



Mental Health Resource & Tips Guide

Having effective and trusted resources is an essential part of my wellness journey and also when I support others on theirs.

It's important to me that you have the same tools to lean on and have some next steps to follow to help you on YOUR way. If you're a health professional, an employer, or you're an individual who wants to help someone on their journey to wellness, this list is also for you.

“I can tell you from personal experience, support groups give me much needed hope, motivation & information.”

There are thousands of mental health websites and resources available. These are the ones I use and trust most. Some are region specific, many are not. Not all will be applicable to your particular situation. But I encourage you to take a look at each. Then reach out to those that are a good fit. Here's to hope. Here's to your wellness.

We can all be mentally healthy.

“Recovery shouldn't be a possibility. It should be the expectation.”

1. **Recommended mental health websites, organizations and support groups:** These websites and affiliated local support groups are rich in resources and experience. Try more than one support group. The first one you try may not be the right fit for you.

I can tell you from personal experience, support groups give me much needed hope, motivation and information. Having a chance to talk and listen with people who have been where you have can be incredibly helpful.

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#) (branches located all across Canada)

[Mental Health America](#) (branches located all across the US, parts of Canada)

[Mood Disorders Society of Canada](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) (branches located in the US, parts of Canada)

[Anxiety BC](#)

[Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#)

[Schizophrenia Society of Canada](#) (branches across Canada; some services are applicable for all mental illnesses)

Also see #6 and #11

2. **Finding good health professionals in your area** Find a support group and attend a meeting. While there don't be shy about asking for referrals to good counselors. Word of mouth is the best testament of a health professional. Or call one of the above organizations and ask who, what clinic or what steps they would recommend in order to find the appropriate clinician.

Mental Health America has a very good page with lots of tips and links about finding a health provider: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/finding-therapy>

3. **Chatrooms and on-line communities** If you're not comfortable or unable to attend a support group many of the above websites have chatrooms and on-line communities where you can get great suggestions.
4. **Dr. Xavier Amador** has a great book "[I don't need Help, I'm Not Sick](#)". He created the LEAP program which gives family members tools to help someone in 'denial' of mental illness accept treatment, but is also designed help people in general resolve conflict and communicate effectively. <http://dramador.com/the-leap-institute/> + <http://leapinstitute.org/wpadmin/>

Check Dr. Amador's referrals page for clinicians who work with his method.

<http://leapinstitute.org/wpadmin/referrals/>

5. **Julie Fast (coaching service + book)** www.juliefast.com/family-coaching and her book 'Loving Someone with Bipolar Disorder'. Julie is a woman who has bipolar disorder herself and is an expert in helping families and partners of those with bipolar disorder. Her books are extremely popular and well respected.
6. **Bipolar Caregivers** <http://www.bipolarcaregivers.org> Although specifically for those who have a loved one with bipolar disorder, the strategies and tips offered are very helpful for anyone supporting a person with mental illness.

7. My **blog post '4 Steps to Help Someone When They Don't Want It'** (you may have already read it) offers concrete suggestions, resources and links to two other posts about helping your adult child. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/crazy-life/201608/4-steps-help-someone-when-they-dont-want-it>
8. **7 Cups of Tea** is a way to speak to someone on-line for support. Free, anonymous and confidential. <https://www.7cups.com/forum/>
9. **Mental Health America** <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/> Click their 'Find Help' icon on their menu bar and look at the dropdown box. They have links to pages with excellent strategies and tools if you're looking for help for yourself or for someone else.
10. **Dr. Lloyd Sederer's TEDxAlbany talk 'When Mental Illness Enters the Family'** This TedX talk offers excellent tips for parents, loved ones and others when supporting someone who is struggling with mental health issues but isn't able to see they need help. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NROo-JXuFMY>

In addition to his talk, he has a widely praised book "[The Family Guide to Mental Health Care: Advice on Helping Your Loved Ones](#)".

11. **International Bipolar Foundation** <http://www.ibpf.org/> Excellent website with information that can apply to conditions beyond bipolar disorder. Their archived video section is particularly good, <http://www.ibpf.org/articles/educational-videos> This page has their resources for those who have a loved one with bipolar disorder: <http://www.ibpf.org/i-care-someone-bipolar-disorder>
12. **BD Wellness Centre** <http://www.bdwellness.com> Full disclosure: I'm part of the research team that helped create this. This website has great evidence based resources and tools for those living with bipolar disorder.

