

# 10 Things to Know

# Protecting Your Mental Health



**1** ***What is normal?***  
When experiencing uncertainty, like receiving an ALS diagnosis, most emotions are acceptable—except suicidal thoughts and feelings. Suicidal thoughts or feelings should be taken seriously.



**2** ***Dealing with uncertainty and change***  
Uncertainty and change are a part of life. Learning strategies to cope with changes can help you manage stress and difficult emotions.



**3** ***Reframe negative thoughts***  
When we have a thought, whether it is true or not, it usually leads to an emotion or feeling. Try to reframe your thoughts to what you can control and are able to do and set realistic expectations.



**4** ***Positivity and gratitude***  
Mindfulness and meditation are practices that can help keep you focused and minimize thoughts about things you can't control. Request support in these practices or in other activities that minimize your stress and negative thoughts.



**5** ***Express your emotions***  
Acknowledging and expressing feelings safely is healthy. Expressing emotions can be done verbally, in writing, or using a communication device. Finding a way that works for you is the important part.



**6** ***Make a plan***  
Expect to experience uncomfortable emotions, and for your mental health needs to change. Consider adding a mental health professional to your care team. Have a plan for who you connect with for mental health support and interventions.



**7** ***Self-awareness***  
Identifying what you are feeling is the first step in helping you take action on how you are feeling.



**8** ***Maintain and build relationships***  
Some people diagnosed with ALS feel isolated. If you find it more difficult to relate to loved ones, try explaining your feelings to them. People want to know how you feel and how they can help. Building relationships through the ALS community may help you feel less alone.



**9** ***Healthy boundaries and limits***  
Boundaries are guidelines that you set for yourself to protect your health and wellbeing. Limit the time you spend with people or in activities that cause you stress or discomfort.



**10** ***Reach out for help***  
If you have concerns about your mental health or are feeling overwhelmed, reach out for support immediately. Call or text 988 or 911 if you feel unsafe.