

Leading Our Community to Improved Health...

Take an Active Part in Your Health Care!



Dear Member:

AultCare and Aultra offer a Care Coordination program to advocate for you to get the care, information and community services you need. We have combined the traditional services of Utilization Management, Case Management and Disease Management into one service, provided by one Care Coordinator, who will be your advocate and help you navigate through the health care system. Our team of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and licensed social workers are available by phone to help you take control of your health and well-being!

Our services are free and we provide:

- Assistance with the referral process to out-of-network specialists
- Help with transitioning your care to panel providers, if appropriate
- Care coordination to help you get the most from your plan benefits while maintaining quality, cost-effective treatment
- Community resource information to provide assistance with prescriptions, utilities and transportation if you are having financial difficulties
- Phone calls with a nurse who specializes in managing care for health conditions
- Educational materials to supplement information your physician has provided
- Informative mailings and handouts about your condition
- Equipment such as the Cardiocom Telescale® and GlucoCom Telemonitoring System to help you manage your condition from the convenience of your home
- Staff to guide you in the right direction and help you work with your doctors to improve your health
- Reliable referrals to service agencies in the community

You may benefit from our Care Coordination services if you:

- Have questions about your health status or health care
- Are in need of a transplant
- Have been newly diagnosed with cancer
- Are experiencing complex medical issues
- Are receiving specialty care outside of the network

Best Regards,

Your Chronic Care Management Team



When a Loved One Has a Mental Illness

It's hard to watch a loved one deal with mental illness. You want to help. Yet you may not know what to do. Your loved one may even push you away. But don't give up. Your support is needed now more than ever. Talk to your loved one's health care provider. Or, contact a group for families of people with mental illness. They can help give you the guidance you need.

What You Can Do

Living with mental illness can be overwhelming. Your loved one may say or do things that shock or frighten you. Sometimes, your loved one may resist treatment. Knowing what to do can help you cope:

- **Help your loved one get proper care.** Often, people with a mental illness deny there's a problem. Or, they may not be able to seek help on their own.
- **Encourage your loved one to stick with treatment.** This may be your most crucial job. Medications that treat mental illness can have side effects. As a result, your loved one may stop taking them. But this will likely cause symptoms to come back. You might also want to attend doctor visits with your loved one to discuss medication and other issues.
- **Provide emotional support.** Encourage your loved one to share his or her feelings. Listen, and don't judge. Let your loved one know he or she can count on you.
- **Be patient.** The healing process takes time. In some cases, your loved one may never fully recover. But his or her symptoms will likely improve.
- **Invite your loved one to take part in activities.** But don't push.
- **Take care of yourself.** Helping your loved one can be very stressful. Take time to care for yourself. You'll have more patience and will be better able to cope.

Resources

National Alliance for the
Mentally Ill 800-950-6264
www.nami.org

National Institute of Men-
tal Health Information
Resources 301-443-4513
www.nimh.nih.gov

National Mental Health
Association 800-969-6642
www.nmha.org

For Caregivers: Coping Tips

Caregivers often feel they must tend to their loved one's needs full time. But burning yourself out doesn't help anyone. You can't take good care of someone else without taking good care of yourself as well. It's not selfish. It's essential. Take a break. Eat right. Get out and exercise. Most of all, accept that you can't do everything yourself.

Give Yourself a Break

All of the things you do are not equally important. Set priorities. That way you won't be busy all the time. Look after your health. Go for a walk each chance you get. Take a long bath. Lift your spirits by having lunch with a friend. Or do nothing for an hour. Just nap or relax.

Accept Help

Knowing you can count on others can be a relief. Accept help when it's offered. And be willing to ask for help when you need it. Those who care about you really do want to help.



Know the Signs and Symptoms of Depression

Everyone feels down at times. The blues are a natural part of life. But an unhappy period that's intense or lasts for more than a couple of weeks can be a sign of **depression**. Depression is a serious illness. It can disrupt the lives of family and friends. If you know someone you think may be depressed, find out what you can do to help.