Especially good is a free tool that assesses quality of life:

https://www.bdqol.com/?_ga=2.111573761.403490126.1494266097-2095998972.1492025677 that can be used as a discussion piece with healthcare providers or team and help guide next steps in treatment and wellness plans.

13. **Sarri Gilman's** excellent TEDx video and book about setting boundaries is very helpful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtsHUeKnkC8> Her website is: <https://www.sarrigilman.com/> Her book **Transforming Your Boundaries** is also an excellent guide: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00JHUELVS>
14. **Mental Health First Aid** <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca/en> Effective programs that teach how to respond when someone is in a mental health crisis or developing a mental health issue. Courses are available across the country. USA: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/> and Australia: <https://mhfa.com.au/>

15. **Not Myself Today** www.NotMyselfToday.ca A well respected fee based program for employers to help create mentally healthy workplaces. It's an evidence-informed, practical solution focused on building understanding, reducing stigma and fostering supportive work cultures.
16. **Mind** <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/550657/resource4.pdf> A free download about how to support staff who are experiencing a mental health problem. Visit www.mind.org.uk to find other good resources.
17. **bpHope** website and bp magazine. Excellent articles, on-line community that provides practical tips, tools and hope. Though focused on bipolar disorder, again check it out as some info can apply to others conditions.
18. **Mental Health Commission of Canada** The commission develops and disseminates Canadian mental health programs and resources. Of particular interest may be their webinars that range from recovery topics to workplace issues. Even if you are based in a country other than Canada, much of the information will still be applicable
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/webinars>
19. **If there's a crisis** please remember your first step is to call 911 or visit your nearest emergency department. Or contact your local crisis centre. You can find a list of numbers here:
<http://www.bdwellness.com/help/crisis>

Helpful Tips and Reminders from Someone who has Been There:

1. **Power in numbers:** Support groups (either in person or on-line) can provide extremely valuable information and encouragement. They've been indispensable to me over the years. Groups can be for people with mental health conditions, or for families, friends, parents and even co-workers or employers of someone with a mental illness.

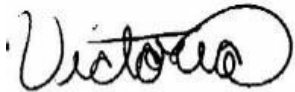
At any given meeting, you will find people who have tackled similar problems that you're dealing with. People may direct you to other helpful resources you may not have known about. For example, at support groups I would ask people for recommendations of good psychiatrists and clinics. Try more than one meeting before deciding a support group is not for you.

2. **Look beyond the disorder:** Although some resources, like #6, are for caregivers of someone who has bipolar disorder, the information can apply equally to a person supporting a loved one with any mental condition. Take time to check them out.
3. **Questions and the phone are your friends:** Don't forget the power of simply picking up the phone, calling one or two of these organizations to talk with someone and asking for help to find the right resource or group. Powerful questions elicit powerful solutions. For example: call your local mental health organization to find out what support group would be the best fit for you or your loved one. You might find out there are other ones that aren't listed on their website or in a different location that's closer to you.

4. **Health Providers may not talk, but you can share.** Dr. Lloyd Sederer, Chief Medical Officer of the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), the nation's largest state mental health system, recommends knowing how to bend the rules of the mental health system. When you call a health professional to ask about your loved one, often they'll say "I can't share that information". But you can ask them to listen. Tell them what's been happening with your family member or friend; explain why you're worried. They aren't breaking confidentiality by listening. Watch [his TedX talk](#) 'When Mental Illness enters the family' for more details. Bending the rules segment comes at 10min 42s
5. Please remember **if you or someone you know is in a mental health crisis** your first step is to call 911, visit your nearest emergency department or contact your local crisis centre. You can find a list of numbers here: <http://www.bdwellness.com/help/crisis>

I hope these resources offer you some guidance and hope on this journey. If you discover you're unable to find the resources you need, please don't hesitate to reach out to me again (victoria@victoriamaxwell.com) and I'll see if there's something else I can suggest.

Take care,



Notes & Thoughts: