

New Medical Diagnosis & Mental Health: What You Need to Know

What Happens Mentally When You Receive a New Diagnosis?

Receiving a new medical diagnosis—whether chronic, life-altering, or unexpected—can trigger a range of emotional and psychological responses, including:

- Shock or Numbness
- Fear of the Future
- Anger or Frustration
- Sadness or Grief
- Anxiety about the Unknown
- Denial or Disbelief

These are natural and valid reactions. But left unacknowledged, they can evolve into more serious mental health concerns.

Common Mental Health Impacts

1. Depression

Feelings of hopelessness, sadness, or a loss of interest in life can occur—especially if the diagnosis changes your daily function or independence.

2. Anxiety

Worry about the condition worsening, treatment side effects, or changes in relationships and work.

3. Adjustment Disorders

Trouble adapting to your new reality may cause emotional and behavioral symptoms lasting more than six months.

4. Post-Traumatic Stress

If the diagnosis was sudden or traumatic, it may trigger lingering stress or fear.

Mind-Body Connection

Mental health and physical health are deeply linked:

- Untreated emotional distress can affect your body's ability to heal or respond to treatment.
- Poor mental health may lead to neglecting self-care, medication routines, or follow-ups.
- Stress and anxiety can increase inflammation, weaken immunity, and worsen physical symptoms.

Coping Strategies That Help

- **Acknowledge Your Emotions**
Give yourself permission to feel — there's no "right" reaction.
- **Learn About Your Diagnosis**
Reliable information can reduce fear and empower you to make informed choices.
- **Build a Support Network**
Share your experience with trusted friends, family, or peer support groups.
- **Maintain Healthy Routines**
Sleep, nutrition, physical activity, and rest are key to emotional and physical healing.
- **Set Small, Achievable Goals**
Celebrate each step, no matter how small. Progress matters.
- **Talk to a Professional**
Therapists, counselors, or medical social workers can help process emotions and build resilience.

When to Seek Mental Health Help

- Persistent sadness, anxiety, or hopelessness
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Difficulty functioning in daily life
- Withdrawal from loved ones
- Substance misuse

You are not alone. Help is available.

FOR MENTAL HEALTH HELP OR SUPPORT, CONTACT:

MWI (24-HOUR LINE): 239-1111 | RED CROSS: 236-8253



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Health