



# Long COVID & *Mental Health*

We often think of Long COVID's physical symptoms but mental health struggles can make living with Long COVID even harder. Depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbances can be more common for people with Long COVID. Some people with Long COVID may even experience post-traumatic stress symptoms.

**Why? Long COVID can strain your mental health for many reasons including...**

- 1. Adjusting to a new normal.** Being unable to go back to your "normal" life or struggling to keep up because of ongoing unexplained symptoms is stressful.
- 2. Dealing with fatigue.** Fatigue can keep you from doing what you enjoy.
- 3. Social isolation.** Long COVID can make it hard to stay connected. Lower energy, chronic pain or trying to avoid reinfection or making symptoms worse can get in the way of connecting.
- 4. Not being believed.** Sadly, many people suffering from Long COVID have had their symptoms wrongly ignored by healthcare providers, family, or friends.
- 5. The COVID-19 virus's impact on the brain.** Researchers are still figuring out how COVID-19 impacts the brain. Current research says the virus can up your risk for mental health challenges.

**Long COVID and mental health struggles can overlap.** Both are real and deserve attention! Long COVID is NOT “All in your head” but, taking care of your mental health can help you cope with Long COVID AND managing your Long COVID can help your mental health.

## The first step in taking care of your mental is knowing what to look out for. Be on the lookout for these signs in yourself and your loved ones...

*Sadness that doesn't seem to go away*

*Feeling numb*

*Not being able to experience pleasure*

*Changes in appetite, over or under eating*

*Being unable to control or stop worrying*

*Thoughts of harming yourself or others*

*Repeated negative thoughts about yourself*

*Trouble sleeping*

*Often feeling tense, on guard, or on edge*

*Difficulty thinking or concentrating*

*Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy*

*Increased use of alcohol or other drugs*

## Small changes can help your mental health. Try...

*Building a daily routine*

*Making time to do things you enjoy*

*Setting small goals for yourself*

*Eating a healthy diet*

*Keeping a journal*

*Reducing your use of alcohol or other drugs*

*Practicing meditation or mindfulness*

*Reducing caffeine intake (if experiencing anxiety)*

*Breathing exercises*

*Joining a support group or talking a trusted loved one*

***A quick word of advice:*** "Do not compare yourself to someone else living with Long COVID. The ways in which you recover belong uniquely to you. However, that does not mean that you are alone. Reach out to someone, anyone! And start taking control of your health and wellbeing."

*-Victoria Haight, Social Worker, Care and Recovery After COVID-19 (CARE) Clinic*

## Sources

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