Recognizing Signs of Depression

People who are depressed may:

- Feel unhappy, sad, blue, down, or miserable nearly every day.
- Feel helpless, hopeless, or worthless.
- Lose interest in hobbies, friends, and activities that used to give pleasure.
- Not sleep well or sleep too much.
- Gain or lose weight.
- Feel low on energy or constantly tired.
- Have a hard time concentrating or making decisions.
- Lose interest in sex.
- Have physical symptoms, such as stomachaches, headaches, or backaches.



Seek out a mental health professional or counselor if you can't cope on your own. Helping people is their specialty. Ask your doctor, family or friends for recommendations. If they can't help, ask your spiritual leader or the Disease Management Team for some names.

Know the Serious Signals

Warning signals for suicide include:

- Threats or talk of suicide.
- Statements such as "I won't be a problem much longer" or "Nothing matters."
- Giving away possessions or making a will or funeral arrangements.
- Buying a gun or other weapon.
- Sudden, unexplained cheerfulness or calm after a period of depression.

If you notice any of these signs, get help right away. Call a health care professional, mental health clinic, or suicide hotline and ask what action to take. In an emergency, don't hesitate to call the police.

Resources:

National Institute of Mental Health - www.nimh.nih.gov • 866-615-6464

National Alliance on Mental Health - www.nami.org • 800-950-6264

Mental Health America - 800-969-6643 • 800-969-6643

National Suicide Hotline - 800-784-2433

The American Heart Association has these suggestions:

- *Take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly, breathe deeply and think of a peaceful scene.*
- *Talk with family, friends, clergy or other trusted advisers about your concerns and stresses and ask for their support.*
- *Exercise regularly. Do something you enjoy like walking, swimming, jogging, golfing, walking a pet, tai chi or cycling. Check with your doctor to determine what activity level is right for you.*



Depression and Suicide in Older Adults

Nearly 2 million older Americans have some type of depression. Sadly, some of them even take their own lives. Yet depression among older adults is often ignored. Learn the warning signs. You may help spare a loved one needless pain. You may also save a life.

What Is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way you think and feel. The most common symptom is a feeling of deep sadness. People who are depressed also may seem tired and listless. And nothing seems to give them pleasure. It's normal to grieve or be sad sometimes. But sadness lessens or passes with time. Depression rarely goes away or improves on its own. Other symptoms of depression are:

- Sleeping more or less than normal
- Eating more or less than normal
- Having headaches, stomachaches, or other pains that don't go away
- Feeling nervous, "empty," or worthless
- Crying a great deal
- Thinking or talking about suicide or death
- Feeling confused or forgetful

What Causes It?

The causes of depression aren't fully known. Certain chemicals in the brain play a role. Depression does run in families. And life stresses can also trigger depression in some people. That may be the case with older adults. They often face great burdens, such as the death of friends or a spouse. They may have failing health. And they are more likely to be alone, lonely, or poor.

How You Can Help

Often, depressed people may not want to ask for help. When they do, they may be ignored. Or, they may receive the wrong treatment. You can help by showing parents and older friends love and support. If they seem depressed, help them find the right treatment. Talk to your doctor. Or contact a local mental health center, social service agency, or hospital. With modern treatment, no one has to suffer from depression.

Resources:

National Institute of Mental Health - 866-615-6464
www.nimh.nih.gov

National Alliance on Mental Illness - 800-950-6264
www.nami.org

Mental Health America - 800-969-6642
www.nmha.org

National Suicide Hotline - 800-784-2433 (800-SUICIDE)

Warning Signs of Suicide and What You Can Do

If you think a person could be suicidal, ask, “Have you thought about suicide?” If they say “yes,” they may already have a plan for how and when they will attempt it. Find out as much as you can. The more detailed the plan, and the easier it is to carry out, the more danger the person is in right now.

