

UNDERSTANDING Type 1 Diabetes Distress



Sequel is working on adhesive options for on-body wear. Alternative adhesive options are available through third-party providers.

How to recognize burnout,
understand your emotional patterns,
and **find strategies that help**

Lifting the invisible weight of T1D



Supporting your mental health, one step at a time

Life with type 1 diabetes (T1D) means putting in effort every day, and that takes strength. However, if you've been feeling overwhelmed, defeated, or discouraged, this could be a sign of diabetes distress.¹ Exploring how diabetes distress is showing up for you can be an important next step.

This guide will help you understand what diabetes distress is, find out if it's affecting you, and learn simple, practical strategies to help you experience more peace of mind moving forward.



We created this guide in collaboration with **Risely Health**, a team of virtual coaches who all live with T1D. They work with individuals and parents of kids with T1D to help them to stop struggling alone, understand the root of what's holding them back, and help them gain more freedom and confidence.

What is diabetes distress?

How is it different from my emotions that aren't diabetes related?

Many people experience feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression, but those who live with T1D often experience them in a way that can differ from those who don't. The patterns of life with T1D can give rise to all kinds of emotions.

Diabetes distress is defined as the emotional burden, frustration, and/or burnout specific to living with diabetes.¹

If those feelings sound familiar, you're not alone:

PER A NATIONAL SURVEY,
approximately 50% of adults with diabetes
experienced diabetes distress²

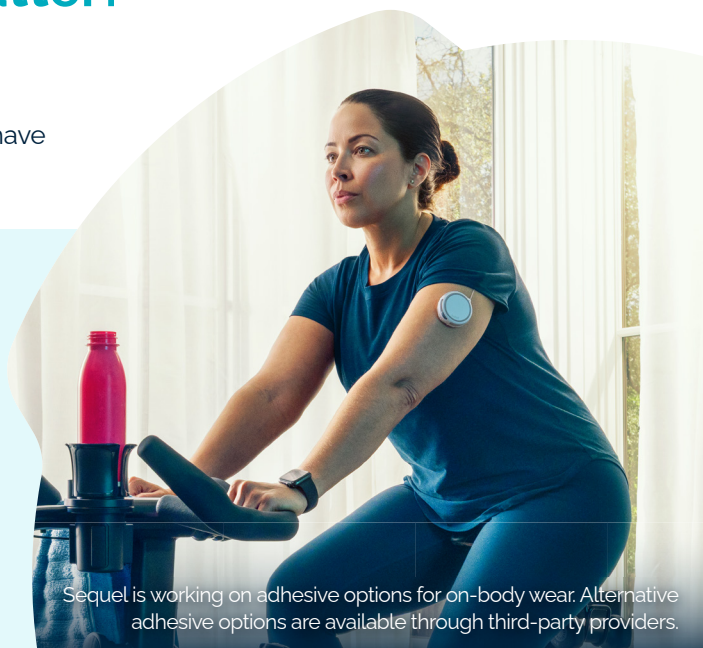
PER A GLOBAL SURVEY,
the International Diabetes
Federation finds that **77%** of people living with diabetes
have experienced anxiety, depression,
or another mental health condition
because of their diabetes³

Why does diabetes distress matter?

These feelings are more than just "stress." Diabetes distress could have negative impacts on your glucose control and mental health.⁴

Diabetes distress can lead to⁴:

- Higher A1C levels
- Feelings of fear, anxiety, or guilt
- Depression or low mood
- Mental or emotional exhaustion
- Feeling distant from your support system
- Strain on relationships



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When is it more common to experience diabetes distress?

You could particularly feel the impact of diabetes distress during times when you are:

- Newly diagnosed with diabetes, or having trouble accepting it
- Overly focused on your glucose numbers
- Struggling with negative feelings surrounding food or meals
- Experiencing a diabetes complication or another health problem
- Feeling isolated, or feeling unsupported by family and friends
- Frustrated by your healthcare provider or healthcare system

What is my level of diabetes distress?

How can I find out?

Think about the past few weeks. Maybe some days felt manageable, while others felt heavy or discouraging. If you find yourself feeling frustrated, drained, or emotionally checked out from your T1D care, speak to your healthcare provider to determine if you may be experiencing diabetes distress. In the meantime, get to know some strategies that may help lighten your mental load.



A helpful next step is to take the official [Diabetes Distress Assessment](#)

It only takes a few minutes and can give you clarity about what you're feeling and why it's showing up.

Five strategies to help reduce diabetes distress

These strategies, provided by **Risely**, are simple, practical steps that can help make living with T1D feel a little lighter. You'll learn to focus on [micro-wins over perfection](#); declutter your brain by [starting simple](#); reframe your thoughts by [naming the narrator](#); remind your mind that [connection beats isolation](#); and remember to [track emotions, not just glucose](#).

STRATEGY 1

Micro-wins over perfection

As you create healthy habits, here are some things to center in your mind as you go through your daily T1D management routine:

1

Shift your focus from "getting everything right" to "getting a little better"

2

Recognize your effort, not just your outcomes; doing your best is worth celebrating

3

Aim for consistency over intensity—this is a marathon, not a sprint



Here's how that might look:

- "I treated a low calmly...without panic eating the pantry."
- "I paused before reacting to a high-ish glucose level and asked what might be driving the trend."
- "I packed my low snacks before leaving the house—that's progress."





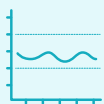
STRATEGY 2

Starting simple

Diabetes distress and low time in range (TIR) often go hand-in-hand. Rollercoaster numbers, sustained highs, frequent lows—it can make everything feel heavier, and this strain can fuel diabetes distress.¹

When you focus on mastering the simple things, such as your management routine, you may find that you have more bandwidth to focus on the rest of your day.

Here are a few supportive ways to work on your management, without pressure or judgment:



Use your continuous glucose monitor (CGM) as data, not criticism, and look for the patterns that are true to your body. Knowledge is power!



Identify the root cause that might be getting in the way, whether it's fear of lows, your relationship with insulin or food, or education gaps around insulin sensitivity. Understanding these blocks is a powerful step that may help you gain more confidence.



Assess whether your current tech is supporting you or holding you back. Tools that fit your lifestyle, comfort level, and emotional needs **can help make day-to-day decisions feel easier**.

STRATEGY 3

Name the narrator

Noticing your thoughts gives you space to reframe them—your inner narrator influences how you experience T1D. Being compassionate and curious in your thinking can allow space for learning.

Here are some typical ways in which your inner narrator may be presenting certain ideas about your T1D management habits, plus some tips for reframing those thoughts:



The Inner Perfectionist

Narrator: *"I can't believe my time in range dropped this week... I must be doing something wrong."*

Reframe: *"That's my inner perfectionist expecting flawless numbers. But diabetes isn't linear; it's feedback, not failure."*



The Inner Critic

Narrator: *"You should've known better. You always mess this up."*

Reframe: *"That's my inner critic using shame as motivation. But I actually learn more when I respond with compassion."*



The Inner Alarmist

Narrator: *"What if this high means everything is spiraling again?"*

Reframe: *"That's my fear talking—not the full story. I've brought numbers down before, and I can again."*

STRATEGY 4

Connection beats isolation

It's easy to give yourself a hard time about your T1D management in your own head. Connection is a reminder that what you're feeling is valid and shared. That's why it can be helpful to stay connected with people who understand what you're experiencing.

When you're connected with a support system, you can gain:

- Emotional breathing room
- A new perspective
- Validation
- More empowered decision making



Here are a few ways you can build connections:

- Joining a peer-led T1D support group
- Attending local T1D events in your community
- Engaging with T1D communities or advocates online or on social media
- Obtaining a mental health referral
- Scheduling regular check-ins with someone who leaves you feeling lighter
- Signing up for coaching programs with the **Risely** team



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STRATEGY 5

Track emotions, not just glucose

When thinking about your mental health, think about your feelings. Your feelings could influence your decisions, energy, and self-care.

Creating a habit of emotional reflection can help you spot patterns, triggers, and moments of progress you might otherwise miss.



You might try:

- Adding one line to your daily log or app: "Today, I felt _____ about my diabetes."
- Using an emoji, symbol, or color to represent your mood
- Recording a short voice memo to capture what's on your mind
- A nightly reflection: "What's one win today that has nothing to do with my numbers?"



You got this!

Life with T1D isn't always linear, and neither is managing diabetes distress. Some days feel lighter, some feel heavier. Keep these strategies in your pocket—they can help you take a small step forward toward calm, clarity, and confidence in your daily care.

If you're looking for an insulin pump designed with day-to-day management in mind, twiist™ may be the right device to simplify your care and help you stay aligned with your goals.



Learn how twiist makes diabetes management personal at twiist.com

The twiist Automated Insulin Delivery (AID) System is for people with type 1 diabetes, 6 years of age and above, available with a prescription, only in the U.S. Visit twiist.com/safety for important safety information.



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For additional support, consider coaching

Whether your goal is to find help improving time in range, lowering A1C, or simply living with more peace of mind, **Risely offers virtual coaching** from a team of people who all live with T1D. They've worked with more than 2,000 people in the T1D community, and they know firsthand that diabetes is not a math problem to be solved, but an experience to be managed.



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Explore coaching at
RiselyHealth.com

References: 1. Fisher L, et al. Diabetes Distress in Adults With Type 1 Diabetes: Prevalence, Incidence and Change Over Time. *J Diabetes Complications*. 2016;30(6):1123-1128. 2. Alexander DS, et al. Diabetes Distress Among US Adults With Diagnosed Diabetes, 2021. *Prev Chronic Dis*. 2025;22:240287. 3. Diabetes Impacts the Mental Well-Being of 3 in 4 People With the Condition. International Diabetes Federation. Published November 13, 2024. Accessed February 5, 2026. <https://idf.org/news/diabetes-hidden-burden> 4. Rodriguez-Muñoz A, et al. Type 1 Diabetes-Related Distress: Current Implications in Care. *Eur J Intern Med*. 2024;125:19-27.

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