

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Migraine can affect your emotional wellbeing, but you can build emotional resiliency and develop healthy coping strategies to better manage your mental health.

Migraine and stress are often linked. One does not necessarily cause the other, but they frequently go hand in hand. Individuals with migraine also have above-average rates of certain psychiatric disorders, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorders, and suicidal ideation. It is important to treat both migraine as well as any comorbid conditions, including any psychological symptoms.

70% +

OF MIGRAINE PATIENTS EXPERIENCE
STRESS-RELATED ATTACKS

25% +

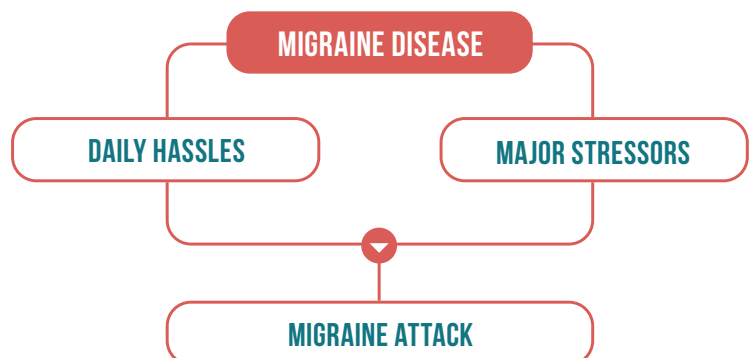
OF INDIVIDUALS WITH MIGRAINE MEET THE
CRITERIA FOR A MOOD OR ANXIETY DISORDER

Understanding migraine and stress

With migraine, stress can interfere with your life in multiple ways. Migraine can cause ongoing stress due to long-term activation of the body's chronic pain response systems, in addition to the emotional effects of pain interfering with personal plans and priorities.



On the other hand, ongoing and/or unpredictable stress — for example, trouble at home, with friends, or at work — can trigger a migraine attack. The body's physiological response to a migraine attack can in turn cause increased vulnerability to pain in the future, as the body adapts to what it perceives as signals of distress.



EMOTIONAL WELLNESS (CONT.)

What can you do to improve your quality of life, manage your migraine attacks, and improve your mental health in the face of migraine disease? Try adding the strategies below to your preventative and abortive medications — a combined medical and behavioral approach often has the best results.

Biofeedback

Biofeedback is a method of helping patients learn to monitor and control physical responses to stress or pain using relaxation techniques. A trained practitioner will use sensors to monitor biological data such as heart rate and breathing. Biofeedback has been shown to reduce frequency of migraine attacks. Most patients are able to see results fairly quickly.

Find a biofeedback practitioner on the Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback's website (aapb.org).

Relaxation

Guided **relaxation** can help to slow heart rate, lower blood pressure, and manage hyperventilation during times of stress or pain. You can learn relaxation techniques with the help of a trained practitioner, or you can try it on your own using web- and app-based options. Relaxation plus preventative medicine may be a helpful combination. Talk to your physician about options.

Meditation is a practice that involves some forms of guided relaxation (e.g., deep breathing), as well as intentional opening of the mind and the release of negative thoughts.



headspace.com



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TRY IT AT HOME

Find a variety of guided meditations and relaxation exercises for migraine and pain management here: dawnbuse.com/relaxation

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of psychotherapy shown to reduce stress related to migraine. It may decrease migraine attack frequency and associated disability, as well as improve quality of life, management of stress, and some comorbidities.

CBT administered by a trained behavioral health professional (e.g., psychologist, counselor, or social worker) can help patients identify and change dysfunctional ways of thinking and increase healthy behaviors.

Check out the **appendices** at the end of this toolkit for help finding a behavioral health provider and for tips on how to access behavioral care.



If You Need Immediate Support

Never be afraid to reach out for support. You are not alone.

If you ever feel the distress you are experiencing is too much to handle, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline offers free, 24/7 services to people experiencing emotional or mental health crises.

Call any time you need support: 1-888-273-8255

For Spanish speakers, you can call a Spanish-speaking crisis prevention team at 1-888-628-9454. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can ask for support on the general hotline number, use an online chat (suicidepreventionlifeline.org), or call a specialized TTY hotline at 1-800-799-4899.