Remember the Warning Signs Mentioned on Page 4

The warning signs for suicide include:

- Threats or talk of suicide
- Buying a gun or other weapon
- Statements such as “Soon, I won’t be a problem” or “Nothing matters”
- Giving away items they own, making out a will, or planning their funeral
- Suddenly being happy or calm after being depressed

Get Help

Don’t try to handle this alone. You can be the most help by getting the person to a trained professional. Why? Because suicidal thinking may be a sign of depression, a serious but treatable illness. Once it is treated, suicidal thinking often goes away.

In an Emergency—Call 911

Don’t leave the person alone. Call 911 or a 24-hour suicide crisis hotline. It can be found in the yellow pages of your phone book under “Suicide.” You can also get help at the nearest hospital emergency room (ER).

Don’t Keep It a Secret

Call a mental health clinic or a licensed mental health professional in your area: a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, psychiatric or clinical social worker, marriage and family counselor, or clergy. Tell them you need help for a person who is thinking about suicide.

Resources

National Suicide Hotline - 800-784-2433 (800-SUICIDE)

National Institutes of Mental Health - 866-615-6464
www.nimh.nih.gov

National Alliance on Mental Illness - 800-950-6264
www.nami.org

Mental Health America - 800-969-6642
www.nmha.org





Understanding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

You may have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if you've been through a traumatic event and are having trouble dealing with it. Such events may include a car crash, rape, domestic violence, military combat, or violent crime. While it is normal to have some anxiety after such an event, it usually goes away in time. But with PTSD, the anxiety is more intense and keeps coming back. And the trauma is relived through nightmares, intrusive memories, and flashbacks (vivid memories that seem real). The symptoms of PTSD can cause problems with relationships and make it hard to cope with daily life. But it can be treated. With help, you can feel better.

How Does It Feel?

Symptoms of PTSD often start within a few months of the event. Here are some common symptoms:

You startle more easily, feel anxious and on edge all the time. This can lead to sleep problems. It can cause you to feel overwhelmed or become angry or upset more easily. Panic attacks (sudden, intense feelings of terror and a strong need to escape from wherever you are) can also occur.

You relive the event through nightmares and flashbacks. During these, you may feel strong emotions and as though you're reliving the event all over again.

You avoid people, places, or activities that remind you of the trauma. You may hold in your feelings and become emotionally numb. It may be hard to concentrate at work or school or to relax with friends. You may be afraid to let people get close to you.

Who Does It Affect?

Not everyone who survives a trauma will have PTSD. But many will. In fact, millions of people have the condition. PTSD can happen to anyone, but it most often develops after a person feels his or her or another's life is threatened.

You're at risk for PTSD if you have experienced or witnessed:

- A rape or sexual abuse
- A mugging or carjacking
- A car accident or plane crash
- A life-threatening illness
- War
- Domestic violence
- Childhood abuse
- Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, or hurricanes
- The sudden death of a loved one

Finding Help

The first step is to talk to a trusted counselor or health care provider. He or she can help you take the next step to treatment. This may involve therapy (also called counseling) and medication.

Are You Having Suicidal Thoughts?

You may be feeling helpless, hopeless, and that you can't go on. You may even have thoughts of suicide. But help is available. There are ways to ease this pain and manage the problems in your life.

Please tell your health care provider or someone you care about right away if you are thinking about harming or killing yourself. You can also call, toll-free, 800-SUICIDE (800-784-2433) from anywhere in the U.S.

Resources

American Psychiatric Association
888-357-7924
www.healthyminds.org

American Psychological Association
www.apahelpcenter.org

Anxiety Disorders Association of America
www.adaa.org

Mental Health America
www.nmha.org

National Center for PTSD
802-296-6300
www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/information

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov/topics/topic-page-ptsd.shtml

Treating Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder results in extreme mood swings that can greatly disrupt your life. These symptoms may cause you distress. But with treatment you can lead a more normal life.

