

ON THE ROAD TO HELPING OTHERS ALONG THE ROAD TO LIVING WELL

Knowing the warning signs of a mental health condition will help you to make a positive difference in someone else's life.



10 COMMON WARNING SIGNS:

- ✓ Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- ✓ Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
- ✓ Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors
- ✓ Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
- ✓ Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
- ✓ Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real
- ✓ Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- ✓ Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- ✓ Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still
- ✓ Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities

STARTING THE CONVERSATION



Use "I" statements so your friend knows that you care and want to help. Try one of these to get things started.

- I've noticed you're [sleeping more, eating less, etc.]. Is everything okay?
- I've noticed that you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is something going on?
- It worries me to hear you talking like this. Let's talk to someone about it.
- I am always here if you ever need me.
- I want you to know that you are not alone; I am always here for you.

*Be patient,
understanding
and
provide hope.*

OFFER SUPPORT!

Tell your friend that you want to help. Use one of these statements to show your support:

- Let's sit down together and look for mental health services. Can I help you make an appointment?
- Can I help with things that you need until you're feeling better, like grocery shopping or walking your dog?
- Would you like me to go with you to a support group or a meeting? Do you need a ride to any of your appointments?

BE A FRIEND

- ✓ Check-in regularly and include your friend in your plans. Social isolation is common with mental health conditions and your friend needs you now more than ever.
- ✓ Learn more about mental health conditions to understand what your friend is going through.
- ✓ Avoid using judgmental or dismissive language, such as "you'll get over it," "toughen up," or "you're fine."
- ✓ Remind your friend that their mental health condition does not change their worth or the way you feel about them.
- ✓ Your friend may be feeling confused, alone or scared. Reassure him or her that with the right services and supports, it gets better.

CAUTION!

Take care of yourself and keep healthy boundaries. Your mental health matters too! You may want to reach out to someone to talk to about how you're feeling or to get advice on how to help your friend. Consider talking to a:

- Family member
- Resident advisor
- School counselor or advisor
- Coach
- Faith Leader

To learn more, please visit www.nami.org.

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