



Please note that the information contained in this document is intended as general guidance purposes only.
For more information visit the Acne Support website: www.acnesupport.org.uk

Emotional Support

Our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing are linked to one another. As a result, it is common for our physical health and appearance to have an impact on the way that we think and feel about ourselves.

Acne changes the appearance of our skin and can leave us feeling upset and distressed. As many as one in four of us who have acne will experience a change to their mental state.

In this section of Acne Support you will find information about how acne might impact on our emotional and mental wellbeing. You will also find information on some of the treatment options that are available to you, which may help you to start feeling better about your acne.

If you feel like you need to speak to someone straight away about how you are feeling then there are some helplines that may be able to assist you. You can find the details of some of these organisations near the bottom of this page.

Acne Dysmorphic Disorder

Skin conditions, such as acne, can have an effect on our mental health. One of the ways in which it can do this is to make us feel like our acne is worse or more noticeable than it really is. This effect is known as body dysmorphia, although when it is specifically related to acne it is often called acne dysmorphia.

When a person is affected by acne dysmorphia, which is also known as acne dysmorphic disorder, or ADD, they can find themselves consumed by thoughts about how bad their acne is. However, in reality, these thoughts do not reflect the true picture of a person's acne as they make it seem more severe and noticeable than it actually is.

These false thoughts and inaccurate perceptions can negatively affect a person's sense of self-worth, confidence and overall enjoyment of life. Sometimes, these thoughts can lead to a low mood and depression.

If acne dysmorphia might be affecting you then a good place to seek help is your GP. Your doctor will be able to speak with you about how you are feeling and help you to form a treatment plan, which may involve other specialists who are trained in treating acne dysmorphia, such as dermatologists and psychiatrists.

Acne Excoriée

Conditions that affect our physical health can have an impact on our mental wellbeing. One of the ways in which acne can have an impact on our mental wellbeing is to make us feel like we have to pick or squeeze out our acne lesions, which are also called spots.

Someone who is affected by acne excoriée will feel a want to forcibly remove their acne lesions, or spots, from their skin. This want can often seem uncontrollable and a person who is affected can feel compelled to pick at an acne lesion or to scratch it out. It is not uncommon for people with acne excoriée to pick out every acne lesion on their body.

After the acne lesions have been removed the skin tends to be left sore and scabbed with open wounds, which may then turn into acne scarring.

In addition to feeling a compulsive desire to pick or scratch at acne lesions, people affected by acne excoriée may have negative thoughts or feelings about their acne. They may also find themselves feeling anxious or depressed, both in relation to their acne and more generally.

It is important to remember that treatment options are readily available for those of us who are affected by acne excoriée. If you would like to find out more about these treatment options then visiting your GP is a good place to start. Your doctor will be able to talk with you about how you are feeling and help you arrange a treatment plan, which may include some other healthcare professionals who are well trained in treating acne excoriée, such as a dermatologist or a psychiatrist.

General Distress

Our physical, mental and emotional health are all connected. When a disease or condition of any sort, including acne, starts to affect our physical wellbeing then it may also have an effect on our state of mind.

Sometimes, acne's effect on our thoughts and feelings is subtle. We may have some negative thoughts or feel in a low mood every now and again. At other times, the impact that acne can have on us is more severe. We might have constant negative thoughts about how we look or find ourselves feeling down and distressed most of the time.

There is no way of knowing how a person's mental and emotional wellbeing might be affected by acne. What is important to remember is that, no matter how your acne is making you feel, there are trained medical professionals available to help you.

Making an appointment with your GP is often a good place to start when you are looking to speak to someone about your emotional and mental health. They will be able to talk to you about the impact that acne is having on your wellbeing and help you decide on the best course of action to address the issues you are facing.

Helpful Resources

Sometimes self-help resources can be useful in enabling us to feel better about ourselves and our skin. Visit our sister site Skin Support for more information on self-help.

If you feel like you need to talk to someone straight away about the way that you are feeling then you might like to get in contact with Mind, Samaritans or Changing Faces, who may be able to help.

You might find that self-help resources help you to start feeling better. There are free self-help resources available, which can guide you on some practical steps and exercises to aid in managing how your acne makes you feel. Visit our sister site Skin Support for more information on self-help.

If you feel like you need to speak with someone immediately about how you are feeling then you might like to get in contact with Mind, Samaritans or Changing Faces, who may be able to help.

Mind's helpline can be reached on 0300 123 3393.

Samaritans on 08457 909 090.