Medications

Bipolar disorder is often treated with medications that stabilize moods. They help you feel better by keeping your moods more even and help prevent future mood swings. Sometimes you may also be prescribed medications that treat depression. All medications can have side effects. If you're troubled by side effects, tell your doctor. Changing the dose or type of your medication may help. But don't stop taking medications until your doctor tells you. If you do, your symptoms will likely come back.

Talk Therapy (Psychotherapy)

Talking to a therapist or counselor may be part of your treatment. Having bipolar disorder can make it hard to hold a job or go to school. It can create stress for both you and your loved ones. Your therapist can help you work out problems and heal relationships. He or she can also provide support when you need it most.

Friends and Family

Those closest to you may also need support. There are many groups for families of people with bipolar disorder. Learning more about this disorder can help your loved ones cope. It can also help them take an active role in your care.

Looking Ahead

Much research is being done on bipolar disorder. This research may lead to improved treatments and hope for a better future.



Resources

National Institute of Mental Health:
www.nimh.nih.gov, 301-443-4513

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill:
www.nami.org, 800-950-6264

National Mental Health Association:
www.nmha.org, 800-969-6642



Recognizing the Signs of Substance Abuse in Teens

Teens are not adults, yet they often have to make adult decisions about drugs and alcohol. Try to be aware of the pressures teens face and learn the signs of substance abuse. If your child has a problem with alcohol or drugs, take action. Your doctor can help.

Why Do Teens Abuse Drugs?

Some of the most common reasons kids try drugs include:

- **Peer pressure.** Teens often face intense pressure from their friends to try drugs.
- **Social anxiety.** Teens may think drug use will help them fit in. Or, they may believe it will make them more relaxed and outgoing.
- **Curiosity.** It's normal for teens to want to find out about drugs for themselves.
- **Problems with school, parents, or sex.** Teens often assume that getting high will solve all their problems.

What Are the Warning Signs?

It can be hard to spot drug use in teens. That's because their lives are often in turmoil. Also, many signs of drug abuse may be signs of other problems. These may include depression and eating disorders. You should be concerned if your teen:

- Falls behind in school. A drastic drop in grades may signal a serious problem
- Withdraws from family and old friends
- Gives up former activities, such as sports or music
- Lies or steals
- Takes risks
- Seems moody or depressed
- Is very hostile
- Gets in trouble with the law or at school

Resource

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
800-729-6686, <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>

What You Can Do

Talk to your teen about drug use. Try not to react too strongly. Most of all, listen to what your teen has to say. If your teen is in trouble, talk to someone you trust. That might be your health care provider, a school counselor, or local mental health clinic. Many school districts now have drug abuse counselors who can help. Or, contact one of the many groups that deal with drug abuse.

To help keep your kids away from drugs:

- Spend time with your teen. Do something together at least once a week.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Find out where your children are going and who their friends are.
- Try to be there when your children get home. The peak time for drug abuse is between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m.
- Don't lecture. Teens need to know they can come to you for help.
- Be a good listener.

Understanding Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) means having constant, intrusive fears (obsessions) that cause you extreme anxiety. Examples include repeated, relentless thoughts about germs, or constant worry that you left the door unlocked. Certain behaviors (compulsions) help relieve the anxiety. You might wash your hands over and over, or repeatedly check the lock. These compulsions can take hours out of your day and cause major problems in your life. In most cases, treatment can help relieve your symptoms. Talk to your health care provider or a mental health professional. He or she can help you.

How Does It Feel?

You probably know your thoughts and actions are irrational, but you can't stop them. Common obsessions are:

- A fear of germs or contamination. This can lead you to wash your hands over and over, wear gloves, or clean the house constantly.
- A fear that you didn't do something important, such as turn off the stove or lock the door. You check these things repeatedly.
- A need to do tasks in a certain order or to have items counted out, arranged, or organized in a certain way. If the routine is even slightly altered, you start over.
- A fear of throwing away something you might need later. This fear may lead to hoarding.



