

Care Team Conversation Guide



Moving beyond “fine” starts with a conversation



A lot of people living with depression say they're fine—but still notice things don't feel quite right. When “I'm fine” becomes your go-to answer, it can be easy to lose track of how you're really feeling. You're showing up. Getting through the day. Doing what you need to do. But being “fine” doesn't always mean feeling the way you want to feel.

This guide can help you put your experience into words and feel more prepared for an open conversation with your care team.

Not sure where to start? You're in the right place.

“Take time to reflect on what's been happening and how you feel so you can share information with your healthcare team. Track your symptoms and their duration, write down any questions and be honest about your treatment journey.”

Dr. Jessica Jackson, licensed psychologist and Vice President of Alliance Development at Mental Health America



Johnson & Johnson worked with Mental Health America, drawing on their mental health expertise and resources, to develop this resource. Mental Health America was compensated for their review of this resource and contributions to the Generation Fine campaign.



Before your appointment: A few things to reflect on

Taking a few minutes to reflect ahead of your conversation with your healthcare provider can make it easier to share what matters most.



Track any improvements you've noticed

Take note of what symptoms have gotten better since starting treatment. Even small changes can help guide your care.



Notice patterns in how you've been feeling

Pay attention to times of day or specific situations when your depression symptoms feel stronger, and be ready to share those examples.



Take a moment to notice what might still be bothering you

Identify depression symptoms or situations that still feel difficult or haven't improved as much as you hoped. Consider your mood, energy and sense of well-being as a whole.



Equip yourself with helpful tools and resources

Visit our website at [GenerationFine.com](https://www.GenerationFine.com) to use our Self-Reflection Exercise to help you notice how you've been feeling lately and what might be hard to put into words.

What's been on my mind most lately? Check all that apply ↓



☐ Emotional and mental well-being

☐ Daily routines or lifestyle changes

☐ Stress, sleep or energy levels

☐ Therapy or counseling

☐ Relationships and social support



Tip:

Writing things down can help you remember what you want to say and what you hope to get out of the conversation with your provider. Use the blank spaces below to prepare your thoughts!



Look through these discussion questions, and identify which you want to answer. You don't need to answer them all—just start with what feels most true to you.

Daily life →

- What makes me say I'm "fine"?
- Am I not enjoying certain activities I once loved because of ongoing depression symptoms?
- What has felt harder than usual lately?

How I've been feeling →

- Do I feel like myself lately?
- What feelings have been coming up most often?
- How does my mood affect my relationships, work or ability to enjoy things I care about?

Routines & habits →

- Are there routines that help me feel better or make things feel harder?
- Have I noticed any changes in my sleep, energy or daily habits?

Support & connection →

- Do I feel supported right now?
- What kind of support do I want more of?

During your appointment: Talking openly about what matters to you

This is your time to be honest about where you are.
Not just how you're functioning, but how you're actually feeling.



Share what feels true for you, even if it's hard to say out loud

You don't have to minimize or sugarcoat your experience. If something feels off, that matters.



Go at your own pace

There's no "right" way to explain how you feel. Pauses, uncertainty or not having perfect words are all okay.



Share what "fine" really means for you

If you're getting through the day but still struggling, naming that can help your care team better understand your needs.



Ask questions

If something doesn't make sense, it's okay to say so. Understanding your options helps you feel more confident about next steps.



Use your notes or bring support

Having written reminders or bringing someone you trust to your appointment can help you speak up about what matters most.



Talking about your goals: What does "better" look like for you?

Feeling better doesn't mean the same thing for everyone. For some people, it's about relief from certain depression symptoms. For others, it's about getting parts of their life back that have felt out of reach. You don't need to have it all figured out—just think about what feeling better might look like for you.



Tip:

You don't need a big goal. Noticing what you want more or less of can be a helpful place to start. Use the blank spaces below to jot down your thoughts on the following questions and help you better understand your goals.

Things you'd like to get back to →

- What's something I miss doing or enjoying?
- Do I have plans, goals, or moments I wish felt easier right now?
- What would getting back to that look like for me?

What you'd like to feel more of day to day →

- How do I want to feel more often?
- What changes in my energy, mood or motivation would make a difference?
- When do I feel most like myself, and how can I have more of those moments?

Where you'd like things to feel easier →

- Where does life feel hardest right now—at work, at home, in relationships or daily routines?
- What would being more present, focused or connected look like for me?

What you'd like more or less of →

- What would I like more of in my life right now (eg, motivation, calm, connection)?
- What would I like less of (eg, exhaustion, emotional overload, numbness)?
- Which of these changes feels most important to start with?



Understanding what matters most to you can help your care team better support you and tailor next steps around your definition of progress.

Conversation starters



"I've been getting through my days, but something still feels off."

"I've been saying I'm fine, but I'd like to talk about how I've really been feeling."

"Some things have gotten better, but I'm still struggling with..."

"I'd like to talk about whether there are other options that might make sense for me."

"I'm having a hard time putting this into words, but I know I don't feel where I want to be."

"I'd like to talk about what 'feeling better' would actually look like for me."

"I'd like to talk about how things have been feeling lately and whether any additional support could help."

"I've been feeling stuck, and I'd like help figuring out next steps."



Questions you might ask your healthcare provider



If it feels helpful, you can use questions like these to keep the conversation open and collaborative:



“Can we talk about what support might make sense for me right now?”



“Based on what I’ve shared, what options should we talk about?”



“If I’m still feeling ‘fine but not great,’ what other options could we consider?”



“What signs should I look for that things are getting better or not?”



“How long might it take to notice changes, and what should I do if I don’t?”



“What can I do between now and our next check-in to support myself?”

There’s no pressure to ask everything at once.
Even one question can help move the conversation forward.

After your conversation: Take a moment to check in with yourself

Before you leave or log off from your appointment, take a moment to check in with yourself and make sure you feel clear about what comes next.

Make sure you feel clear about:

- What’s staying the same, what might shift and why
- How long it may take to notice changes and what’s normal along the way
- Next appointments, check-ins or when to reach out if something doesn’t feel right
- Who you can reach out to for questions, so you don’t feel like you’re navigating things on your own

Afterward, it can also help to ask yourself:

- Do I feel heard and understood?
- Do I feel clearer than I did before the conversation?
- Is there anything I wish I’d said or want to bring up next time?



Tip:

The conversation might be fresh in your memory now, but you may not remember all the details of your appointment later. Take a few minutes afterward to write down how you're feeling, next steps, things you don't want to forget and how you might approach your next check-in differently.

Reminder!

You don't need to have the "perfect" words to start the conversation. Even small details about how you're feeling can help your care team better support you. Remember, you are the expert on your experience.



If something still feels unresolved, that's okay. One conversation doesn't have to cover everything. This is part of an ongoing process and includes support that meets you where you are.



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