

Connecting patients to the

right care, in the right place, at the right time

Quick Guide: Talking to Your Doctor About Mental Health

It can be hard to find the right words to describe how you feel. This guide may help you identify some of the most common mental health symptoms and communicate them to your healthcare provider. Before your next appointment, take a few moments to think about how you've been feeling.

<p>I'm noticing I feel anxious. It feels like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I'm keyed up or on edge - I'm panicking - I'm avoiding activities because they make me too nervous - My body is giving me cues that I'm anxious. I'm noticing sweating, shaking, dry mouth, muscle tension or other physical sensations 	<p>I'm noticing my mood is low. It feels like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I've lost interest in things I used to enjoy - I'm exhausted - I feel guilty or worthless most of the time - I'm having trouble concentrating - My appetite has changed 	<p>I'm having trouble managing my emotions. It feels like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My emotions change at the drop of a hat - I feel angry a lot of the time - My relationships have a lot of conflict - I act impulsively - I hurt myself on purpose to cope - I feel empty
<p>I've experienced a traumatic event. Ever since, I've noticed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I'm having nightmares - I am having vivid memories about the event - I avoid things that remind me of the event - I feel like something bad is going to happen most of the time - I startle easily 	<p>I'm using more drugs or alcohol than I want to. I'm noticing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I spend a lot of time thinking about and getting drugs or alcohol - I keep using drugs or alcohol, even though it is causing challenges in my life - I have cravings for drugs or alcohol - I feel like I've lost control of my substance use 	<p>I'm seeing, hearing, and feeling things I don't understand. I feel like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People can hear what I'm thinking - I'm seeing unusual things that others don't seem to see - I'm hearing sounds or voices that others can't seem to hear - I'm having a hard time getting people to understand what I'm talking about - I feel like people are trying to hurt me - I feel like something is crawling under my skin
<p>For several days in a row, I notice my mood is very high. It feels like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I'm on top of the world - I don't need sleep - I'm much more talkative than usual - My thoughts are racing and won't slow down - I have lots of energy - I'm doing things that others might call excessive or risky 	<p>Notes for my appointment:</p>	

If you are having thoughts of harming yourself or someone else, contact COAST at 905-972-8338. For immediate help, call 911 or go to your local Emergency Department.

This handout is meant for informational purposes only and is not meant to diagnose or treat a mental health condition. If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, talk to your primary care provider for support.