

If you have any questions, please call your Nurse Care Manager at 1-800-832-0778.



We're here to help!



**POSITIVE
HEALTHCARE™**

24 Hour Customer
Service Line:
1-800-832-0778



**POSITIVE
HEALTHCARE™**

**YOUR
FEELINGS
ABOUT
HIV**

Listen to Your Feelings

Learning that you have HIV can cause many different feelings. You may feel angry and frustrated. You may feel scared and lonely. You may feel like giving up.

It's also possible that you may not know how you feel. You may feel numb. Think of this as your body's way of taking "time out."

Accept your feelings. They are normal. Even people who are living full and happy lives with HIV sometimes have strong feelings.

Your life is different now, but you are still you. Accept yourself. And be a good friend to yourself.



Deal with Stress

Stress weakens your immune system. A weak immune system can't fight off infections. A strong immune system can fight infections. It can improve your emotional and physical health.

Here are some ways to help you decrease stress:

- Find ways to share your feelings.
- Find ways to relax.
- Be patient with yourself and others.
- Keep a sense of humor.
- Find a physical activity you like.

- Get regular sleep.
- Eat nutritious foods.
- Seek spiritual or religious support if it's right for you.
- Fill your life with things that make you feel good about yourself - hobbies, friendships, work.
- Take action when you can.

Build a Support System

Wait until you feel ready before you tell others you have HIV. Then, begin by telling people you think will support you. Sharing your feelings with people you trust can help you feel less depressed, less anxious and less overwhelmed.

Some people may have negative reactions. Many do not understand the facts about HIV. Think carefully about whether you want to be around people who don't support you.

Being intimate with a partner can give you great support. But there are new issues to deal with in your love relationships. Talk openly about safer sex.

Talking with a counselor can be a safe way to share your feelings. Counseling may help you see the issues more clearly. It can help you make changes and take charge of your health.



Support groups of people living with HIV are helpful for many people. If you feel comfortable with support groups, being with others who are dealing with the same things can help you feel less alone. You may also learn new information about treatment and services.

Take Action

HIV affects everyone differently. You may feel overwhelmed at times. Here are some ideas that may help:

- Know you have the power to help yourself.
- Learn all you can about HIV and your own health.
- Find out all your choices in a situation.
- Find out what you need, then ask others to help you.
- Make as many of your own decisions as possible.
- Avoid tobacco, caffeine, alcohol and other drugs.
- Get ready to deal with substance abuse or unhealthy relationships.
- Make new friends when you're ready.
- Express your feelings in as many ways as you can.

When you feel ready, taking action can help you feel in control and help you manage your health.

Psychological distress may also require professional mental health support. When problems or symptoms get too severe or don't go away, ask your medical provider for help or seek a mental health professional.