is no longer able to do, and then throwing the piece of paper away as a symbol of letting go. Also, just allow yourself to grieve; this helps you heal faster.*

Guilt

Guilt is the feeling that sets in when we do something wrong. In caring for someone with a mental illness, guilt could come in many forms. There is guilt that sets in when you feel you are somehow to blame for the mental illness. For example, you may feel that you did not do enough to prevent them from getting sick initially. There is guilt over not being patient enough or losing your temper. Many times, caregivers also feel guilty for doing simple things like going out to lunch or movie with a friend. They think they have been selfish and blame themselves.

How to cope: *The first thing is to forgive yourself for any mistakes you may have made. Cut yourself some slack and realise you cannot be perfect or in complete control of how things turn out. Also remember that taking out sometime for yourself is also beneficial to the person you are caring for, as it puts you in a better frame of mind to help them.*

Impatience

It can be tasking to get the person you are caring for to do normal everyday things. For example, dressing up or getting to doctor's appointments on time can seem like an impossibility. You may find yourself constantly behind on your schedule, and this could cause you to lose patience easily.

How to cope: *While it is natural to want to hasten things and get the person you are caring for to be more compliant so that you are able to maintain a semblance of a schedule, it is good to keep a balance too. Start by slowing down and building in lots of extra time into all the tasks you need to accomplish.*

Understand that there will be things you can't control and make up your mind not to let those things affect you unduly.

See Further:

- Cycle Against Suicide: [Ask for Help](#)
- Citizens Information: [Respite Care](#)
- Health Service Executive (HSE): [Steps for managing Stress](#)
 - [How to deal with Panic attacks:](#)
 - [Anxiety](#)
 - [Clinical depression](#)
- Yourmentalhealth.ie [Looking after mental health: Information and advice for families and friends](#)
- Mental Health Ireland: [Anger](#)
- [Samaritans Ireland](#)
- Shine: [Supporting People affected by Mental Ill Health](#)
- [Care Alliance Ireland](#)
- [Family Carers Ireland](#)

Caring for Your Wellbeing

Even if you have not identified any of the emotions above as something you feel, you must take care of your own emotional health and wellbeing if you are caring for someone with a mental health illness. You don't have to wait until you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope. Here are some of things you do to help look after yourself:

- Be realistic. Understand the things you can and can't do as a carer, so you don't put yourself under unnecessary pressure. Begin by making a list of all the ways in which the person you are caring for needs support. Identify the ones you can do and make arrangements for the ones you can't.
- Understand the things the person you are caring for can and can't do for themselves so that your expectations align with reality.
- Make out time for yourself and give yourself breaks to do other things you want to do.
- Have someone you can confide in and share your feelings with.
- Eat well and ensure you maintain a well-balanced diet.

- Don't ignore your own health; recognise when you need a break
- Join a support group for carers.
- Ask for help when you need it. This could be from a family member or friend or hiring someone
- If you start feeling stressed, do not hesitate to talk to your doctor about it – perhaps counselling or other treatment may be of help to you.
- Take care of your physical health. This is the best you can do for yourself. Start by learning a relaxation technique and creating time for yourself. Rest very well from time to time by getting enough sleep. Finally, exercise regularly and stay hydrated.

There are other little practical steps you can take, which may not seem like much, but cumulatively, help create a smoother, easier way to carry out your care duties. For example:

- Organising meetings or appointments may be a big part of the way you care someone with a mental illness. To help you manage this, you can get a good record keeping and scheduling system to remind you of meetings and appointments.
- Similarly, an app to remind you of medications – when to administer them or track if they have been taken is also a good tool. A fitness app that helps you remember to take a set number of steps or carry out other activities per day is a good way to maintain your own physical and emotional health and ward off depression.
- [MeetUps](#) are a good way to meet people in your locality with similar passions or in the same care situations as you.
- Don't forget to take advantage of services that may be available through your local social services department. You can ask for a 'carer's assessment' which will reveal if you need any services to help you in supporting and caring for someone with a mental illness. Lastly, there are many local organisations and services that can assist you with practical support. We have included some of them throughout this toolkit and in the resources section below. Visit their websites or call to explore the ways they can support you.

Additional Resources

- Cycle Against Suicide: [Ask for Help](#)
- Jacqui O'Riordan and Carol Kelleher: [A Fine Balance: Mental Health and Family Caring](#)
- Mind.org: [How to cope when supporting someone else](#)
- Rethink Mental Illness: [Supporting someone with a mental illness](#)
- Sane.org: [Family, friends and carers](#)
- [Shine](#): Shine aims to empower people with mental ill health and their families through support, information and education while also advocating for social change.
- [Samaritans](#): Samaritans offer emotional support 24/7, 365 days a year on freephone
- [MyMind Centre for Mental Wellbeing](#): MyMind Centre for Mental Wellbeing provides counselling and psychotherapy face to face in Dublin, Limerick and Cork, and online.
- [HSE Live](#) HSE Live offers a national information service to everyone in Ireland and provides information on health services and entitlements, for the cost of a local call.
- [Irish Council for Psychotherapy](#)
- American Psychiatric Association: [Helping a Loved One Cope with Mental Illness](#)

About Cycle Against Suicide

Cycle Against Suicide is a national awareness charity that strives to break down the barriers around mental health illness and works to increase awareness of the supports and treatments that are available to empower those affected.

While progress has been made in terms of prioritising mental health, the continued impact of the stigma surrounding this issue remains large. To create a discrimination-free society, Cycle Against Suicide sets out to develop public awareness of its core message:

***IT'S OK NOT TO FEEL OK; AND IT IS ABSOLUTELY OK TO ASK
FOR HELP'***