

# Help for Cystic Fibrosis Caregivers

## *Mental Health: Anxiety and Depression*

Cystic fibrosis (CF) can cause a lot of stress for families. Caring for a child with CF is a lifelong challenge. It takes a lot of time and energy.

Caregivers of children with CF:

- manage complicated treatments and diet needs for their child
- face scary new infections, tests, and hospitalizations
- handle costs and insurance for medical care.

It's common for caregivers to feel overwhelmed, worried, or sad at times. But sometimes stress can build up and cause more serious health problems, like anxiety and depression. If this happens you may find it harder to take care of yourself or your child.

As your child's caregiver, you're one of the most important members of their health care team. When you're healthy, you're able to give good care to your child and the rest of your family. We want to help you be as healthy as you can.

In this document, we'll give you:

- information on the signs of anxiety and depression
- resources to get help and support.

## What are the signs of anxiety and depression?

Caregivers can sometimes focus so much on caring for their child that they do not notice their own problems and signs of stress. But you can learn the signs of anxiety and depression.

Anxiety is when you feel worried or afraid. It's how your body reacts to stress. Some anxiety is normal. But too much can make it hard to work, care for yourself, or care for your family.

Depression is when you feel sad most of the time. You may also have less interest in things you used to enjoy. You may not have enough energy or interest to work, enjoy yourself, or care for others.

On the next page you can answer a few questions to see if you have any signs of anxiety or depression.

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## Anxiety

Answer the questions below about anxiety in your daily life. Choose the answer that feels most true for you.

**In the last 2 weeks, how often have you felt nervous, anxious, or tense?**

- Not at all (0 points)
- Several days (1 point)
- More than half the days (2 points)
- Nearly every day (3 points)

**In the last 2 weeks, how often have you not been able to stop worrying?**

- Not at all (0 points)
- Several days (1 point)
- More than half the days (2 points)
- Nearly every day (3 points)

Add the points from both questions together. If you have 3 or more points, you may have signs of anxiety. It may help you to talk to a mental health care provider. You can find a list of resources on page 3.

## Depression

Answer the questions below about depression in your daily life. Choose the answer that feels most true for you.

**In the last 2 weeks, how often have you felt down, depressed, or hopeless?**

- Not at all (0 points)
- Several days (1 point)
- More than half the days (2 points)
- Nearly every day (3 points)

**In the last 2 weeks, how often have you not wanted or not enjoyed doing things?**

- Not at all (0 points)
- Several days (1 point)
- More than half the days (2 points)
- Nearly every day (3 points)

Add the points from both questions together.

If you have 3 or more points, you may have signs of depression. It may help you to talk to a mental health care provider. You can find a list of resources on page 3.

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## How can I get help?

Your child's CF team can help. You can:

- call (615) 875-3086 to talk to the CF mental health coordinator. They can help you find a mental health provider and other resources.
- ask us questions at your child's next visit to the CF Clinic. The CF clinic coordinator or your child's provider can connect you with our support team.
- talk to your regular primary provider. Let us know if you need help finding a primary provider.

**If you have an urgent need, or if you're thinking of harming yourself or others, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room right away.**

## Mental health support resources

### *Tennessee Statewide Crisis Phone Line*

(855) 274-7471

Text "TN" to 741-741

**Tn.Gov/behavioral-health/need-help**

They offer support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

They can send help to you, if needed.

### *Tennessee Department of Mental Health*

1-800-560-5767

oca.tdmhasas@tn.gov

**Tn.Gov/behavioral-health/mental-health-services**

They can help find mental health resources in your area.

### *Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute (CFRI)*

**CFRI.org/education-support/psychosocial-support-programs/**

They can help pay the cost of counseling.

### *CF Foundation Compass*

(844) 266-7277

compass@cff.org

**CFF.org/assistance-services/about-compass/what-is-compass**

They can help you find resources and services in your area.

### *Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)*

Your employer may offer health services to you and your family at a low cost or no cost. Talk to your HR (human resources) department about this program.

### *Primary Care and Family Practice*

A primary care provider can help check for signs of anxiety and depression. They may also help you find a mental health provider.

### *Psychology Today*

**Psychologytoday.com**

Find a therapist, psychiatrist, or support group in your area.

### *Cystic Fibrosis Foundation*

1-800-344-4823

info@cff.org

**CFF.org/life-with-cf/daily-life/emotional-wellness/**

Find more information and resources about how to take care of your mental health.

### *Your Insurance Company*

You can also talk to your insurance company. They may be able to help you find more resources and the mental health providers in your area.