Who Does OCD Affect?

Most often, OCD strikes teens and young adults, but even preschool children may have the disorder. Both men and women are affected. It also affects people of every race and income level.

What Causes It? Doctors once thought OCD was caused by beliefs you learned in childhood. But it's now known that brain chemistry plays a large role in the disorder. OCD also seems to run in families. Bacterial infections, such as rheumatic fever, may trigger OCD in some people.

Getting Help - You may try to hide symptoms of OCD from others. You also may be afraid to seek help. Having OCD is nothing to be ashamed of. Treatment with therapy and certain medications can help ease your distress.

Obsessions - An obsession is a constant, unwanted thought that you can't control. You may know the thought is unreasonable. Yet you can't seem to stop it. For instance, you might be very clean. Yet you may constantly worry about germs. Obsessions can make you anxious and unhappy.

Compulsions - A compulsion is an urge to do something to lessen distress. In obsessive-compulsive disorder, you'll likely feel the need to repeat certain actions. This may help reduce the concern caused by obsessive thoughts. The most common compulsions are washing, cleaning, and checking. For instance, you might spend hours each day washing your hands. Or, you might check your stove over and over to make sure it's turned off. In severe cases, compulsions can take over your life. Common compulsions include:

- **Cleaning.** You may spend hours each day washing yourself or cleaning.
- **Checking.** You fear you may harm yourself or others. So you check what you've done again and again.
- **Repeating.** You repeat a word or name over and over.
- **Avoiding.** You go to extremes to avoid what scares you.
- **Hoarding.** You may save a large number of items that you don't need.



Treating Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

You don't have to live with OCD. Treatment and your own efforts can offer hope for a healthier, happier life. Talk to your health care provider. Or, contact a mental health professional or mental health clinic. They're listed in the yellow pages of your phone book. If you can't afford treatment, don't give up. There are programs that may help pay for your care.

Medications

Medications that treat depression may also help control the symptoms of OCD. These medications don't cure the disorder, but they can provide some relief. It may take at least 3 weeks for them to work. Once you feel better, don't stop taking them on your own. If you do, your symptoms will likely come back. Also, keep in mind that most medications can have side effects. If you're troubled by side effects, tell your doctor. Changing the dose or type of medication may help.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

This type of therapy can help you change unwanted thought patterns. You'll also learn to control compulsive actions. Working with your therapist, you'll confront your unwanted thoughts and fears, one step at a time.

Family Therapy

OCD may also affect your loved ones. They may be confused or angered by your symptoms. Often, they may want to help but don't know what to do. A family therapist can help them learn more about OCD. They may also find comfort in an OCD support group.



Resources

- National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov..... 866-615-6464
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org 800-950-6264
- The National Mental Health Association: www.nmha.org 800-969-6642
- International OCD Foundation: www.ocfoundation.org 617-973-5801

AultCare and Aultra Members...

If you have questions regarding provider information, coverage, benefits, services, business hours or any other health plan topics we are here to help!

Please contact our friendly customer service staff for fast answers to your questions!

AultCare Service Center:

330-363-6360 or 1-800-344-8858

TTY: 330-363-2393 or 1-866-633-4752

Call Center & Walk-In Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm EST

Aultra Group Service Center:

330-363-2050 or toll free: 1-855-270-8497

Call Center Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm EST



24 Hour Health Line

By calling the Aultman Health Line at **330-363-7620**, or toll-free at **1-866-422-9603** you will be directed to an experienced nurse to answer your health-related questions. This service is available 24 hours a day. All calls are **FREE** and entirely confidential!

- Provide first aid instructions and general health information
- Determine what level of care is most appropriate for you
- Answer your medication questions
- Other suggestions for self care

